

# ANCIENT HISTORY

## Ancient Personality: Xerxes

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### How Xerxes dealt with revolts:

Egyptian revolt was started in 486 BC-possibly encouraged by Persian defeat at Marathon and/or the transition of new King to the throne-being Xerxes, a reaction to tax rises to finance Darius' planned new expedition against the Greeks and redeployment of skilled Egyptian workers on the Kings building projects. Herodotus explains how Xerxes marched into Egypt himself and quickly re-established control "he sent an army against the Egyptian rebels and decisively crushed them..." reducing the country to a "condition of worse servitude than before" and mentions his brother's appointment as Satrap. Herodotus says that the Egyptians were heavily punished, as evidenced by the Satrap Stella (311BC), describing the confiscation of the Temple of Bute's land by Xerxes. Modern historians question Herodotus' view; Briant → no abandonment of Pharonic titles occurred that would indicate he changed the traditional tolerant approach as evidenced by the Wadi Hammamat. He also justifies Xerxes actions of targeting temples and taking away Egyptian land, saying it was for punishment for rebelling rather than changing religious policy. Furthermore, according to Granger "The view that Xerxes treated Egypt harshly after the rebellion is not tenable. Xerxes took pharonic titles and donated to temples."

2 brief revolts during Xerxes reign-Babylon. The first was in 484 and Dandamaev suggests that "The motives for this revolt, just like in Egypt, included the burden of taxation..." This revolt was put down quickly. The second revolt in 482 BC was more serious where many cities joined. Persians laid siege to Babylon for several months → rebellion was put down in 481 by Megabyzus (Xerxes' brother-in-law). As punishment, the satrapy was divided into two-which reduced Babylon's political status; temples were destroyed, leaders of the revolt were executed. Roman historians Strabo, Diodorus and Arrian all mention Xerxes' destruction of temples to emphasise his cruel nature and accusing him of sacrilege: Arrian reports "[Alexander] marched in accordingly, and instructed the people to restore the temples which had been destroyed by Xerxes, in particular the temple of Bel, the one god held by the Babylonians in the greatest awe." Contrasting modern historians views → Briant believes "none of these arguments holds water," as they justify the destruction as punishment for the revolt and historian Stolper believes that the sacred statue of Marduk was "a symbolic prize taken to the royal palace in order to represent Babylon's part in the Empire"

### Religious policy:

The religion practiced by the Achaemenids is the worship of their major deity Ahuramazda in their religion. Teachings of Zoroastrianism → life was a constant struggle between good/ truth/ justice vs. evil/ falsehood, as evidenced by Xerxes opposition to the Daevas (demons) in the Daeva Inscription. Xerxes continued the practice of attributing his right to rule/ kingship to Ahuramazda "who made Xerxes King" (Daeva Inscription). This is an example of divine or sacral kingship, a strategy to prevent both noble and subjects from rebelling or questioning the legitimacy of King → gave the religion an important political dimension-in justifying his claims to the throne and the activities of his reigns to seek divine approval Xerxes emphasised the importance of telling the truth "Arta" and righteousness as part of religious policy-"Worship Ahuramazda and the holy Arta." → link with political loyalty as much with religious truth.

Many of the ancient sources portray Xerxes as being intolerant of other deities. Roman historians Strabo, Diodorus and Arrian all mention Xerxes' destruction of temples in Egypt and Babylon to emphasise his cruel nature and accusing him of sacrilege: Arrian reports: "[Alexander] marched in accordingly, and instructed the people to restore the temples which had been destroyed by Xerxes, in particular the temple of Bel, the one god held by the Babylonians in the greatest awe." This sacrilege against the temple of Buto in Egypt is evidenced by the Satrap Stele of 311BC.-showing him to be intolerant.

It is evident that Xerxes was religiously tolerant of other deities. According to modern historian Allen "Persian religious tolerance was ...a tactic of domination" He is saying that his tolerance could have served a political purpose-to gain support of his diverse empire. Even Briant opposes the ancient sources, divulging that "none of these arguments holds water," as he justifies the destruction of temples as mere punishment for the revolt and historian Stolper believes that the sacred statue of Marduk was "a symbolic prize taken to the royal palace in order to represent Babylon's part in the Empire." Evidence that Xerxes worshipped foreign Gods in Egypt and Babylon despite the fact he desecrated the temples. He still donated to the temple at Babylon and made sacrifices to Greek Gods where according to Briant "It appears more likely that the Persian offerings were intended to procure the favour of Greek gods for Xerxes and his army"-showing he was religiously tolerant.

### **Foreign policy of Xerxes:**

Foreign policy consisted on his motivation to expand the empire into Greece, his preparations, his use of tactics and strategies, and the way he dealt with revolts.

