

**Lecture 5: Assyria, Neo-Babylonian and Persian Empires**

**WC 52-71 PP 57-64: Annals of Ashurnasirpal and Herodotus**

**Chronology:**

**Rise of Persia**

ca. 1000	Assyria flexes its influence
883-605	Neo-Assyrian Empire
– 883-59	Assurnasirpal II founder
605-559	Neo-Babylonian Empire
559	Cyrus becomes prince of Persians
549-331	Persian Empire
– 559-30	Cyrus the Great
– 522-486	Darius
– 486-65	Xerxes
– 336-330	Darius III

**Star Terms:**

- Cyrus the Great
- Darius
- Xerxes
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**Geog. Terms:**

- Persian Empire
- Thermopylae pass

**A. Ishtar Gate, Built by Nebuchadnezzar, c. 575 BCE, currently at the Pergamum Museum, Berlin**

Dedicated to the Babylonian goddess Ishtar, the gate was constructed using glazed brick with alternating rows of bas-relief mušḫuššu (dragons) and aurochs.

The roof and doors of the gate were of cedar, according to the dedication plaque. Through the gate ran the Processional Way, which was lined with walls covered in lions on glazed bricks (about 120 of them).

Statues of the deities were paraded through the gate and down the Processional Way each year during the New Year's celebration.



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**B: Behistun Inscription: Bas relief carving in granite, modern Iran**

Funerary monument for Darius the Great; demonstrates wisdom of ruler and submission of people; Ahura-Mazda



By 480 BCE, the **Persians** ruled what was then the largest known empire in history. It even included Egypt. They divided this empire into **satrapies**, or provinces. Each of these was ruled by a governor, or **satrap**, who was directly responsible to the king. In 518 BCE, **Darius I** (ruled 421-486 BCE), the greatest of the **Achaemenid dynasty** of ancient Persia (now Iran), began to build a capital at Parsa, or **Persepolis**, as the Greeks called it.... As we know from inscriptions and accounting records construction there continued for more than two hundred years.