

# HISTORICAL WOMEN ♀

📅 26 OCTOBER, 2019

POWERFUL WOMEN OF PERSIA

WELCOME



## INTRODUCTION

This section is dedicated to some of the most powerful women of Persia that never received the historical recognition they deserve due to passage of time and accidents of history. Women in Persia were very honored and revered, they often held very important & influential positions in the Courthouse, Ministries, Military, State and Treasury Department, and other official administrations. The significant role of women in Ancient Persia both horrified and fascinated the ancient Greek and Roman male-dominated societies. The fortification tablets at the [Ruins of Persepolis](#) also reveals that men and women were represented in identical professions and that they *received equal payments* as skilled laborers and that gender was not a criterion at all (unlike our modern world). New mothers and pregnant women even received wages far above those of their male co-workers in order to show appreciation. Women enjoyed a high level of gender equality before the imposition of the dark, backward, and pernicious Abrahamic ideologies (*Judaism*, *Christianity*, and especially *Islam*) after the barbaric Arab invasion upon Persia which destroyed our Equal rights, Freedom of speech and Freedom of religion and replaced those factors with central primitive brutal government, prejudice and slavery. There is much evidence that the principles of [Zoroastrianism](#) lay the core foundation to the first [Declaration of Human Rights](#) in the Persian Empire set by [Cyrus the Great](#) since the rulers of Persia were [Zoroastrians](#) and relatively liberal and progressive.

Persian women held more power than what our perception of history gives them credit for in the ancient world. It is essential for Women to know and understand their glorious history of the past, because without it, they will not be able to plant their place in the future. Our so called civilized modern world still has a long way to go in terms of gender equality. Freedom & Equality does not come free and no one will ever deliver it to us in a silver platter. We must build relationships that are unimpeded by [gender-based distinctions and discrimination](#).



ⓘ The historical events below are arranged in chronological date order: **(oldest to newest)**.

... Selection



🔗 [QUEENS.HTM](#)



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## MANDANA

 600 → 559 B.C.E.


QUEEN ► MOTHER OF CYRUS THE GREAT

(BEFORE CURRENT ERA)

*Mandana* (Mandane) was a Median princess, daughter of the mighty King Astyages and later, the Queen consort of *Cambyses of Anshan* and mother of Cyrus the Great, (ruler of Persia's Achaemenid Dynasty and the writer of the first declaration of human rights, named: Cyrus Cylinder). *Queen Mandana* is a central character in legends describing Cyrus the great's early years. According to ancient greek historian Herodotus, after the birth of Cyrus, King Astyages had a strange dream that his 'Magi Harpagus to get rid of the boy. Harpagus, morally unable to do so hid the child with a shepherd named *Mitridates*. Cyrus grew up without knowing that he came from a Royal Bloodline. According to this legend, Cyrus would eventually defy his grandfather, King Astyages, leading to a great war between them; as the dream had forecast. There are references to Mandana's death as 559 B.C.E. in the history books. King Darius the Great named his daughter 'Mandana' after her.

♀ The name '*Mandana*' means: '*Eternal*' in Persian.



The Declaration of Human Rights written by Cyrus the Great has been hailed as the first charter of human rights, predating the Magna Carta  by nearly two millenniums (~1700 years) and in 1971 the United Nations was published translation of it in all the official U.N. languages. It is now kept in the British Museum and it is no exaggeration to say that it is one of the most precious historical records of the world. Also a replica of the Cyrus Charter of Human Rights is kept at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.


▼ The son of Mandana: King of the Kings, Emperor Cyrus the Great of Persia



▼ Ruins of Persepolis: Eagle-Headed Griffin with a body of a Lion Guarding the Entrance



## CASSANDANE SHAHBANU

 575 → 519 B.C.E.

NOBLEWOMAN ▶ QUEEN ▶ EMPRESS

(BEFORE CURRENT ERA)

*Cassandane Shahbanu* was an Achaemenid Persian noblewoman, the daughter of Pharnaspes and the beloved wife of Cyrus the Great. She bore four children: Cambyses II (who succeeded his father and conquered Egypt), Smerdis (Bardiya) who also reigned as the king of Persia for a short time and a mighty daughter named Atusa. Princess Atusa later played an important role in Achaemenid royal house. Cyrus loved his Queen Cassandane dearly and when she died the entire empire observed a great mourning. Cyrus never recovered from the grief of losing her and stayed inactive for nearly a decade after her death. ***Behind every great man there's a great woman and vice versa!*** There is a report in the chronicle of Nabonidus that, when the king's wife died, there was a longlasting public mourning in Persia along with all the twenty-five nations that were part of the empire. Queen Cassandane was buried in the tower called Zendaan-e Solaymaan at Pasargadae Persia.

♀ The name '*Cassandane*' means: '**Creation of Glory**' in Old Persian and '**She who entangles men**' in Greek.  
(Alternative spellings are: 'Kassandra' and 'Κασσανδάνης', and it later evolved to 'Cassandra')

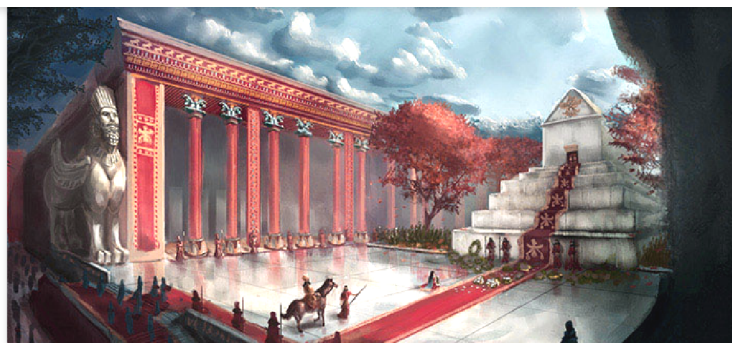




✓ Emperor Cyrus the Great with his beloved Shahbanu, Empress Cassandane



✓ Pasargadae - The Palace of Peace and the Tomb of Cyrus the Great of Persia



✓ Pasargadae - Tomb of Cyrus the Great on the occasion of the 2500<sup>th</sup> anniversary




✓ Ruins of Ancient Persepolis - The ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Persian Empire



**PANTEA ARTESHBOD** 

COMMANDER OF THE ELITE FORCE

 570 → 525 B.C.E.

(BEFORE CURRENT ERA)