Significantly, Xerxes sought to continue to extend the legacy of imperial expansion and stability of his father, Darius 1. This could be achieved through the invasion of mainland Greece. Mardonius convinces Xerxes to make a stance, saying "it is not fitting that they of Athens escapes free, after doing the Persians such great injury" (Hdt) Xerxes also had the expansion motive, where according to Granger, the "size and demand for earth and water" from a large number of poleis' indicates this was a major reason.

To a great extent, Xerxes prepared himself for such an invasion-military logistics. He set up supply dumps for the army and navy established in key locations along the coast of Thrace and Macedonia "to save the army and beasts of burden from suffering want on their march into Greece" (Hdt). He recruited a large conscripted army of over 200 000 men and navy of 1207 triremes; according to Herodotus, "the army was indeed far greater than any other in recorded history." To save the army time and prevent destruction of forces by sea storms, Xerxes had the Hellespont bridged and cut a canal through Mt Athos to enable efficient movement of troops from Asia to Europe "major achievements in engineering and organisation" (Ehrenburg). His effective use of diplomacy in 481 by demanding "earth and water" (Hdt) ensured unnessasay losses of men.

To a certain limited extent of significance, Xerxes used tactics and strategies against the Greeks.

The strategy of a combined land and sea invasion-according to Bury and Meiggs, the "army [was] supported by the fleet" to provide it with protection, supplies and communication. At the Battle of Salamis, Xerxes incurred heavy losses of men (and a loss of 200 ships while the Greeks only lost 40). This is a result of Xerxes' little experience in naval combat, the large size of his triremes which weren't easily able to be manoeuvred in the narrow straits. As a result of the heavy loss of ships, according to Cook: "without a [Persian] fleet the Peloponnese could not be conquered," impacting on Xerxes' ability to conquer Greece.

Revolts in Egypt and Babylon reveal his significant foreign administration. Both were punished; where in Egypt the Satrap Stella (311BC), describes the confiscation of the Temple of Bute's land by Xerxes. In Babylon, the satrapy was divided into two-which reduced Babylon's political status; leaders executed and temples were destroyed, which is mentioned by Roman historian Arrian who reports: "[Alexander] marched in accordingly, and instructed the people to restore the temples which had been destroyed by Xerxes, in particular the temple of Bel, the one god held by the Babylonians in the greatest awe." Modern historians have contrasting views, that Xerxes wasn't religiously intolerant; Briant believes "none of these arguments holds water," as they justify the destruction of temples as mere punishment for the revolt and historian Stolper believes that the sacred statue of Marduk was "a symbolic prize taken to the royal palace in order to represent Babylon's part in the Empire."

Xerxes foreign policy extended after the Greek campaign, Dandamaev suggests there is evidence to show that Xerxes expanded in the later part of his reign to take in the Saka people (east of Caspian Sea) and further east to a region called Akufaka.

### **Xerxes' administration of the empire:**

In Xerxes empire there was a focus on administration, communication and economic organisation to help manage the empire.

Xerxes administered the empire himself as evidenced by J.Hicks "The Empire derived its fundamental energy from the authority of the King himself." This began with a satrapy system – division of the empire into 23 administrative districts-satrapies, administered by a satrap (normally high ranking families or nobles e.g. Ariamenes satrap of Bactria) who was responsible for maintaining peace, collecting imperial tax/tribute, conscription of troops and labourers. Xerxes also relied on advisors like courtiers, nobles and a large bureaucracy of scribes to aid in decision making. A positive image of Xerxes as an administrator is supported by cylinder seals found at Persepolis "I am not hot tempered, I hold firm control."

Royal Treasuries were important for financial administration and storage of wealth. The Fortification text from Persepolis recorded detailed payment of provisions, both daily and monthly, to workers, craftsmen, treasury officials, the royal household and the King.

Communication was aided by the road networks-which also helped administration and trade throughout the vast empire. There was a 2500km road system from Susa to Sardis with other interconnecting roads. These are referred to in the Persepolis tablets and described by Herodotus "Everywhere there are royal stations with excellent resting places, and the whole road runs through country which is inhabited and safe." Another important road was the one connecting Babylon and Ecbatana-providing essential communications for efficient administration of a large empire. Herodotus comments: "so skilfully has this been invented by the Persians."

