

Babylon.) He next examines the romances of Parsondes, a masculine hero imprisoned in female dress and forced to work as a singing girl before achieving revenge on the man who brought him low, and Stryngaios, a warrior driven to unmanly grief and suicide by his untempered passion for the warlike Scythian queen Zarinaia; the inversion theme again unites a range of material that seems unique to Ctesias while drawing on elements of Mesopotamian religious and social traditions. The survey closes with the “historical saga” of the fifth-century Persian aristocrat Megabyzus, abused by his unfaithful Achaemenid wife and driven to rebellion by his king’s dishonorable actions, who eventually returned from exile disguised as a leper—thereby displaying dramatic reversals of fortune and social station rather than gender per se.

In a brief conclusion, Waters summarizes his view of Ctesias as a storyteller who engaged in the “Hellenized rendering of Mesopotamian and Iranian traditions, coupled with his own artful ingenuity,” an “appropriation” facilitated by immersion in the multicultural Achaemenid court atmosphere (p. 103). This compelling assessment sheds new light on the underappreciated importance of the Ctesian legacy. Removed from scrutiny in terms of the accuracy of its political and military narrative, the *Persika* can serve as a rich source for the late Achaemenid era as a period of intellectual transmission between the societies of ancient western Asia and the eastern Mediterranean, prefiguring the literary and cultural interactions of the Hellenistic world.

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<https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2020.1715186>

**Persian Interventions: The Achaemenid Empire, Athens and Sparta, 450-386 BCE**, John O. Hyland, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017, ISBN 9781421423708 (hbk), pp. xii + 257.

In 479 BCE Xerxes lost his European territories and much of coastal Anatolia. Just under a century later Artaxerxes II recovered Anatolia. This book is a new reading of Persian imperial engagement with the Aegean frontier in the intervening period. The enterprise is colored by new or reevaluated non-Greek evidence. But the *histoire événementielle* comes almost entirely from Greek sources—Thucydides, Xenophon, Diodorus and Plutarch plus (occasionally) non-literary epigraphic and numismatic documents (e.g. the SUN coinage is linked to Cyrus’ support of Lysander, Sidon group IV coins to the 396 fleet deployment)—and for the most part the story-line with which Hyland works is not markedly different from that familiar to *aficionados* of the period. What is new is the interpretation put upon the story.

Hyland's reading has six principal features. (1) The king was fully involved in decision-making: the Anatolo-Aegean front was not so unimportant that it was dealt with fumblingly and without central guidance—though distractions might occur (notably disturbances in Media, Egypt and Cyprus). (2) Artaxerxes I forsook recovery of Ionian tribute because trade increased in the eastern Mediterranean in the post-Persian War era and the consequent fiscal profit outweighed the loss of tribute and made recovering it a pointless expense. (3) Darius ordered recovery of Ionian tribute when Athens began to tax trade in the Aegean (instead of collecting tribute) and this threatened the fiscal profitability of eastern Mediterranean trade; and he joined the Peloponnesian War when Athens' defeat in Sicily suggested that its hold on Western Anatolia could be removed relatively easily. (4) He and his successor then consistently sought to repossess western Anatolia until this was achieved a quarter-century later in 387/386 BCE. (5) Neither espoused a defensive balancing strategy intended to keep both Athens and Sparta weak: aborted mobilization of the Phoenician fleet in 411 BCE was due to tension with the king's Spartan allies embodied in a riot at Miletus; delays in achieving intended aims were due to the complex politico-military circumstances, antipathy to more than minimal deployment of cash or other resources ("instincts for financial conservation": p. 168), an attraction to "imperial methods that avoided military entanglement" (p. 10), and concomitant over-optimism about enemy weakness. (6) There was an ideological perspective, the kings' aspirations and achievements being framed in terms of a world view that espoused universal empire, maintenance of order, curbing of chaos at the empire's edges, benefaction to deserving subjects and protection of the weak.

Points 1–3 reflect the impact of non-Greek sources. Documents in the Persepolis Fortification archive relating to the *pirradazis* (express message service), have sensitized Hyland to the potential for rapid communication over immense distances: it was *possible* for Tissaphernes and the king to exchange messages quickly, so Hyland presumes that they regularly did. Greek sources, by contrast, suggest no such thing and see consultation with the king as entailing huge delays. The Egyptian customs document has sensitized Hyland to day-to-day tax collection in a context explicitly involving "Ionians." In view of the flood of Athenian silver coinage to the eastern Mediterranean from the mid-fifth century onwards, Hyland infers that the fiscal effects of Aegean–Levantine trade were a major component in policy-making. Again no Greek source comes close to suggesting any such thing. Both arguments are speculative, but Hyland is right to put them on the table.