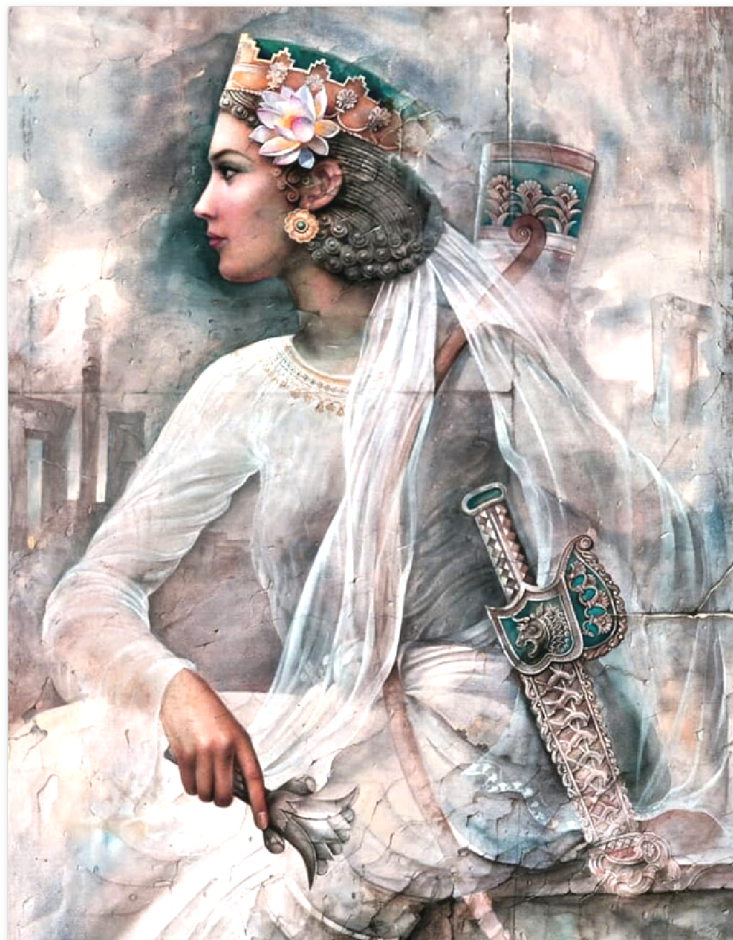


was one of the all-time greatest Persian commanders during the reign of Cyrus the Great (557 - 530 B.C.E.). She was the wife of General Aryasb (Achaemenid Arteshbod). She played an important role in keeping law & order in Babylonia after the conquest of the Neo-Babylonian Empire in 547 B.C.E. by Cyrus the Great. Commander Pantea truly was an important and sensitive military commander whose presence on the ancient battlefield made a difference to the outcome of the battle and played a part in building up the tapestry of ancient military Achievement. Pantea and General Aryasb were the commanders of the elite force of Persian soldiers who performed the dual roles of both Imperial Guard and standing army during the Persian Empire's expansion. They formed the elite core of the Persian army in times of war and the royal guard in times of peace in Persian Achaemenid Empire. In Persian lore, Pantea was the most beautiful and toughest woman in all of Asia and kept her face covered with an intimidating Battle Mask during war to protect her face but also to prevent men from falling in love with her.

♀ The name '**Pantea**' means: '**Strong**' in Old Persian and '**all the gods**' or '**all the flowers**' in Greek.

The elite force were known as **The Immortals** because they were kept constantly at a strength of exactly 10,000 men, every killed or seriously wounded member was immediately replaced. To insure loyalty, the original members of this 'immortal' fighting machine were Persians by bloodline and trained from early childhood (age 7+). Not everyone could become one of the 10,000 since the training was very rigorous and hard both physically and psychologically. They also followed a strict adherence to the religion of the prophet Zarathustra and his teachings in order to respect and value life. **The Immortals** were mainly used during the last stages of each battle as reinforcement by the order of the King of Kings to shock the enemies strategically.

▼ Arteshbod Pantea - Commander of the Persian 'Immortal' Army





✓ Reconstruction of Persepolis: Main Stairways to Terrace and Gates of Persepolis






✓ Ruins of Persepolis: Tripylon Staircase, showing the alignment of the Immortals




✓ Historical Artifact - Golden Achaemenid Dagger from 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. in the national museum





 Video: Gordafarid , one of the heroines in the *Shahnameh*  (Epic of Kings)

## ATUSA SHAHBANU

 550 → 475 B.C.E.

PRINCESS ▶ DIRECTOR OF PALACE AFFAIRS ▶ EMPRESS

(BEFORE CURRENT ERA)

*Atusa Shahbanu* (Atossa) was the Empress of the Persian Achaemenid Empire, wife of the mighty Persian Achaemenid King Darius the Great (522–486 B.C.E.), daughter of Cyrus the Great and Queen Cassandane, a half-sister of Cambyses II and the mother of Xerxes the Great (Khashayar Shah). Ancient Greek historians of the era remarks that the formidable Atusa '*had all the power*'. Atusa, had a great authority in the Achaemenid royal house and her marriage with Darius I is suggested to be because of her power and influence and also the fact that she was a direct descendent of Cyrus the Great. When her mother Cassandane died all the nations of the Persian empire observed a great mourning that lasted for months. *Atusa* was the director of palace affairs. She had a saying in deciding who would be send on military missions. She made sure that '*Xerxes*' became the successor of Emperor '*Darius the Great*' and not his eldest son '*Artobazanes*'. The invention of old Persian script is attributed to her. According to the legends Atusa also had a very strong women's intuition and sixth sense which the King strongly admired and followed. Atusa is well mentioned in the Persepolis Fortification Tablets, an administrative archive from Persepolis. She was very wealthy with her own administration and massive personal army. *Atusa & Darius the Great* followed in the footsteps of *Cyrus the Great*, and respected the culture, language and religion of subdued nations and considered all nations equal in terms of their rights.

♀ The name '*Atusa*' means: '*Beautiful body*' (Alternative spellings are: Atoosa, Atousa, or Atossa.)

✓ Emperor Darius the Great (Darius I) with his mighty Queen, Atusa Shahbanu

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▼ Historical Artifact - Bust of Atossa from 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. in national museum of Iran

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▼ Royal Residences of the Queen

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▼ Emperor Darius the Great in Persepolis entrance of Gateway of All Nations

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▼ Bas-relief of Darius the Great's Nowruz Audience, known as 'Treasury Relief'

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▼ Reconstruction of Persepolis, the royal ceremonial capital of the Persian Empire

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▼ Naghsh-e Rostam - Tomb of Emperor Darius the Great and Atusa Shahbanu

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Read the Testament of Darius the Great to his son and successor Emperor Xerxes the Great.



LIEUTENANT ▸ COMMANDER

(BEFORE CURRENT ERA)

*Lieutenant Artunis* was the Commander of the Achaemenid Persian Army and the daughter of Artebaz, Sepahbod (Lieutenant General) during the reign of Darius the Great. She was a mighty brave woman.

♀ The name '*Artunis*' means: '*True and faithful*'

✓ Lieutenant Artunis discussing battle strategy with one of her female soldiers

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✓ Reconstruction of Persepolis: The East Portal of the Apadana Palace of Darius the Great

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✓ The largest and most complex building in Persepolis was the Audience Hall

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✓ Ruins of Persepolis: A Guarding Lion capital statue (Lion is a zoroastrian symbol of Fire)


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## PHAIDYME SHAHBANU

🕒 -535 → 490 B.C.E.

NOBLEWOMAN ▸ QUEEN ▸ EMPRESS

(BEFORE CURRENT ERA)

*Phaidyme Shahbanu* was an Achaemenid Queen and the daughter of the Persian noble Otanes, one of the seven conspirators who helped Darius the Great to assume the throne. She was the wife of king Smerdis (Bardya) who was allegedly killed and replaced with a false pretender to the throne (Gaumata). According to the Greek Historians she was the first to realize there is something wrong. In bed she feels for the absent ears of her husband while he is making love to her in the dark; and so begins the legendary story about the overthrow of the 'Magi ' (Court Magician) who pretends to be the king by the seven aristocrats.

♀ The name '*Phaidyme*' is a Hellenized form of an unidentified Old Persian name. (Alternative spellings: Greek: Φαιδύμη)

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▼ Queen Phaidyme with the Court Magician; The false pretender to the throne...

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▼ Reconstruction of Persepolis, the royal ceremonial capital of the Persian Empire

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▼ Reconstruction of Persepolis: Tachara palace: Private palace of Darius the Great

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▼ Ruins of Persepolis: Palace of Persian King of Kings at Dawn

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## IRDABAMA

🕒 520 → 470 B.C.E.

HISTORICAL BUSINESSWOMAN

(BEFORE CURRENT ERA)

**Irdabama** was a highly successful Persian businesswoman who lived during the reign of Emperor Xerxes the Great (518–465 B.C.E.). She was a major formidable landowner and controlled a huge workforce. She ran her own wine and grain businesses. The fortification tablets at Persepolis contain information about her wealth, workshops and hundreds of workers of both sexes. She had her own seal which meant great prestige and power. She was of the noble class, but possessed far more political and economic power than most members of the nobility. Irdabama proved that possession of enormous property, wealth and good social standing was not limited to Royal women and that everything was possible with hard work and determination. Her non-Royal ranks with considerable estate, influence and autonomy. She is also well mentioned in international history books. Irdabama was just one of the many successful and powerful businesswomen in the ancient Persian World. Most of them had the power to use their own seals and letterheads indicating not only their autonomy, but also the existence of an equal social system which accepted the authority and independence of women.

very own business and land. They were not allowed even to make suggestions. Also, women belonging to wealthy families didn't work. Work was reserved thus for slaves and for the lower classes according to Roman and Greek historians. In the ancient Greece, women were considered to be inferior species. The rights of women decreased immensely with the spread of Greco-Roman culture and laws, as well as the spread of Abrahamic religions such as: (*Judaism, Christianity*, and especially *Islam*). [continue »](#)

♀ The name '*Irdabama*' is a Hellenized form of an unidentified Old Persian name.

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✓ Persians exported/traded wine as far away as southern Europe, Egypt, India and China.