Xerxes also administrates through Economic Organisation. This is where he makes his subjects pay tax-satrapies are required to pay a fixed yearly amount in gold or silver as evidenced by the Behistun inscription. The Achaemenids also encouraged trade → major source of imperial wealth. This was facilitated by the road network as mentioned above-messages could be relayed anywhere in the empire within 15 days. Wage lists at Persepolis tell us that first wages were paid in meat, wheat, barley and wine. But Darius then introduced gold (Daric) and silver coins as legal tender throughout the empire and systems of standardised weights based on Babylonian system. Standardised measure is evidenced by the royal 'cubit', a black limestone ruler with titles of Darius inscribed on it. Wealth was based on land and agriculture –where land was the main reward that the King had available for those who gave service or were in positions of great political or military power in the empire as evidenced by the Fortification tablets-Feudal system. There is archaeological evidence of large waterworks near Persepolis in the form of cut channels, dykes, irrigation ditches and dams-all of which would have aided in agriculture.

Burns: "If all we had was archaeological evidence, the Persian Empire was at its greatest in the reign of Xerxes".

Xerxes administrated through the military. He had a well-maintained military and naval organisation, like the 10 000 Immortals; conscripted members of the empire used in the army which had specific skills. These forces were answerable to the King.

Overall the Persian Empire benefitted from Xerxes' administration, for with peace increased trade, improvements to industry and agriculture and better communications.

## **Discuss effectiveness of Xerxes' leadership/to what extent was he a successful ruler/Military Career:**

Xerxes' leadership consisted of positive and negative aspects.

The preparations for the Greek offensive indicate that Xerxes was an effective military commander. He set up supply dumps for the army and navy established in key locations along the coast of Thrace and Macedonia "to save the army and beasts of burden from suffering want on their march into Greece" (Hdt). He was effective in recruiting a large conscripted army of over 200 000 men and navy of 1207 triremes; according to Herodotus, "the army was indeed far greater than any other in recorded history." To save the army time and prevent destruction of forces by sea storms, Xerxes had the Hellespont bridged and cut a canal through Mt Athos to enable efficient movement of troops from Asia to Europe "major achievements in engineering and organisation" (Ehrenburg). His effective use of diplomacy in 481 by demanding "earth and water" (Hdt) ensured unnessasay losses of men;-it also disapproves the Greek view that Xerxes was ruthless leader. JM Cook states that "Persian preparation at this time was first class" Callender: "excellent planning"

On the other hand within preparations "the lesson of Marathon had not been learnt" (Cook) and filled his army through the use of conscripted men-a problem in terms of language barriers, their motivation to fight. Xerxes possibly jeopardised the safety and/or economy of the Empire by stripping it of all able men-"ransacked all of Asia"-Hdt. He also didn't offer Athens and Sparta chance to medise, which may have prevented the war.

Xerxes can be seen as a strategic leader through his strategies and tactics at various battles in Greece. He used the strategy of a combined land and sea invasion-according to Bury and Meiggs, the "army [was] supported by the fleet" to provide it with protection, supplies and communication. At Thermopylae, Xerxes utilised the strength of his archers; according to Alan Lloyd "Persian archery was alarmingly accurate". With Spartan defeat, the Persians were able to continue their march southward into the Greek mainland. With his loss of ships at Artemisium, Xerxes reassessed his plan to divide the naval forces to attempt multiple attacks. Callender: "superb & careful strategist".

However, it is also evident he lacked military experience. This is apparent at Thermopylae where he didn't change his strategy of using his archers to kill the oncoming Greeks, until it was too late and the Greeks began to infiltrate their forces. At Artemisium and Salamis, his loss of men, resources and ships jeopardised his plans of conquering Greece, "without a fleet, the Peloponnese could not be conquered." (Cook) Xerxes had little experience in naval tactics so as a naval leader, he was useless. Troops were totally reliant on the navy for supplies, so Xerxes never took into consideration the question of how the troops would acquire supplies if the navy was destroyed. "With his fleet routed, Xerxes could not supply his large army since it depended on seaborne supplies which could now be intercepted." (O'Neill) Granger concludes of Xerxes' Grecian Campaigns that he was "ultimately, a military failure"

(Just for leadership) Xerxes can be seen as an effective administrator. This is how he appoints satraps of provinces who were responsible for maintaining peace, collecting imperial tax/tribute, conscription of troops and labourers. A positive image of Xerxes as an administrator is supported by cylinder seals found at Persepolis "I am not hot tempered, I hold firm control." An opposing view comes from TC Young who says Xerxes "paid too little attention to the bothersome details of administering the empire" where he spent a lot of time on the building program at Persepolis. Overall he was an effective leader, but to an extent he did have failings.

(Just for military career) The success of Xerxes' military career in the Greek campaign is evidenced by Dandamaev who says that despite the Greek opinion, "there is no doubt the Persians did not regard themselves as being defeated' since their objectives had been achieved;" Where they sacked Athens, in turn getting revenge.

However, the failure of his mission is evident in the large losses he suffered in 480-479, and despite having triumphed at Thermopylae; to the Greeks they had won as Leonidas sacrificed himself and his men just to delay the Persian forces so Athens could be evacuated.