The idea of defensive balancing (point 5) was proposed by Alcibiades to Tissaphernes in 412/411 BCE in specific circumstances (where it suited Alcibiades' interests). Tissaphernes later recommended it (as Alcibiades' advice) to Cyrus in circumstances where it might have suited Tissaphernes' interests. (The recommendation was ignored.) The idea never surfaces again, not even after Cnidus, when once again both Athens and Sparta were in play. In fact it only has any purchase as historical analysis because Thucydides endorses it as the explanation for non-deployment of the Phoenician fleet in 411 BCE. But even if we accepted that, there are no other contexts where we need to postulate it to explain the phenomena (Hyland's con-

trary remarks on pp. 6–7 involve a *suggestio falsi*), and Hyland himself, of course, has another explanation for the fate of the Phoenician fleet. In short, by headlining the strategy as an interpretative model to be deprecated, Hyland arguably gives it more of the oxygen of publicity than it deserves.

But if Thucydides' acceptance of balancing strategy is to be deplored, Persian preference for "financial conservation" brings Hyland close to the judgment of another Greek historian: the author of *Hellenica Oxyrhynca* noted the king's unwillingness to spend money (speaking of the Deceleian War but in the context of a comparable situation in 395/394 BCE), and there can be no student of 412–386 BCE who has not thought that Darius II and Artaxerxes II might have achieved their goals more quickly and neatly by investing more money upfront—especially as the temporary success represented by Athens' defeat in 404 was achieved precisely by a step-change increase in expenditure. Thucydides saw Cyrus' role as paymaster as a *sine qua non* for Athens' defeat and Hyland demonstrates that the last phase of Cyrus' involvement in 405 is when spending finally went nuclear. Hyland wants us to see Persian policy as purposively rational, but the financial history to this point—and after 400 too—is arguably a spectacle of mismanagement. Moreover Hyland is clear that expenditure went nuclear because of Cyrus' private agenda, not because the system had an outburst of good sense. (It was so far from having such an outburst that it failed to grasp and eliminate the destabilizing threat posed by Cyrus.) In normal circumstances there was a structural problem: satraps had goals but did not want to risk royal disapproval by requesting funds; so they tried to get things done with their own funds, but, being averse to lavish spending, ended up creating the impression of lack of commitment to a decisive outcome. In this respect Hyland's account is only revisionist in insisting that the impression is wrong. He is certainly not claiming that Persia did not make mistakes—the concluding chapter is very clear on this—but he *is* claiming that the consistent element in Persian policy is expenditure minimization, not defensive balancing.

But the fact that someone makes bad choices in attempting to achieve something does not prove they are not attempting to achieve it. Hyland's view is that from 413 to 386 BCE Darius II and Artaxerxes II displayed a consistent desire to recover control of Western Anatolia (point 4), and the messy phenomena are probably as consonant with that view as with any other. Of course the bar is arguably low if a king can will a desired end in a practical vacuum (Darius' initial policy change in 413/412) and if the means to achieve the end can include a sudden switch from Sparta to Athens as the beneficiary client (412/411: the Alcibiades negotiations), compounding tensions with Sparta by withdrawing a Phoenician fleet without explanation (411), doing nothing and hoping that the enemy will go away (400–397), and deliberately exposing Hellespontine Phrygia to attack to protect Lydia and/or provide time for fleet preparation (398, 395), but the proposition that there is a consistent will is not an empty one: on the contrary, it provides a specific (if somber) perspective from which to view the way the Achaemenid state conducted its affairs.

Hyland's reading could be framed entirely in hard-headedly rational terms. So, how does ideology (point 6) fit in? Ideological terms of reference are near-explicit in