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✓ Historical Artifact - Golden Achaemenid Rhyton from 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. in national museum of Iran

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✓ Historical Artifact - Extremely rare Ancient Persian Gold Cup from 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E.

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## AMESTRIS SHAHBANU

🕒 510 → 460 B.C.E.

NOBLEWOMAN ▶ QUEEN ▶ EMPRESS

(BEFORE CURRENT ERA)

*Amestris Shahbanu* (Alternative spellings in Greek: 'Ἀμῆστρις') was the beautiful daughter of Otanes (A Persian nobleman mentioned in the Histories of Herodotus as a defender of the idea of democracy,) and the early wife of Emperor Xerxes the Great (prior to Esther), mother of King Artaxerxes and Queen of Persia. When Darius died in 486 BC, Amestris was married to the crown prince, Xerxes. She was also an Achaemenid military Commander and her mother was a Arteshbod General of the Imperial Army. Amestris was known to have been poorly regarded by biased ancient Greek historians. She had the reputation to be more bloodthirsty than any Persian king had ever been against those who broke the law, in order to set a precedent for the importance of the rule of law in the empire. Queen Amestris was a great and very strict law-giver. Worth to mention is that after her death King Darius II of Persia named his daughter Amestris after her in the year 413 B.C.E.

♀ The name '*Amestris*' means: '*Friend, companion*' (Comes from Old Persian 'Amāstrī' with the meaning 'Strong woman')

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▼ Gateway to all Nations and the entrance into the ancient city of Persepolis

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▼ Ruins of Persepolis: Gateway to all Nations and the entrance into the ancient city

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## GRAND ADMIRAL ARTEMISIA

 -500 → 450 B.C.E.

GRAND ADMIRAL OF THE PERSIAN NAVY

(BEFORE CURRENT ERA)

**Grand Admiral Artemisia** became the ruler of Halicarnassius (A Greek City-State and a colony of Persian Empire). She ruled under the overlordship of the Persian Emperor Xerxes I (Khashayar Shah). She was the legendary Grand Admiral and leader of the Persian Navy, She was Xerxes' great love. A great powerful, independent and intelligent woman who won many battles during the Achaemenid Dynasty Era. When the Persian King Xerxes went to war against Greece in 480 B.C.E, **Artemisia led her powerful ships** and helped Xerxes defeat the Greeks in the beginning phases of naval battle of Salamis. Ancient Greek historian Herodotus (Father of History) writes, apparently quite embarrassed: *'It seems to me a marvel that she - a woman - should have taken part in the campaign against Greece.'* *The Athenians resented women in arms, says Herodotus.* The Greeks offered a reward of 10,000 drachmas for capturing Artemisia's head, but no one succeeded in winning the prize. Understand that back then Persia was the sole superpower of the globe and Greece consisted of tens of separated and scattered city-states, each played their own tunes and they were busy fighting each other all the time. Some of these city-states were pro Persia, some were anti Persia, some were neutral and some were even parts of Persia as protectorates! Admiral Artemisia became a living legend and a role model for all the women in the Empire and the known civilized World.

♀ The name '**Artemisia**' means: '**The great speaker of truth**'

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...and captured. She made an oath to get Xerxes, the Great King of Persia. She was nuts about him. There was something about Xerxes that drove her crazy! Xerxes was a great military mind himself. Xerxes was also a great flirt, a playboy, Ladies' man, and a very arrogant aristocrat.. Capturing his heart was a great task to do for Artemisia. To win Xerxes' heart she had to impress him militaristically! Xerxes had seen it all, he had women throwing themselves at him from all parts of his empire from Chinese border in the East and Aristocrats from Ariana and Bakhtar Satrapies, all the way to Greek colonies of Persian Empire in the West and Europe to the Northern borders of Africa, Egypt in south! She eventually impressed Xerxes by her brave Navy campaigns and bravery in battlefield. She gave naval support to Xerxes and Mardoniuses forces. She fought in the battle like a man. she showed military genius and ingenuity. She impressed the hell out of Xerxes. By doing this, she for sure captured his heart and definitely accomplished getting a high position in Persian government. Xerxes had never seen a woman quite like her! Artemisia became Xerxes' lover, actually his greatest love until that day!

▼ Grand Admiral Artemisia discussing battle strategy with a Royal Navy officer

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Yet Xerxes never married her, funny how Xerxes later ended up marrying Esther his Jewish Princess! Yes, no matter how much this great love affair between Xerxes and Artemisia dragged on, yet they never got married! It was diny for Esther to come along in the years ahead and to steal Xerxes' heart again! Grand Admiral Artemisia wanted a very high position and command in Persian CourtHouse to establish her absolute power and authority in the Persian Achaemenid Court. Well, Persian Empire being the only Super Power in the known world back then, she wanted to be an important part of it! Artemisia saw life as a large battlefield!

▼ Grand Admiral Artemisia and Emperor Xerxes the Great

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▼ Reconstruction of Persepolis: Private Residence of the King of Kings

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## GRECO-PERSIAN WARS

In their wars with Persia (490–479 B.C.E.), the *Greek city-states* were never a threat to the Persian heartland. The Greeks had been carrying out terrorist attacks on Persian holdings for years. They had attacked Persian cities, set fire to Persian temples, disrupted key trade routes, and pirated merchant ships crossing the Bosphorus. They incited rebellions inside Persian provinces, but perhaps most abhorrent to the Persians was the ease by which the Greeks broke their treaties and betrayed Persia's trust. Rather than resort to violence Persia tried to keep the Greeks in check by financially supporting Greek politicians who were 'pro-Persian,' But what finally triggered Persia's wrath was an act rarely mentioned in the West, though well documented, even by the

...many, even to the ordinary parts of Sardis trapping most of its population in a ring of fire, *many killing hundreds thousands of innocent civilians.*

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It is important to note that Persia did *not* want to conquer Greece, the empire was already over stretched spanning three continents and over twenty-five nations. Many Ionian Greeks were already parts of Persia as protectorates and Persians respected Greek philosophers and had many of them in their employ. Also the Greek city-states were constantly busy fighting each other all the time and the Persian Kings saw that region as very unstable and left them alone. Persia mainly only attacked Greece as response to terrorist attacks on Persian holdings (*Similar to what USA did after 9/11*).

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## PERSIA'S WRATH

*Darius the Great* left the task of *punishing the Athenians* for their interference in the Ionian Revolt and for the burning of the city of Sardis to his Son. Emperor Xerxes prepared his expedition with 10,000 of his elite warriors (The Immortals) along with a force at around 50,000 combatants. Many smaller Greek states, moreover, also took the side of the Persians. After the Persian victory at the Battle of Thermopylae, Athens was abandoned and King Xerxes decided to burn some of the Government Headquarters and Palaces to the ground as revenge and warning for all the previous Greek terrorist attacks on Persian holdings and civilian population. Xerxes later rebuilt some of the damaged civilian areas of the city and sent a message to the Athenian citizens and told them that they could return to their homes, which they did. Soon after Xerxes left Greece for good. That shows how humane the Persian empire was and how much they respected civilians, despite the fact that the Athenians wiped out the entire Persian city of Sardis and all its civilian population. What Persia did not achieve through war, it obtained through diplomacy.

✓ Emperor Xerxes the Great commanding the Persian Navy at the Battle of Salamis

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✓ Ruins of Persepolis: Lion vs Bull at the Grand Entry: Dual entrance to the Palace

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## CONSPIRACY AGAINST HISTORY

*The Battle of Thermopylae* was of course written by the classical Greek author, *Herodotus*. His book, *'The Histories'* became part of Western folklore only recently. It was not until about 1850 that America embraced Herodotus as the leading authority on Persian history. Before 1850, however, the West had a very favorable and true impression of the humane Federal Persian Empire. That's because the West's main source for Persian history was the Bible and the Cyropaedia in which both glorified the




...and to liberate themselves from their own monarchies, a major campaign began, around the mid 17th century, to promote democracy throughout the rest of Europe, and Herodotus was the perfect propaganda tool and was quickly ushered in as the 'Father of History'. Around 1850, his 'Battle of Thermopylae' came to symbolize the West's struggle for democracy against the powerful forces of Persia's monarchy. The story is easy to buy into: 300 brave Spartan barbarians saved Western democracy from 3 million evil Persians! But aside from the fanciful numbers, this whimsical tale has far graver consequences than a mere bias account of history. The 'Battle of Thermopylae' has been the single most powerful wedge, which has divided East and West for over 2 millennia. In a time when East and West should be reconciling their differences, along comes the movie '300' to drive that wedge even deeper.