### **Assess the achievements of Xerxes:**

- In the 5th Century BC Greek world he has a widespread presence, as he is widely discussed by Greek sources in their victory against the Persians (e.g. Herodotus and Aeschylus-in his plays). His defeat by the Greeks damaged his prestige in the Persian world but it didn't affect the empire in any major way, only the loss of men and no consequent revolts other than Ionia.
- He continued the stable rule of his father Darius 1 and maintained traditions like religious policy, administration, the building program which he continued and the economic stability-a development from Darius who introduced the Daric.
- FOREIGN POLICY: He successfully expanded the empire; Xerxes' foreign policy extended after the Greek campaign, Dandamaev suggests there is evidence to show that Xerxes expanded in the later part of his reign to take in the Saka people (east of Caspian Sea) and further east a region called Akuafaka; revealing he was successful as a leader in expansion.
- PREPARATIONS: He recruited a large conscripted army of over 200 000 men and navy of 1207 triremes; according to Herodotus, "the army was indeed far greater than any other in recorded history." To save the army time and prevent destruction of forces by sea storms, Xerxes had the Hellespont bridged and cut a canal through Mt Athos to enable efficient movement of troops from Asia to Europe "major achievements in engineering and organisation" (Ehrenburg).
- It can be seen by the Greeks that his campaign in Greece was a failure, but according to Dandamaev, despite the Greek opinion, "there is no doubt the Persians did not regard themselves as being defeated' since their objectives had been achieved;" (Dandamaev) Where they sacked Athens, in turn getting revenge.
- He successfully put down revolts in the empire in Egypt and Babylon→details "he sent an army against the Egyptian rebels and decisively crushed them"(Hdt)
- BUILDING PROGRAM: He further developed the building Program that Darius started, which expanded and developed Persepolis and Susa. Inscriptions provide an insight into the Great King's attitude towards building. "Much other good construction was built within this city Persepolis, which I built and which my father built. Whatever good construction is seen, all that by the favour of Ahuramazda we built"
- EMPIRE: 21 years of stable government and administration of the Persian Empire, seen through the fact that trade flourished and the economy was booming as evidenced by Egyptian Papyri (476) which provide a list of imports and exports which were plentiful. Also evidence from the Wadi Hammamat reveal how Xerxes allowed his empire to flourish especially in Egypt where implementation of such Persian technologies reveal how he was a fair King who wanted the best of his empire-an achievement in itself.
- Road network has survived to this day-important for administering his empire but still important to this day for trade.
- His loss of the war in the Greek eyes actually enhanced their reputation and arguably contributed to their cultural impact in the region-the radicalisation of democracy, the imperial policy of Pericles which led to the beautifying of Athens where the Parthenon was built.

## Assess the legacy of Xerxes:

- Physical: He further developed the building Program that Darius started, which expanded and developed Persepolis and Susa.-provides us with information about his life and reign, customs, values etc. Inscriptions provide an insight into the Great King's attitude towards building. "Whatever good construction is seen, all that by the favour of Ahuramazda we built" (Apadana Inscription). Persepolis is the "work of the son" (Dandamaev)
- Persepolis: Apadana reveals 23 subject nations giving tribute→ Xerxes as a powerful ruler. In Harem it reveals him fighting beasts→ Xerxes the way he wanted to be remembered-courageous.
- The canals and quants (irrigation works-Wadi Hammamat→ Persian technologies at the time survived to this day→ have been developed on e.g. drainage system in modern times), Naqsh I ruschca (tomb-burial practices).
- Non-Physical: Traditions→ he maintained religious, administrative and economic traditions of forefathers seen through building program (Continuing policies and ideologies of Darius) Religious traditions seen through Persepolis could have been a religious centre. Concepts (What a good King is, what does he do, look like, act, and involvements)-SACRAL KINGSHIP. His reputation, Institutions: (administrative) –Economic-maintaining Darius' Daric coin system and standardised weights and measure. The tax he imposed on his subjects is evidenced by Fortification texts and Behistun inscription-used in modern day times.
- Long Term: His Greek campaign he lost but "fulfilled his aims" (Dandamaev) → the effect of a perceived loss led to great reputation of Greeks-radicalisation of democracy, new developments in the Greek world-> the Golden age, philosophers, Imperial policy of Pericles→ beautifying of Athens, Parthenon, architecture, the arts in Athens which we have incorporated in the Western tradition. Remains of the empire reveal a lot about Persian society, Persian power and prestige in the modern world→ empire continued for another 150 years. Road system (2500km) from Suda to Sardis-messages relayed in less than 15 days-a system that is still present to this day "so skilfully this has been invented by the Persians" (Hdt). His maintenance of Darius' coin system-gold darics- Coin system used in modern times.
- Short Term: Conquered: added land to the empire (Macedonia, Thrace and according to Dandamaev, Akaufaka) – attempt at Greece but failed, Stays as King to continue the dynasty, He consolidated the empire (he reforms administration and temples, religious policy, keeps people in the empire and supports nations so they don't rebel or leave), No more rebellions after Egypt and Babylon: 21 years of stable government and administration of the Persian Empire, seen through the fact that trade flourished and the economy was booming as evidenced by Egyptian Papyri (476) which provide a list of imports and exports which were plentiful. Granger: "Ahiquar Scroll demonstrates that trade flourished in Egypt during Xerxes reign" After he made administrative adjustments to maintain the empire through hyparchs, satraps, Productive economy -the goods that tributary nations bring as seen on the gateway of Persepolis. Engineering feats "his achievements were glittering" (Hdt) "