Spartan-Persian treaty drafts in a diplomatically inopportune claim to *all* ancestral lands or the arguably superfluous affirmation that “the king may decide about his own land as he wishes.” The King’s Peace rescript can also be seen this way: although the king is ceding rights over territory outside Asia, he phrases this as a beneficent grant of autonomy (accompanied by a beneficent gift of islands to Athens), not a surrender of power; the guarantee clause affirms a right of military action in an undefined space which must include non-Asiatic locations and/but is formally unbounded; and the whole is cast in terms of justice (“Artaxerxes thinks it just that ...”). The deal was done for practical reasons, but the packaging claims a moral high ground and affirms unlimited power: there *is* something of the world of royal inscriptions here and it perhaps invites one to adduce ideological considerations elsewhere to explain what might otherwise seem strange. Pharnabazus’ deployment of a war-fleet around the Peloponnese in 393 exceeded what was needed to secure Anatolia and continue engagement with the Corinthian War (which could have been done by sending money): it also symbolically undid the events of 480–479 and demonstrated the Great King’s reach—almost a foretaste of the implications of the King’s Peace as articulated above. For Isocrates the Peace of Callias was a simple Persian defeat. For Hyland Artaxerxes used success in Cyprus and Egypt to lever a deal in which he graciously rewarded the Athenians with Western Anatolia in return for frontier stability and acknowledgement of Persian power. Historians will in any case suspect that Artaxerxes tried to put a good construction on what was *prima facie* surrender, and Hyland is entitled to observe that the ideology of good order and benefaction provided the king with a suitable means of doing so. Spin-offs from this reading include the idea that Pissuthnes’ interferences in Samos or Notium reaffirmed royal power, agency and defense of the weak without endangering the status quo and that Darius II undertook recovery of Anatolian tribute because the Athenians had spurned his predecessor’s gift of it to them. (They were also supporting the rebel Amorges—a more practical issue, perhaps, but also susceptible of ideological spin: for rebels and those who gave them succor were agents of the Lie.)

Sometimes application of the ideological template seems arguable: Hyland’s view that the king would have been happy to do a quasi-King’s Peace deal in 393/392, with Athens as beneficiary client, but was thwarted by Tiribazus’ suspicions about Athenian motives, seems improbable. Granted the notion of a client beneficiary, such a beneficiary had to be one with either an absolute interest in Greek Anatolia (Athens, Peace of Callias)—a model not on the table—or no such interest (Sparta, King’s Peace). Athens was an implausible beneficiary of the latter sort—that defeat in 404 meant it would never again assemble the material or psychological capacity to harbor hegemonic aspirations in Anatolia and would be content with client status was unreasonably optimistic just after Cnidus (whatever the case in the 370s and later)—and so was Sparta until the interventionist agenda of Agesilaus and Lysander was abandoned. What was crucial in 400–387 was achieving the requisite military lever: only then could an ideological posture be adopted, and instability exported from Anatolia to mainland Greece and the Aegean.

But the ideological perspective is certainly another thing that the author is entitled to put on the table, and the mixture of pragmatics and presentation has a ring of truth to it. Later kings should not be thought to have forgotten about the world view created by Darius I—and the engagement of Artaxerxes II with it is independently suggested by the conjunction between his attested promotion of the cult of Anahita (not least in Western Anatolia) and the novel inclusion of Anahita's name in the conservative formulaire repertoire of royal inscriptions.

Hyland's book is not meant to be an exhaustive treatment of a century of Achaemenid-Greek history. It contains nice incidental observations (e.g. that, popular though Xenophon may say he was, Cyrus took tribute from Greek cities held by mercenary garrisons or that Tissaphernes traveled remarkable distances around Western Anatolia in 412–411) and interesting conjectures (e.g. Artaphernes deliberately drew attention to himself on his journey to Sparta in 425/424 in order to put diplomatic pressure on Athens), as well as some loose ends (e.g. what was the real truth about Cyrus' reaction to Callicratidas?) or unexplored possibilities (did Timocrates masquerade as a trader on his clandestine trip to bribe politicians in Greece?). But, above all, it deserves welcome for the heuristic power of its broad theses.

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<https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2020.1735909>

**Lives of the Prophets: The Illustrations to Hafiz-i Abru's "Assembly of Chronicles,"** Mohamad Reza Ghiasian, Leiden: Brill, 2018, ISBN 978-90-04-37722-6 (hbk), 343 pp.

For many, Persian painting evokes fine manuscripts of poetic texts with brilliant illustrations—whether epics such as the *Shahnama*, whose complex images depict valiant heroes battling demons, or lyric tales such as Nizami's *Khamsa*, with romantic scenes of lovers swooning in verdant gardens. This informative monograph, volume 16 in Brill's Studies in Persian Cultural History, addresses a lesser known side of the field: prose chronicles illustrated in a simpler, more linear style. A reworking of the author's PhD dissertation at the University of Bamberg, it focuses on the so-called "Assembly of Chronicles," compiled by the Timurid court historian Hafiz-i Abru (d. 1430), and on the illustrations in it depicting the prophets.

The book opens with a brief introduction (pp. 1–5) that succinctly summarizes the contents. The first chapter (pp. 6–24) outlines the political, religious, and cultural contexts in which the text was assembled. Although based mainly on secondary sources, it provides a readable summary of the time and sets the focus for Chapter