*The Spartans* were extremely cruel men who annually killed for sport! And declared war on the defenseless Helots  (Greek slaves) that lived around them. The entire civilized ancient world viewed them as bloodthirsty barbarians and nothing else. Herodotus is accepted blindly by virtually all Western demographics. Yet we know that slavery was an integral cornerstone of Greek society. Democracy may well be the best form of government in the modern age. But what makes America great is not so much democracy as it is its Bill Of Rights. And this is exactly what made Persia Great. Democracy can often lead to tyranny by the majority as was the case in democratic Athens, where women, slaves and foreigners did not have the right to vote. In monarchic Persia, however, women enjoyed a level of gender equality unmatched even to this day, and slavery was not practiced. The fact is, Persia's monarchy was more free than the Athenian 'democracy', all because of Persia's Bill of Human Rights.

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...History is unfourtunatley always written by the victors and the usual Greek anachronism often corrupts historical facts about the Persian Empire and the Greco-Persian Wars.

## ESTHER

 492 → 460 B.C.E.

BIBLICAL ▸ JEWISH PRINCESS ▸ QUEEN

(BEFORE CURRENT ERA)

*Esther (born 'Hadassah')* was the wife of King Xerxes the Great and Persia's first Jewish queen and heroine of the Biblical Book of Esther which is named after her and recounts how a Persian king helped protect the Israelite nation from annihilation. In many ways, Esther's story reads like a 'Cinderella tale'. Many modern scholars are concerned over Esther's historical accuracy since it is hard to distinguish authentic history from fiction in biblical texts. According to the Biblical Book of Esther King Xerxes of Persia held a one hundred and eighty-day feast in Susa to display the vast wealth of his empire to the world and the splendour and glory of his majesty. When the king's heart was 'merry with wine,' the king ordered his seven chamberlains to summon Queen Vashti to come before him and his guests wearing her royal crown, in order to display her beauty. She refused to come since the Susa feast had lasted for nearly six months and she did not want to embarrass herself in front of all the drunken royal guests all over again, thus she left the palace at night. Furious at her refusal, the King asked his wise men and the seven princes of Persia for advice, they advised the King to search for a new queen. The King followed this advice and banished the rebellious Queen Vashti and then began searching for a new queen by means of a large-scale nationwide beauty & talent contest.

her adoptive father and guardian. For 12 months each woman underwent beauty treatments and Educational Importance of Royal Manners and Etiquettes in the Harem. They were then given anything they wanted or wished for to take with them from the Harem to the King's palace. Most women chose luxurious colourful dresses, wore heavy makeup and carried as much gold and diamond jewellery as they could carry in order to catch the Kings Eyes and attention. When it was time for Esther to go to the king's palace, she chose the simplest white dress she could find, wore minimum makeup and jewellery. Xerxes liked Esther more than he did any of the other young and beautiful women. None of them pleased him as much as she did, and right away he fell in love with her natural beauty, simplicity, sincerity and intellect and crowned her to be his wife and queen. In honor of Esther he gave a big dinner for his leaders and officials. Then he declared a holiday everywhere in his vast kingdom along with all the twenty-five countries that were part of his empire and gave expensive gifts to everyone. Both Esther and her adoptive father Mordecai became favourites in the Persian court.

♀ The name '**Esther**' comes from the Persian word: '**star**'

▼ Shahbanu Esther Welcomed by Emperor Xerxes the Great

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▼ Xerxes the Great with Shahbanu Queen Esther under the Lion in the Palace







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## PARYSATIS

🕒 -450 → 390 B.C.E.

PRINCESS ▶ QUEEN

(BEFORE CURRENT ERA)

**Parysatis** (Pari Satis) was the illegitimate daughter of Artaxerxes I , Emperor of Persia, half-sister of Xerxes II  and the wife of King Darius the Second . When her husband died, she supported her younger son Prince Cyrus  who was also a general. Cyrus was defeated in the Battle of Cunaxa, and she blamed the satrap Tissaphernes  for his death and took vengeance upon the slayer of her favorite son. Whilst King Artaxerxes wanted to eliminate his brother for betraying him, Parysatis interfered successfully and restored order and peace with her own army (The Persian queens had large private estates and personal armies). **Worth to mention is that the Asteroid 888 Parysatis  is named after her.**

♀ The name '**Pari**' means: '**Angel-like**'

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✓ Imperial Army's hall of honour Ports (also called 'Hundred-Columns Palace') in Persepolis

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✓ Ruins of Persepolis: Winged Human Faced Lion guardian


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## SISYGAMBIS

 -400 → 330 B.C.E.

PRINCESS ▶ QUEEN

(BEFORE CURRENT ERA)

*Sisygambis* (Sissy Cambis) was the Mother of Darius the Third , whose reign was ended during the wars of Alexander the Great. She was a remarkable Achaemenid woman. At the Battle of Issus (333 BC), Darius's army was routed and the Persian king fled the field, leaving his extended family, including his mother, his wife Stateira I, his children, and many others to the mercy of Alexander. When the Persian army's Scythian cavalry broke through Alexander's forces to reach them, she allegedly refused to celebrate what appeared at first to be Persian victory since she could never forgive her son Darius for abandoning his family. After she was captured by Alexander she became devoted to him, and Alexander referred to her as 'mother' and she became the Second Adoptive Mother of Alexander.

In January 334 B.C.E., The king of Macedonia: **Alexander**, Invaded Persia and began a series of campaigns that lasted ten years. Alexander broke the power of Persia in a series of decisive battles. He subsequently overthrew the Persian King Darius III and conquered the Achaemenid Empire in its entirety. Alexander was an admirer of Persian Kings and especially Cyrus the Great. He conquered Persia but the Persian culture conquered him. He married with the Persian Princess Roxana and ordered all his generals and 10,000 of his soldiers to follow suit in a mass Persian wedding. Alexander tried to emulate the Persian court customs and attempted to create a new culture, a mixture of both *Persian and Hellenistic*.

♀ The name '*Sissy*' means: '**Fortunate**'

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▼ Reconstruction of Apadana Palace - The audience hall in Persepolis

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▼ The ruins of Persepolis at Dawn




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## YOUTAB ARYOBARZAN

 -360 → 330 B.C.E.

NOBLEWOMAN ▶ COMMANDER

(BEFORE CURRENT ERA)

*Youtab Aryobarzan* also spelled as *Ario Barzan* (meaning 'Exalting the Aryans') was an Achaemenid Persian noblewoman, brave warrior and the sister of the legendary Persian Hero, General Ariobarzanes of Persis  also known as *Ariobarzanes the Brave* (in Ancient Greek: Ἀριοβαρζάνης). She commanded part of the Persian Army and stood side by side with her brother who led a last stand of the outnumbered Persian forces at the *Persian Gates* near Persepolis at the Battle of the Persian Gate  in the winter of 330 B.C.E. against the invading Hellenic League and successfully ambushed Alexander's army, inflicting heavy casualties which held back the Macedonian army for a month. There are also historical accounts that an Iranian shepherd led Alexander's forces around the Persian defenses, just as a local Greek showed the Persian forces a secret path around the pass at the Battle of Thermopylae  150 years prior...

♀ The name '*Youtab*' means: '*Unique*'

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▼ An artistic reconstruction of General *Ario Barzan* and his sister *Youtab*

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✓ **Image below;** Iranian Youth Enduring legacy of Aryobarzan at the city of Yasooj (Southern Iran) and form a human chain around the statue of Aryobarzan in early July 2011 to prevent its destruction by the extreme religious right.

...

Alexander and his Army also plundered Persia, he ordered the execution of many Persians, allowed his troops to indulge themselves in plunder and rape and, in a drunken rage, set torch and destroyed Persepolis, the magnificent palace complex of the kings in revenge for all the Persian-Greek wars many centuries before and also because he was not yet the sole ruler of the Persian Empire, and it was too dangerous to leave the enormous treasures behind, where his enemies could recapture them. When Alexander conquered the Persians, he burned many of the grand buildings and libraries in Persepolis and destroyed or stole many of its royal treasures. The ancient painting below is showing Alexander's troops burning and looting the palaces in Persepolis.

