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The World in an Indian Silver Bowl: Local Crafts and Global Interactions in Nineteenth Century Bombay

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KEY NAMES

Achaemenids. The Achaemenid Persian empire (550–330 BCE) was the largest that the ancient world had seen, extending from Anatolia and Egypt across western Asia to northern India and Central Asia. It was founded by Cyrus II ("the Great"), king of Persia (r. 559–530 BCE).

His successor Darius I ("the Great;" r. 522–486 BCE), added northwestern India and consolidated Aegean conquests into the Achaemenid realm. He initiated two major building projects: royal buildings at Susa and the new dynastic center of Persepolis. Darius' son Xerxes (r. 486–465 BCE) attempted to force the mainland Greeks to acknowledge Persian power, but Sparta and Athens refused, and which resulted in the defeat of the Spartans at the battle of Thermopylae and the sack of Athens in 480 BCE.

The Achaemenids faced final defeat under Darius III (r. 336–330 BCE), who met the armies of Alexander III of Macedon ("the Great"). Ultimately Darius III was murdered by one of his own generals, and Alexander claimed the Persian empire.

Sasanians. The Sasanian dynasty (224–650 CE), founded by Ardashir I (r. 224–241), saw themselves as the successors of the Achaemenid Persians. During the reign of Shapur I (r. 241–272), the central government was strengthened, coinage was reformed, and Zoroastrianism was made the state religion.

The expansion of Sasanian power in the West brought conflict with Rome. In 260 A.D., Shapur I took the Roman emperor Valerian prisoner in a battle near Edessa. Thereafter, the defense of Rome's eastern frontier was left to the ruler of Palmyra, a caravan city in Syria. By the end of Shapur I's reign, the Sasanian empire stretched from the River Euphrates to the River Indus and included modern-day Armenia and Georgia.

Over the next 400 years, the Sasanian dynasty faced loss of territory, subsequent recovery, and new losses; conflicts with the Kushans, Hephthalite Huns, Arabs, Romans and

Byzantines, as well as internal conflicts. These weakened Iran, and Arab forces, united under Islam, defeated the Sasanian armies in 642. The last Sasanian ruler, Yazdgard III, died in 651.

Parsi (alt. Zoroastrian, Zarthosti; "Parsee" in 19th century sources). An ethnoreligious community, followers of the prophet Zarathustra (Zoroaster in western sources; fl. approx. 1000 BCE). Originally from Iran, the Paris migrated to India at some time between the eighth and tenth centuries and settled in parts of Gujarat. By the nineteenth century, and during the British colonial period, the Paris community gained high economic and political visibility. It was centered in Bombay (Mumbai), where they made major contributions to commerce, industry, philanthropy, and to the city's urban landscape. Other major centers for the Parsi community were Surat, Calcutta, Karachi, Rangoon. Although an international diasporic community today, Mumbai remains the center for India's leading Parsi families, such as Tata, Godrej, and others.

SUGGESTED READINGS

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John R. Hinnells and Alan Williams, eds. *Parsis in India and the diaspora* (London; New York: Routledge, 2007)

Talinn Grigor. *The Persian revival the imperialism of the copy in Iranian and Parsi architecture* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2021)

Ali Mousavi. *Persepolis: Discovery and afterlife of a world wonder* (Boston: De Gruyter, 2012)

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