## Impact and influence of Xerxes on his times:

### Impact on Persia:

- Defeat by Greeks damaged Persian prestige in the eyes of Greek and Persian Empire→REVEALED Persian Could be beaten in battle when they had a huge army. Defeat had no consequence for the empire→no major revolts as evidenced by a lack of evidence of any revolts.

- Although Xerxes' campaign to Greece was seen to be unsuccessful by the Greeks as the Persians lost many men in all the battles and never really added Greece to their empire; it can be seen that the Persians never considered it to be this way. This idea is brought up by Modern Historian Dandamaev who says that despite the Greek opinion, "the Persians did not regard themselves as being defeated since their objectives had been achieved" in punishing Athens.

### **Impact on Greece:**

- Victory for Greeks increased their pride and the Greek campaign became an inspiration by historians and playwrights like Aeschylus to write plays like "The Persians" which was very popular in Greece.
- The Greeks never destroyed the Persians→so Persians continued to play a part in Greek history for the next 150 years→Phillip and Alexander of Macedon used the Persian invasion and destruction of Athens as a pretext to invade the Persian empire.

### **The immediate consequences of his policies:**

- Religious: Most modern sources tell us Xerxes was religiously tolerant. According to modern historian Allen "Persian religious tolerance was ...a tactic of domination" He is saying that his tolerance could have served a political purpose-to gain support of his diverse empire. While most ancient sources tell us he wasn't when subject nations revolted e.g. Arrian reports: "[Alexander] marched in accordingly, and instructed the people to restore the temples which had been destroyed by Xerxes, in particular the temple of Bel, the one god held by the Babylonians in the greatest awe."
- Archaeological evidence disproves the ancient view that Xerxes was a harsh ruler, that he had a huge impact on subject nations. Papyrus from Egypt (476) provides a list of import and export duties which are proof that Egypt's economy was booming; instead of the view that he burnt down temples and was religiously intolerant to them after their revolt. Also, qanats found in excavations reveal introduction of Persian technology. So hence, Egypt was flourishing under Persian rule.
- Administrative: Xerxes administered the empire himself as evidenced by J.Hicks "The Empire derived its fundamental energy from the authority of the King himself." This began with a satrapy system –division of the empire into 23 administrative districts-satrapies, administered by a satrap (normally high ranking families or nobles e.g. Ariamenes satrap of Bactria) who was responsible for maintaining peace, collecting imperial tax/tribute, conscription of troops and labourers. Xerxes also relied on advisors like courtiers, nobles and a large bureaucracy of scribes to aid in decision making. A positive image of Xerxes as an administrator is supported by cylinder seals found at Persepolis "I am not hot tempered, I hold firm control." Xerxes also administrates through Economic Organisation. This is where he makes his subjects pay tax-satrapies are required to pay a fixed yearly amount in gold or silver as evidenced by the Behistun inscription. The Achaemenids also encouraged trade which was a major source of imperial wealth→ economy booming.
- The extent of his contribution to maintaining, shaping or changing the political, economic and/or religious structures of Persia. He maintained religious policy of accepting other religion except for the Daevas or demons. The economy was in good shape as the evidence tells us trade flourished seen in Fortification texts.

## **Significance of the Greek campaign-the consequences of expansion:**

- Also, despite their losses, the Persian failure of expansion didn't affect the empire in any major way as we see that trade flourished and the economy was booming as evidenced by Fortification Tablets and Egyptian Papyrus (476).
- Xerxes foreign policy extended after the Greek campaign, Dandamaev suggests there is evidence to show that Xerxes expanded in the later part of his reign to take in the Saka people (east of Caspian Sea) and further east a region called Akrafaka; revealing he was successful as a leader in expansion.
- Also influence of Greek perceived win-radicalisation of democracy-Pericles' imperial policy.