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✓ Alexander and the Greek Seleucids Burning & Plundering Persepolis in Persia

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Alexander paid tribute to Cyrus the Great at his tomb. This shows how much Emperor Cyrus was respected, even in the eyes of his fierce enemies. When Alexander returned several years later and saw the Ruins of Persepolis, he regretted his act deeply.

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## ROXANA

🕒 340 → 310 B.C.E.

NOBLEWOMAN ▶ PRINCESS ▶ QUEEN

(BEFORE CURRENT ERA)

**Roxana** (Roxanne) was the Persian princess of Bactria and the daughter of a nobleman named Oxyartes. She married the King of Macedonia: Alexander when he professed his love for her in the fortress around 327 B.C.E. Roxana bravely accompanied him on his campaign in India in 326 B.C.E. She bore him a posthumous son called Alexander IV Aegus, after Alexander's sudden death. Roxana and her son became victims of the political intrigues of the collapse of the Alexandrian Empire. They were protected by Alexander's mother, Olympias, in Macedon, but her assassination in 316 B.C.E. allowed Cassander to seek kingship. Since Alexander IV Aegus was the legitimate heir to the Alexandrian empire, Cassander ordered him and Roxana assassinated around 309 B.C.E. This is a factual based portrait and the historically accurate Roxanna.

♀ The name '**Roxana**' means: '**The dawn and luminous beauty**' (in both Persian and Bactrian).

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**Alexander past away in 323 B.C.E.** Although a masterful general, he lacked administrative skills. Shortly after his death, his empire was divided among his contesting generals. An important legacy of his conquest of Persia was the introduction of the Persian imperial practices into the West. Many of these practices particularly those relating to state administration and the rule of law were later adopted by the Roman Empire.

■■■

**The Seleucid Dynasty** was established by one of Alexander's generals. After Alexander's conquest, Persia fell under a foreign occupying force. The subsequent Seleucid Empire was obviously not Persian, but Greek. They did not arrive with the intent of evolving Persian culture, but rather to dominate it, use it, and overwhelm it with another culture: Greek. Some of the results were positive, in so much as Greek culture is as rich as ours and has much to offer. Nevertheless, since it set out to overwhelm and subjugate Persian culture instead of simply enriching its foundations, it can be viewed only as a foreign occupation.





In 247 B.C.E. (*87 years after the invasion*), the Persians gradually defeated the invaders. The Parthians (Ashkanian), a tribal kingdom from northeastern Persia of the coastal areas broke the Macedonian dynasty, gradually defeated the Greek Seleucids and consolidated their control over all of Persia and they remained true to the spirit and culture of Persia, and did their best to make positive contributions.

#### ▼ The Persian Parthian Empire



The Greco-Persian wars and Alexander's victories proved that light-armed troops could not stop heavy, well-trained, and brilliantly led infantry of the type of hoplites or phalanx. These could only be encountered with even more heavily armed and highly professional cavalry causing disorder in the massed ranks and then attacking them on vulnerable points with bowshots capable of piercing armour and lances effective against shields. This lesson went home with the Parthians who in ousting the Seleucids from Persia formed their own professional armies and taking into consideration of what was needed against their enemies. Their victory over the Romans in 53 B.C.E. elevated the Parthian Empire into a *superpower* of their era. [continue »](#)

#### ▼ Parthian Commander - The Legendary General Surena of Persia




## THE AMAZONS

 5<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY B.C.E.

FEMALE WARRIORS AND COMMANDERS

(BEFORE CURRENT ERA)

*The Amazons* - One of the areas that have received the least amount of attention by international scholarship is the role of women warriors of ancient Persia. The role of ancient Persian female warriors can be traced back several millennia. The women warriors, known as 'Amazons' by the ancient Greeks, were typical of such fighters who prevailed in Iran's north (modern Gilan, Mazandaran, Gorgan) and northwest (modern Azarbaijan in Iran) as early as the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. or earlier. There have been numerous finds in the gravesites of ancient North-Iranic warriors known as the Scythians  (Saka in Persian) and their Sarmatian (or Ard-Alan) successors. The ancient burial mounds have often yielded the remains of women warriors who were buried alongside their swords, shields and other war equipments. These burial mounds have been discovered in various forms fall the way into the Caucasus and Iran (to the north and northwest).

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▼ A reconstruction of the north-Iranian Saka or Scythians  in battle.


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**The Central-Asian steppe** has been the home of iranic nomad tribes for millenniums. The earliest mention of the iranic Scythians is in Assyrian records dating to the reign of Sargon II (prior to 713 B.C.E.). The Scythians were diverse groups of militaristic Iranic pastoralists and their language belongs to the Iranian group (Eastern Iranian language family). The current province of 'Sistan' in today's Iran is historically known as 'Sakestan' which means 'The land of Saks' (Birthplace of the Scythians). continue »

▼ Nomadic and sedentary (Imperial) Iranic Peoples in 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E.

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## SURA

 -213 → 235 C.E.

A STRATEGICAL AND MILITARY GENIUS

(CURRENT ERA)

**Sura** was one of the Greatest Heroines of Persian History, A strategical and Military Genius during the Parthian dynasty. She was the daughter of Ardavan the Fifth, the last King of the Parthian Empire (Ashkanid Empire). She is mentioned in the history books as her father's right hand. Sura had the rank of: Ashkanid's General, Sepahbod (Lieutenant General). Although she was not as tactical in the battlefield as the legendary General Surena (who was her role model), she was a great respected Lieutenant General on her own. Her main tactics was to not charge into the enemy line before weakening and exhausting them first. She was unfortunate to live during the decline of the Parthian empire due to centuries of Roman-attacks, major internal revolts and instability. continue »

She had a grudge against King Ardashir because on 225 C.E. Ardashir (Son of Babak) went to a great war against her father (Ardavan V) and killed him in the war. All she experienced during her short life-span was war, death and misery. Her soldiers were the only friends that she ever had. May her great spirit rest in peace.


♀ The name '**Sura**' means: '**Flower face**'

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▼ Parthian Elite Cataphracts known as the 'Ashkanian Savaran' (247 B.C.E. – 224 C.E.)

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## AZADOKHT SHAHBANU

 -220 → 260 C.E.

QUEEN ▶ EMPRESS

(CURRENT ERA)

**Azadokht Shahbanu** was the Queen of the Persian Sassanid Empire and the wise wife of Shapur the Great, they established **Jondi Shahpur university**, a major center of higher learning. Azadokht was not a military woman but she was very skilled with her sword. Persia were constantly in war with the Roman Empire for many centuries and the Roman army had never seen women soldiers in war fighting so bravely and brutally next to male soldiers and valiantly defending the empire. During the Sassanid dynasty many of the Persian soldiers captured by Romans were women who were fighting along with the men. Rome was a brutal empire with her economy based on slavery, POWs and built on blood.

The Great **King Shahpur** invaded **Roman Empire territory** in the years (253–260 C.E.) with the goal to reestablish the borders of the old Persian empire and also as a revenge for all the previous centuries of Roman–Persian wars. After the Roman army was defeated and besieged by the Persian forces, King Shahpur took Emperor Valerian and the entire Roman army prisoner as a lesson to never attack Persia again! He was victorious over three Roman emperors during his reign: **Valerianus**, **Gordianus III** and **Philip**. The Roman army was defeated several times and captured in its entirety by the Persian forces; for the first time in Rome's military history their emperors was taken prisoner. As such, these battles are generally viewed as one of the worst disasters in Roman military history. This in turn forced the Romans to quickly negotiating peace with the Sassanid Persians and they started to pay heavy taxes each time they approached near Sassanid territory in order to avoid unnecessary conflicts.

♀ The name '**Azadokht**' means: '**Free girl**'

...

The ancient Painting below is showing the Surrender of Roms Emperor Valerian and Roman Senator to Shapur I the Great King of Persia (on horse-top). Emperor Valerian kneels and begs for mercy from King Shahpur of Persia while the Female Persian cavalry officer (left) is guarding along with nobleman of the Suren clan (with tall 'beaked' hat). **continue »**

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The ancient illustration below (angus mcbride) is showing the fatal wounding of the roman emperor Julian during a ambush of Sassanid Persian Elite Warriors during the Battle of Samarra. Here you can clearly see the Golden-Armored War Horse and Elephants in Action causing panic and disorder in Roman army-ranks.

