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*present*

## The Achaemenids and the Imperial Signature: Persepolis – Arachosia – Bactria

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École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris

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The Achaemenid Empire (c. 550–330 BCE) defined itself through a set of ideological values that were reflected in royal inscriptions, court stories, and practices that were probably observed by the Persian nobility. The image that arises from this type of material is coherent enough as it stands, but may be further complemented if the perspective from economic and administrative sources is included. Although these documents have been partially known for decades, they have recently acquired greater meaning, through combination with other sources centered on the Persepolis Fortification Archive, to form a more comprehensive semantic mosaic. Put into the larger Achaemenid context, texts from Arachosia, for example, gain significance as traces of an “imperial signature,” a recognizable Achaemenid way of organising the lands the Persians had conquered, based on standard structures and protocols, emerge. In fact, this approach, best witnessed in the eastern and northeastern satrapies, turns out to be quite systematic in nature. It lends support to the notion of an imperial paradigm, the idea that administrative networks could be copied and applied as useful tools. Persian imperial self-awareness perhaps was not only limited to universal order and the *pax achaemenidica*, but may well have included ideas about efficient organisation, communication, and accountability.

**Wouter F.M. Henkelman** is associate professor of Elamite and Achaemenid Studies at the École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris since 2011, following earlier appointments in Berlin (Deutsches Archäologisches Institut), Paris (Collège de France) and Amsterdam (VU University). He studied in classical philology in Leiden and Achaemenid history and culture in Utrecht (Netherlands) and defended his doctoral thesis on cultic practice as recorded in the Persepolis Fortification Archive in 2006 in Leiden. His current research includes the edition of a larger part of the Elamite tablets of that same archive and a new edition of an Elamite version of the celebrated Bisotun inscription of Darius the Great.

\*Light refreshments will be served\*

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