## **Ancient and modern interpretations of Xerxes' life and reign/ Images and representations:**

There are varying interpretations from the ancient and modern sources on Xerxes' life and reign-ranging from negative to positive.

The nature of the sources themselves must be taken into consideration where most of the ancient sources have an inherent bias against Xerxes being a Persian 'tyrant' against democracy as they were pro-Athenian. While modern sources are using the only available evidence either second hand from ancient sources or based on archaeological finds to interpret Xerxes life and reign. There are limited Persian sources→mostly archaeological.

### **His own Image:→ from inscriptions and reliefs**

- The king used the image to maintain control over his empire as the "King of Kings". Presented an image through the Apadana reliefs, and through his inscriptions, of his might as the ruler of a large Empire; appearing strong in order to control nobles and potential challengers to the throne. The rightful heir, upholder of the Truth (Daeva Inscription).
- He is larger than others in relief's→ power; and he emphasises his right to rule in inscriptions. Also, revealed fighting mythical beasts in Harem relief → Triumphant King-the way he wants people to see him as courageous.
- Archaeological evidence like Wadi Hammamat and qanats reveal him to be a great King allowing his empire to prosper under his rule with trade and economic activities. Good administrator (cylinder seals-"I am not hot tempered, I hold firm control.")
- Papyrus from Egypt (476) provides a list of import and export duties which are proof that Egypt's economy was booming after the revolt

### **Ancient:**

- Herodotus: Arrogant, ruthless and Brutal-This is demonstrated through the execution of the engineers of the bridge over the Hellespont "find Pythius' eldest son and cut him in half" Arrogant pride "he gave orders that the Hellespont should receive 33 lashes and have a pair of fetters thrown into it" Gullible for falling for Themistocles' deceit at Salamis. In believing the slave, Xerxes was set up in the narrow straits at Salamis where his large fleet were neutralised.

Also a good view of Xerxes: "glittering achievements" and remarks on the road system "so skilfully has this been invented by the Persians"

- Aeschylus: Depicted in his play 'The Persians' where Xerxes is portrayed as weak, impetuous where he says Atossa says "Xerxes whose rashness emptied Asia of its men". Also, his hubris which led to his downfall at Salamis according to Greeks. Depicted with "flailing arms" and tearing at his shirt-brutal.

### Modern:

#### Building

- Dandamaev: "the Persepolis we have long admired was the work of the son and not of Darius"
- O'Neil: "a weak ruler with little interest in, or aptitude for, military affairs who much preferred building activities."
- TC Young says Xerxes "paid too little attention to the bothersome details of administering the empire" where he spent a lot of time on the building program at Persepolis.

#### Military

- Dandamaev: Persians never considered Greek campaign a loss "as they had fulfilled their aims" – great military leader
- Granger: His Greek campaign was a failure on account of his skills or lacks of them "he was a military failure"
- Callender: Great prep for the Greek campaign - "superb strategist"( bridging Hellespont, and canal through Mt Athos)
- Ehrenburg: "major achievements in engineering and organisation"
- Cook: "Persian preparation at this time was first class"

#### Empire

- Hignett believes "he was not equal to his high position, which he owed to his birth and not to his merits"
- Burns: "if all we had was archaeological evidence, the Persian Empire was at its greatest in the reign of Xerxes"; Wadi Hammamat and quanats tell us economy was flourishing.
- Olmstead: "It is nonsense to view Xerxes' reign as the beginning of a decline. Xerxes added a province to the Empire in the east, east of Bactria; the Arakaufa people" → success of Xerxes as a ruler in expanding → archaeological evidence like Wadi Hammamat and quanats tell us economy was flourishing. Furthermore, with his rule and after putting down the Babylon and Egyptian Revolt, there is no evidence to suggest that there were any more revolts, → subject nations were looked after under his rule. Also, that Greek campaign had little effect on Persian Empire, implying Xerxes successfully held together his empire.

#### Xerxes' relationship with Persians and Non-Persians:

The nature of his relationships was largely dictated by his position as an absolute monarch of a large empire