▽ Sassanid Persian Elite Warriors vs. the Roman Army (Battle of Samarra)

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\* Roman emperors always said that in order to Rule the World and acquiring new lands and control over the Silk Road you have to conquer Persia first (known to the ancient world as 'The wealthiest empire under the sun'). The Romans also wrongly believed that two superpowers could never coexist peacefully and therefore their main goal was to conquer and destroy Persia but they never succeeded despite of centuries of wars and instead lost many wars that weakened their own empire and in the end left both empires very vulnerable against internal revolts and outside threat. The Romans tried to re-write history by calling great civilized and historical nations that they invaded and colonised (Greece, Egypt etc.) along with the entire Non-Roman world for 'Barbarians' when in fact it was the other way around. Persians and Greeks viewed the Romans as the true bloodthirsty Barbarians of their era. [continue »](#)

- ▽ The Silk Road (6,500 km): The loaction of Persia and the richness of its vast land was one of the many reasons for all the unnecessary Roman-Persian wars that lasted for nearly 700 years (54 B.C.E. – 629 C.E.).


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▽ Sassanid Capital - Ctesiphon - Royal Palace Entrance

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ZENON 

ROYAL COURT DANCER

 -360 → 400 C.E.

(CURRENT ERA)

King's, and dancing appeared in the Persian mystic court dances. The only survivor in Persian dance in its existing condition, which has survived throughout the centuries. Dancing was an advanced, protected art form during many dynasties of the Persian Empire. Greek texts, detailed descriptions for different forms of Persian dancing, fire dance, sword dance even horse dance (dancing while horseback).

♀ The name '**Zenon**' means: '**God-like**'

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The Persian exotic dancing traditions has still survived to the present day of Iran and the most beautiful women in Persia are devoted to the profession of dancing; the transparency of their shift, which is the only covering they use to conceal their persons, the exquisite symmetry of their forms, their apparent agitation, and the licentiousness of their verses, are so many incentives to a passion which requires more philosophy than the Persians possess to restrain. In the 1950's and 60's, Persian classical dance began a revival but the decline in the monarchy in 1979 was paralleled by a decline in the support and status of dancers. Classical Persian dance today continues to evolve in private, combining strength, flexibility, musicality, and art, into what could be considered the epitome of classical Persian dance.

*The Persian classical dance is not a dead art, frozen in time and endlessly repeated, but one that is both rich in heritage, and capable of adapting and incorporating elements from outside its tradition...*

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## ASPAS

🕒 -380 → 430 C.E.

PRINCESS ▸ COMMANDER OF THE PERSIAN POLICE FORCE

(CURRENT ERA)

**Princess Aspas** was a Commander of the Persian Sassanid police force and a daughter of Emperor Ardeshir the Second (The tenth Sassanid King of Persia).

♀ The name '**Aspas**' means: '**Guard of strength**'

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✓ A Silver-Armored Sassanid City Guard (Police) Cavalry at Ctesiphon (Sassanid Capital)

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The Persian Sassanid High Command often channeled invading forces into 'kill zones' and destroyed them by deploying Heavily Armored Savaran units (Elite cavalry). The right figure is a female warrior who is a local governess (Paygospanan-Banu). ▾

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## PARIN

🕒 490 → 540 C.E.

PRINCESS ▸ COUNSELOR OF THE PERSIAN COURTHOUSE

(CURRENT ERA)

*Princess Parin* was a Persian Sassanid politician, daughter of Emperor Kavadh I (Qobad). She was the counselor of the Persian Courthouse and a confident female politician who mastered the art and practice of conducting negotiations between representatives of states in order to prevent unnecessary conflicts between Roman/Byzantine Empire and Persia.

♀ The name '*Parin*' means: '*Same as an angel*'

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## ZAND SHAHBANU

🕒 -510 → 560 C.E.

COUNSELOR OF THE PERSIAN COURTHOUSE ▸ EMPRESS

(CURRENT ERA)


*Zand* Shahbanu was the Queen of Persia and the mighty Wife of King Khosrow Anushirvan: ruled 531–579 C.E. (The most illustrious of the Sassanid Rulers) and the niece of General Bahram Chubin. She was also the counselor of the Persian courthouse, extremely intelligent and confident lady. The last holdout of Sassanid Persia was in the east, and it is to this little studied part of the world that scholars need next to approach, for it seems certain that the small states of Central Asia, too, were part of the ancient Persian world, and their role in bringing Persian influences to China and to Russia should not be forgotten.

♀ The name '*Zand*' means: '*Precious*'





## SHIRIN SHAHBANU

 -570 → 628 C.E.

CHRISTIAN PRINCESS ▶ QUEEN ▶ EMPRESS


(CURRENT ERA)

*Shirin Shahbanu* was the Queen of the Persian Sassanid Empire and the wife of the mighty King Khosrow II (590–628 C.E.) whose military exploits extended the empire to its furthest extent and conquered much Byzantine empire territory. Shirin was a christian princess who eventually consents to marry King Khosrow after several romantic and heroic episodes, including his rescue of her from a lion. Their historical love story has been further romanticized by Persian scholars. During his reign, King Khosrow Parviz built several magnificent palaces in the Kermanshah Province (west of Iran) and named them after his queen, Shirin; hence the city got its name from there and is now called 'Qasr-e Shirin', literary meaning 'Palace of Shirin'.

♀ The name '*Shirin*' means: '*Sense of sweetness*'



## PURANDOKHT

 590 → 632 C.E.

SOLE RULER, MONARCH OF PERSIA

(CURRENT ERA)

*Empress Purandokht* (Buran) was the twenty-sixth Sassanid monarch of Persia, reigning from 629 to 632. She was the daughter of emperor Khosrow II and the older sister of Azarmidokht. Her father was overthrown and killed in 628 C.E. by a group of members of the nobility which ushered in a period of instability in the empire. When Purandokht ascended to the throne she attempted to quickly bring stability to the empire. This stability was brought about by a peace treaty with the Byzantine Empire, the revitalization of the empire through the implementation of justice, reconstruction of the infrastructure, lowering of taxes, and minting coins. She was committed to revive the memory and prestige of her father, during whose reign the Sasanian Empire had grown to its largest territorial extent. She was largely unsuccessful in her attempts to restore the power of the central authority which was weakened considerably by civil wars, and resigned.

♀ The name '*Puran-dokht*' means: '*Beautiful-girl*'


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## TURANDOKHT

🕒 -605 → 633 C.E.

PRINCESS ▶ AN ICON OF NOBILITY AND STATURE

(CURRENT ERA)

*Turandokht* was the beautiful Princess of Persia during the Sassanid dynasty era and the youngest daughter of King Khosrow Parviz. The legend and fairy tale of Princess Turandokht (Turandot) is very famous in Europe and it was taken from the Persian collection of stories called: The Book of One Thousand and One Nights (Hezar o-yek shab), she became an icon of nobility and stature. The Europeans changed the nationalities of the historical characters but other than that everything else is intact and true to the original. Turan  is the ancient Persian name for Central Asia which used to be part of the Persian Empire. The original Turanians are the Tuirya Iranian people of the Avesta age (1737 B.C.E.).

♀ The name '*Turandokht*' means: '*Turanian girl*' with 'dokht' being a contraction for 'Dokhtar' in Persian (meaning 'Daughter').

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## AZARMIDOKHT

🕒 600 → 631 C.E.

SOLE RULER, MONARCH OF PERSIA

(CURRENT ERA)

*Empress Azarmidokht* was the younger daughter of King Khosrow Parviz. She was the twenty-seventh Sassanid Monarch of Persia and she ruled the empire after her sister Purandokht during the last decade of the Sassanid Dynasty era. In the years following King Khosrow's death, there were internal revolts which caused major instability and left the empire very vulnerable against outside threat.

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## APRANIK

🕒 -620 → 655 C.E.