## Prominent Persians:

- Mardonius: nephew and son-in-law of Darius, key advisor and general for Xerxes in 480-79 Invasion of Greece. "Mardonius was his evil genius" (Cook) Chief advocate of the Greek campaign (according to Herodotus) was the highest ranking of all of Xerxes' generals, remained in Greece to lead the campaign after Salamis and was killed at Plataea. He was for going to Greece, a key person who persuaded Xerxes to invade Greece. Controls Xerxes army in Greece when Xerxes returns to Asia.
- Atossa: Xerxes' mother-probably involved in the choice of Xerxes as heir to Darius 1. According to Herodotus she had "immense influence" during Xerxes' reign
- Darius 1: Xerxes' father, King of the Persian Empire before Xerxes. Unsuccessful campaign against Greece. He started the foundations at Persepolis and the Apadana but didn't build yet. "In a word, the Persepolis we have long admired was the work of the son and not of Darius." (Dandamaev) Makes a big impact on Xerxes' foreign policy as Xerxes finishes the plans that Darius started to re invade Greece. Darius selected Xerxes as the heir when he had a large choice. Darius started the coinage (Daric) and standardised weights etc. which Xerxes continued.
- Amestris: Xerxes' Queen, Daughter of Otanes, a high-ranking nobleman of the Persian court. Bearing him sons-heir; Mother to Artaxerxes.
- Artaxerxes: Xerxes' son who succeeded him in 465 and was implicated in the conspiracy to kills Xerxes. Once Xerxes is dead he takes the throne.
- Achaemenes: Xerxes' brother, appointed satrap of Egypt after the suppression of the revolt of 486BC. He was killed during a later revolt that broke out in 645-64BC at the end of Xerxes' reign. Advised and carried out Xerxes' orders in Egypt-administering Egypt for Xerxes as satrap-keeping Xerxes on the throne as he controls Egypt allowing Xerxes to stay as King.
- Masistes: Xerxes' brother, Satrap of Bactria, led an unsuccessful revolt against Xerxes; Killed during the revolt; It's suggested that the revolt occurred because Xerxes coveted Masistes wife.
- Megabyzus: Brother-in-law of Xerxes; Crushed revolt of Babylon early in Xerxes' reign. Makes sure Babylon is obedient to the empire; Assists Xerxes as consolidating his position as King. Advised Xerxes-in the decision making process. As general, carries out Xerxes' foreign policy.
- Artabanus: Xerxes' uncle, trusted advisor of Xerxes, acted as regent during invasion of Greece.

## Non-Persians:

- Demartus: Exiled Spartan King, military advisor to Xerxes during Greek campaign, advising Xerxes about Spartan Kingship. Attached himself to the Persian court; was greatly honoured by Darius and accompanied Xerxes on his Greek Campaign, offering valuable advice on local conditions.
- Artemisia: Ionian Queen from Halicarnassus who commanded five Ionian warships in the Greek campaign AND ADVISED Xerxes not to proceed with the attack at Salamis according to Herodotus "I think that you should yourself quit this country and leave Mardonius behind with the force he asks for".

- Themistocles: when ostracised sought asylum in Persian courts, honoured with title “king’s friend”.
- Pausanias: Xerxes negotiated with Spartan leader, and according to Thucydides Pausanias promised to deliver Greece to the Persian Empire in return for marriage with one of Xerxes’ daughters.

### **Building Program of Xerxes:**

- By the time Xerxes became king his predecessors had established a tradition of impressive building projects that had become a mark of effective kingship. The impression created by Xerxes’ inscriptions is that he was particularly active in using this tradition to generate an impression of himself as a remarkable king. His most significant building program was at Persepolis.
- Persepolis – Begun by Darius around 515BC and completed by Xerxes is one of the best ways to examine the ideology of Achaemenid kingship and the character of the Persian Empire.
- Inscriptions provide an insight into the Great King’s attitude towards building. “Much other good construction was built within this city Persepolis, which I built and which my father built. Whatever good construction is seen, all that by the favour of Ahuramazda we built”.
- The building program of a Persian king became a measure of his power, influence and importance.
- Granger suggests 3 reasons for Xerxes’ building activities: Religious function – Ahuramazda focus; Public works program- economic activity- huge workforce including women. Treasure and Fortification tablets provide evidence of this: Propaganda- Notice the Apadana reliefs; the peoples of the nations are all the same height, including the Persians. Only the king is bigger. The reliefs are static; the Empire is at peace, obeying the King’s word; some subject nations wear weapons on the reliefs indicating trust within the empire.
- The majestic splendour of buildings like the Apadana and the Hall of 100 Columns indicates that Xerxes and the other kings who contributed to the structure wished to demonstrate both the might of the Persian Kingship and the power and wealth of the empire.
- TC Young says Xerxes “paid too little attention to the bothersome details of administering the empire” where he spent a lot of time on the building program at Persepolis. This reveals the importance of it in his rule; a tradition that Xerxes had to continue.
- Burns: “if all we had was archaeological evidence, the Persian empire was at its greatest in the reign of Xerxes.
- Apadana: The largest building on the Terrace at Persepolis; 36 Columns, nearly 20 metres high, decorated with ornamental bell bases and capitals of two kneeling animals. Reliefs on the stairway depict the 23 subject nations paying tribute to Darius 1. Xerxes dedicated the work to Ahuramazda.-->reveals his high status as King, recognised by foreigners.
- Xerxes’ Palace: Double staircase, courtyard, central columned hall; Xerxes’ Central Hall grander than Darius’. King followed by attendants with fly whisk and parasol.
- Harem: Made up of many identical apartments, porch and courtyard. There are two reliefs of king being followed by 2 attendants and two images of the king fighting; in one a monster & the other a lion.-->reveals the way he wanted to be seen- as a king with prowess and power.