HIGH RANKING COMMANDER OF ARMY

(CURRENT ERA)

**Apranik** was a Persian Sassanid High Ranking Commander of Army and the daughter of Piran (the great General of King Yazdgird III) and she fought gracefully, as a resistance commander, fighting against the invading Arabs (brutal nomadic tribesmen). Apranik was more like a TomBoy! Since childhood, she loved military and was her Father's Right hand and eventually followed his footsteps and become a military person. Like her father Apranik decided to become a professional soldier and she climbed the steps of progress, one by one and after her complete education, she managed to rise from a petty officer, to a high ranking commander. Apranik was a tireless inspiration for her troops in defense against outside aggressors.

Apranik fully took the command of a major battalion of the Persian Army directly after the full-scale invasion and occupation by the united Arab armies and she led her devoted warriors against the Arab invaders even after the loss of the Persian Empire. As she got wiser, she found out that 'Organized Warfare' with the Arabs or 'The Desert Rats' as she referred to them, who invade and hide, and then reinforce and invade again, does not work; therefore, she started a campaign of a treacherous battle against the occupiers. For years to come, Apranik, first fought an official war and later on when all hopes were destroyed, Apranik, started her Hit and Run Rebellious Campaign. Apranik's Dedicated Commando Warfare were legendary and relentless. Her white horse has always been a famous symbol of freedom and still is til this day.

♀ The name '**Apranik**' means: '**Daughter of elder**'

▼ Legendary Commander Apranik of the Persian Sassanid Army

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▼ Commander Apranik of Sassanid Army in Battle against the invaders

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... **Apranik** and her Ranks, never surrendered, they have fought an on going bloody battle to the bitter ends. Her braveries were so known, that she became a symbol for the 'Persian Resistance & Freedom' and Persians created an expression for her! Every time

...and policy were: *No retreat, no surrender*. Apranik acted as a battery charger for resistance spirit and chose to fight with her soldiers, until the bitter end and eventually Apranik became a legend. May her great spirit rest in peace. Apranik, the mighty daughter of renowned general Piran or as they used to call her 'Apranik of Piran's' will always be in the 'Persian Resistance Hall of Fame'. This is what the Persian women were made of!

▼ A Gentler side of Commander Apranik of the Persian Sassanid Army

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## THE FALL OF THE EMPIRE

**Rostam Farrokhzad** was the head of Persian forces & the Grand General in charge of the defence under King Yazdegerd III. A large Arab army had united against Persia (battle of Nehavand) and a long and brutal war against the savage invaders started in the southern borders of Persia at the worst time possible, during civil wars within the empire which weakened the central authority.

Rostam figured what the Bloodthirsty Arabs were fighting for... for their hunger, and their new God 'Allah' and his so-called Holy War against the civilized World and all non-believers. (Arabs believed that they could rape & plunder the population, and if they would die during the holy-war they would go directly to heaven and meet their 72 virgins). It was not possible for the Persians to fight an official war against the rebellious Jihadist Arabs who deliberately targeted un-armed civilians to spread fear and terror among the population. For the first time Rostam, 'The Mighty Lion of Persia' as they called him... felt outnumbered and could finally see the End.. They thought the Sassanid Empire would last for thousands of years. Rostam stood in the front of his horse giving his last speech telling his army if he falls, he will take as many savage Arabs as he can. ***'Let this last day be the worse for them...'*** The Persian borders falls, but the resistance from the people makes it more bloody though they were not armed, Resistance in the final stages was led by a mighty woman named Apranik.

▼ Governor Rostam Farrokhzad - Mighty Sassanid Army General and Warrior

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The last Sassanid ruler, **Yazdegerd III** , died in 651 C.E. as a fugitive. Persia was again faced with an enemy from within which aimed to completely undermine its civilization and identity. The first factor used to destroy a national identity was an attack on its predominant religion: Zoroastrianism.

 Read the Historical letter of Yazdgird III to the Arab Caliph Omar.

## THE DARK AND BRUTAL ARAB CALIPHATE ERA

## DECLINE OF THE EMPIRE

The endless Wars and Rivalry between the two superpowers; Rome and Persia lasted for nearly 700 years (54 B.C.E. – 629 C.E.) and weakened both empires significantly. Neither side won a clear victory, a lot of fighting but no real change in the borders. The final and most devastating of the series of wars fought between Byzantine (Eastern Roman Empire) and the Sassanid Persian Empire took place between 602–628 and was fought throughout nearly all of the subject countries of Rome and Persia in both Europe and Asia from all directions. By the end of the conflict both sides had exhausted their human and material resources. Consequently, they were vulnerable to the sudden emergence of the Islamic Caliphate, whose forces invaded both empires after these series of wars.

In the years following the death of the Persian King Khosrow, there were major internal revolts, instability and power struggle that lasted for years in the exhausted empire. The central authority was weakened considerably by civil wars. At the same time the **Arab forces** (brutal nomadic tribesmen) were trying to attack and invade Persia from South. The Persian King Yazdegerd III was strictly focused on protecting the Persian borders against the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantine) and was not paying any attention to the rise of Islam and the invading barbaric savage Arabs. The first encounter between Sassanids and Muslim Arabs was in the Battle of the Bridge in 634 which resulted in a Sassanid victory, however the Arab threat did not stop there as the united Muslim army repeatedly attacked the southern borders of Persia again and again. The united barbaric tribes of Arabia eventually conquered the entire Sassanid Persian Empire and deprived the Byzantine Empire of its territories.

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## OPPRESSION, MISERY AND MASSACRE

The history of Persians after the Arab conquest can be summarized in three words: **oppression**, **misery** and **massacre**. The Arabs invaded Persia not only for its reputed wealth, but to bring into the faith new converts and to impose Islam as the new state religion. They were religious zealots who believed that 'in a religious war if one kills or is killed, one's place in heaven is secure'. To impose the new religion, the old culture and creed had to be destroyed. Therefore first they targeted the libraries, universities and schools. Only few examples reflect the enormity of the calamity that befell upon Persia at 630 C.E. To conquer Persia and force Islam, the Arab invaders resorted to many inhumane actions including massacre, mass enslavement of men, women and children, and imposition of heavy taxes on those who did not convert.

▼ Arab Taziz Raping and Killing Civilians in Persia and enslaving women and children



## ERASING HISTORY BY BURNING BOOKS AND KILLING SCHOLARS

In 641 C.E. When the Arab commander *Saad ibn-e Abi Vaghas* faced the *huge Persian library* of Ctesiphon (capital city), he wrote to *Omar* (Calif/Ruler of Arab Muslims): what should be done about the books?. Omar replied that the '*blasphemous*' books are not needed, as for us only Koran is sufficient. Thus, the huge library was destroyed and the books or the product of the generations of Persian scientists and scholars were burned in fire or thrown into the Euphrates (waters of Euphrates ran black with ink from the enormous quantities of books flung into the river). Later by the order of another Arab ruler (Ghotaibeh ibn-e Moslem) in Khwarezmia, those Persians who were literate with all the historians, writers and Mobeds were massacred and their books burned so that after one generation the people were illiterate. Other libraries in Ray and Khorassan received the same treatment and the famous international University of Gondishapour declined and eventually abandoned, and its library and books vanished. Only few books survived, because the Persian scholars quickly translated them into Arabic in order to save them.

*It was a tremendous loss. Our knowledge would be richer and, potentially, our path from the ancient world to the modern world would have been shorter and easier, had some of these works survived.*



## MASS MASSACRE AND CONVERSION

By the order of the Arab commander 'Yazid ibn-e Mohalleb' in Gorgan so many *Persians were beheaded* that their blood mixed with water would energize the millstone to produce as much as one day meal for him, as he had vowed and ordered the soldiers to cut off the tongue of anyone who dared to speak Persian. This is why in Arabic, Persians are called 'Ajam', meaning mute! The event of *blood mill* has been quoted by the generations of historians and Persian Zoroastrian families to this day, yet our books of history have been silent about it. In recent years however, disenchanted Persian scholars have been writing about the blood mills and in fact this event has been reported by our historians of the Islamic era. On the way to Mazandaran (northern Iran) the same commander ordered 12,000 Persian captives to be hanged at the two sides of the road so that the victorious Arab army pass through. Upon arrival, many more were massacred in that province and heavy tax (Jizya) was imposed on the survivors who did not convert.

*One of the Umayyad Caliphs was quoted saying: 'milk the Persians and once their milk dries, suck their blood.'*



Some historians have estimated that a total of **400,000 Persian civilians were massacred**. After the battle of Alis, the Arab commander (Khalid ibn-e Valid) ordered all the prisoners of war be decapitated so that a creek of blood flows. When the city of 'Estakhr' in the south put up stiff resistance against the Arab invaders, 50,000 residents were slaughtered. One of the battles by the Arabs has been named, 'Jelovla' (covered), because an estimated 100,000 bodies of the slain Persians covered the desert. It is reported that **130,000 Persian women and children were enslaved** and sold in the Mecca and Medina markets and large amount of gold and silver plundered. One respected Persian scholar recently wrote, 'Why so many had to die or suffer? Because one side was determined to impose his religion upon the other who could not understand'. The Arabs colonized, exploited, raped and despised the population. They even named the Persian converts 'Mavali' or 'liberated slaves'. Persian women became second rate citizens when the Arabs conquered Persia in a very brutal way, they lost all their rights and consistently assigned a passive role in the society. Many Persian women joined the resistance fighters against the barbaric Arab oppressors and fought to the end, they rather chose to be cut to pieces by the Arab Sword, than to become a slave or whore in the Arab Bed. Nevertheless history reflects the extent of atrocities committed by the Arab conquerors.

*'Persians have developed a surprising ability to adapt, but only outwardly, superficially & when absolutely required. Persian culture is both very strong & resilient. Iran was neither truly Arabized nor Islamized.'*

▼ Arabs Raping and Enslaving women and selling them in Mecca and Medina markets



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♀ Women actively took part in many of the future movements for freedom of Iran and repossession of their human rights from Arabs. Women were the most oppressed segment of Iranian society by the Arabs and they were a significant part of the many Revolutionary Movements of Iran including the Sanbad movement in Neyshabour of Khorasan (Northeast of Iran), Ostadsis' movement in Sistan (Southeast of Iran), Moqanna' and Sarbedaran movement in Khorasan (Northeast of Iran), and Babak Khoramdin's movement in Azerbaijan (Northwest of Iran).

**BANU KHORAMDIN** 

795 → 838 C.E.

FREEDOM FIGHTER ▶ LIONESS

(CURRENT ERA)

**Banu and Babak Khoramdin** are considered as one of the most heroic freedom fighters of Persia who initiated the Khoramdinian movement. It was a freedom fighting movement aimed to overthrow the Tazi Arab Caliph occupiers and at the time rulers of Persia. After the occupation of Persia by the Arab Hounds, Banu and Babak worked as revolutionary resistance fighters leading the Persian Resistance Militia. The famous female commando and revolutionary **Banu**, was a lioness. The central area of activity for Banu was Atropatgan state of Persia. Now this woman was amazing! She was the better half of **Babak Khoramdin** (Legendary Freedom Fighter). Banu was a temperamental Woman and a very skilled archer, she grew up with her bow and arrows! She was Babak's partner in life and death, in war and peace. Banu was a symbol of Pure Persian Pride! Banu and Babak fought the Arab Occupation for years. One of the most dramatic periods in the history of Persia was set under Babak & Banu's leadership between 816–837 C.E. During these most crucial years, they not only fought against the Caliphate, but also against Tazi Arab barbaric behaviors and customs.

Eventually, Banu and Babak and their warriors were forced to leave 'The Castle of Babak' (Ghaleye Babak) after 23 years of constant successful campaigns that killed over 500,000 invading Arabs and Babak's mighty army (Red-Shirts) was never once defeated. According to historians of the era; For every Persian that died 10 Arabs followed them to the grave! They were eventually betrayed by one of their own officers and were handed over to the Abbasid Caliph. They lived and they died as Proud Persians until the last drop of blood was shed.



♀ The name '**Banu**' means: '**Lady**' (Alternative spellings: 'Bānu Xorramdin')

...

✓ Banu's husband: Babak Khoramdin, The Persian Hero (798–838 C.E.)

...

**After Babak and Banu's execution** many Persians started revolts in different regions of the country in order to regain their freedom. This in turn, forced the Arab Caliphs to use more violence against the Persian population in order to keep the country under control but they failed and eventually **Arab rule over Persia began to diminish**. Babak's sensational and legendary campaign to defend Persia's national identity and interest is still pursued after nearly 1200 years. Every year on his birthday in July the Iranian pilgrims visit Babak's fortress in Southern Azerbaijan to hail their Persian hero, Babak, as the symbol of Persian resistance against Tazi Arab occupiers. The pilgrims read poetry including **Shahnameh** (Epic of Kings - Iran's most famous epic by Ferdowsi) and play traditional Persian music. They also light up bonfires to follow traditional rituals of ancient Persia.

View a summary video clip in Persian about  Babak's life and History 

**GOLDENAGE** 

REINCARNATION OF PERSIA

 820 C.E.

(CURRENT ERA)



...and after that it was indeed the darkest chapter of Iran's history and has been compared to a nightmare associated with the moans of widows and orphans, 'a dark night of silence that was interrupted only by the hoot of owls and the harsh sound of thunder'. Finally the **Arabs were driven out of Persia**. Various local **Persian monarchs rose to power**: the Tahirids (821–873), Saffarids (867–903), Samanids (873–999), Ziyarids (928–1077) and Buyids (945–1055).

The lost ancient Persian language was restored and it soon blossomed into one of the most poetic languages of the world. The Samanids were the first to adopt Persian as the official language of their court. Once again, Persia became a world center for art, literature and science. It was renowned for the impulse that it gave to Persian national sentiment and learning. All the cultural, scientific and philosophical advances of the so-called Islamic world came out of Persia, these advancements were not Islamic, but Persian. [continue »](#)

'It's about being who you were born to be... a Queen...'

...

Timeline of Persia: [8<sup>th</sup> millennium B.C.E. to Present day »](#)

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## PERSIAN IDENTITY

Iran has never been an Arabic country and never will be! Iranian people have very strong ties to their history, culture and language, which are distinctively Persian. They are very proud of their rich heritage, strongly admire their former King of Kings, especially [Cyrus the Great](#) and his legacy of introducing [human rights](#) in a political setting of the first humane and equal Federal World Empire. Another reason for which Persians dislike being mistakenly identified as Arabs is because Arab Islamic army conquered Persia in a very brutal way and forced them to change their religion, and customs by the edge of a sword. When Arabs conquered Persia they destroyed our Equal rights, Freedom of speech and Freedom of religion and replaced those factors with central primitive brutal government, prejudice and slavery. But Persian culture and rich history conquered them! Persia is the only country which didn't become an Arab country (like Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, Phoenicia and all the other ancient countries conquered and destroyed by Arabs) and in spite of centuries of invasions and foreign rule by Greeks, Arabs, Turks, Mongols etc. Persia has retained its own strong identity.

*For centuries Arabs has tried to destroy our culture, our language, science, poetry, literature, philosophy, religion, race, traditions, celebrations, music, arts and of course our Calendar. They never fully succeeded! **Wake up Persia!***

'Don't forget our brave and mighty Lions and Lionesses of the past!'

...

*'A great civilization is not conquered from without until it destroys itself from within.'*

§


## THE FUTURE

Iran today stands at the crossroads of history and we live in remarkable times, and thanks to the tyranny of the islamic republic, we are now able to shed the Islamic past and move ahead into the future. A future without Islam, or any other organised religion. In this, we are far more fortunate than the rest of the world, for once this regime crumbles into dust, the tyranny of religion will never again raise it's ugly head in our land, for we will never forget. Islam as an Arab ideology has been a disease for Iran and Iranians and the only people who have truly once and for all uprooted Islam from Iran are the Mullahs themselves in only three decades. In a way, we should be grateful to them for this remarkable achievement.

For us, there is no going back to the superstitions of the distant past. There is only the future, where Atheism, Equalism, Democracy & Freedom awaits us... For millenniums when invaders came to Persia, the Iranians never become the invaders; the invaders became Iranians. Their conquerors were said to have 'gone Persian'. Persians seem particularly proud of their capacity to get along with others by assimilating compatible aspects of the invaders' ways without surrendering their own; a cultural elasticity that is at the heart of their Persian identity.

*'The Invaders Can't Control What's Inside Us'*

...

We would like to end by saying that we are certain that light will overcome darkness/fanaticism, and Persia, alike the legendary bird Simorgh of Shahnameh , will once again rise from her ashes and regain her rich history. Persia, has always been home to those who throughout history have fought for the idea of **freedom and equality**.

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39/39