- **Central Building:** Between Apadana and Throne Hall, features three stone doorways with representations of Ahuramazda above 28 figures representing the empire. It consists of central hall, stairways, smaller rooms and reliefs of the King and dignitaries.
- **Throne HALL:** AKA Hall of a 100 Columns. Possible started by Xerxes and completed by his son Artaxerxes. Detailed reliefs depict King slaying monsters-> portray him as a hero.

### **How Xerxes became King:**

Xerxes was the grandson of Cyrus 2 (Cyrus the Great), founder of the Persian Empire, also the son of Darius 1 who wasn't a direct descendant of Cyrus-only through marriage with Cyrus' daughter Atossa was his kingship legitimised.

While Darius was in preparation for a third campaign to punish the Greeks, a revolt in Egypt had to be suppressed, but before he could do so the law required that, being King, he choose a successor before setting out. The options were Xerxes, Artabazanes and Ariamenes and sources give evidences as to why Xerxes was chosen over the others.

Herodotus gives two reasons for Xerxes as the heir to the throne: Firstly, the exiled Spartan King Demartus advised Darius that it was a Spartan custom for the son born "afterwards [The Kings] succession" to be King after Darius, hence, Xerxes was chosen by Darius as his heir. Secondly, that Atossa had power and influence over Darius being the daughter of Cyrus the great.

J.M Cook supports Herodotus' view, believing that Xerxes became King due to his bloodlines; where his mother was Atossa, the daughter of Cyrus the Great, so therefore Xerxes is a direct descendant of Cyrus while Darius was just a nobleman whom gained Kingship through marrying Cyrus the Great's daughters. Briant disagrees with this view, divulging that Atossa had nothing to do with it. He highlights Xerxes' patrilineal descent, being the "Son of Darius" (Harem Inscription), not Atossa.

The Harem inscription at Persepolis reveals Xerxes' account of the events of his kingship; that it was Ahuramazda's will that he was King: "by the grace of Ahuramazda I became King on my father's throne."

Granger believes Xerxes demonstrated more potential to be an effective King than all his other brothers.

### **Family background and early career of Xerxes:**

**FAMILY** – He is the grandson of Cyrus 2, founder of the Persian Empire and the son of Darius 1, who had succeeded Cyrus in 522BC after the death of Cyrus' son Cambyses2. Darius married Cyrus' daughter Atossa and the rest of his daughters in order to strengthen his claim to the kingship. The Behistun Inscription also reveals Darius' account of how he was able to claim the throne – that Ahuramazda chose him. There is limited evidence of Xerxes' early career, most comes from Herodotus who says "The period of a boy's education is between the ages of five and twenty and they are taught three things only: to ride, to use the bow, and to speak the truth." Succession to Kingship...Darius sick, Xerxes crowned 2 months later; he was direct descendant of Cyrus through mother Atossa hence chosen as heir. An inscription dating to the beginning of Xerxes' reign reveals the power struggle: "Other sons of Darius there were, (but)-thus unto Ahuramazda was the desire-Darius my father made me the greatest after himself" Role of Demartus in influencing Darius to choose Xerxes based on Spartan tradition of Kingship (not first born, but the first born after the reign of Darius)

**EARLY CAREER** – Put down revolts as soon as he came into power: Babylon and Egypt→strong leader (no evidence of revolts after Egypt and Babylon, THEREFORE A GOOD LEADER)

He gave his brother Ariamenes satrapy of Bactria. His 10 year preparations for the Greek Campaign: setting up supply depots, bridging the Hellespont “major achievements in engineering and organisation” (Ehrenburg) He used diplomacy, a demand for earth and water according to Herodotus which actually saved lives. He also “ransacked all of Asia” (Hdt) with conscripted men for his troops to Greece.

Administrative policy: dividing the satrapy at Babylon into two, reducing their political status, redistributing land and implementing Persian technologies into Egypt e.g. qanats.

His religious tolerance which is backed up by Modern sources like Briant where religious intolerance interpreted by modern sources “holds no water “ as he took pharonic titles and donated to temples according to Granger.

Kent - “Trained am I both with hands and feet. As a horseman I am a good horseman. As a bowman I am a good bowman both afoot and on horseback”

Xenophon “...he was remarkable for his fondness for horses and being able to manage them extremely well.” Good at military arts “archery and spear throwing” He was eager to learn “most willing to practise”