



ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Reconstructing the Persian Royal Road: A Geospatial Approach to the Case Study of the Susa-Persepolis Route(s)

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Abstract

The Persian Royal Road(s) was an essential infrastructure of the Achaemenid Empire, facilitating the movement of the king, royal court, military, and trade. Contrary to earlier assumptions that imperial roads were primarily defined by construction materials, recent research highlights their superior maintenance, reliability, and logistical infrastructure. Royal roads were broader and featured well-maintained way stations, supporting the passage of the royal family, king's entourage and imperial armies. They likely included "royal," significant structures, emphasizing their role in imperial mobility over secondary routes.

This contribution is the first to employ Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology to analyze the key section of the Royal Road between Susa and Persepolis, focusing on its logistical characteristics. Terrain modeling, Slope and Least-Cost analysis will reveal how the road's design accommodated the vast Achaemenid court, optimizing travel efficiency and overcoming geographical challenges. These techniques will trace the road's probable route(s) and evaluate the environmental factors that influenced its construction.

The research enhances our understanding of what it meant to be a "Royal Road" in the Achaemenid context, highlighting its critical role in governance and logistics. It also demonstrates the value of GIS as essential tool for archaeological investigation, particularly in regions where traditional excavation is challenging.

Keywords

Achaemenid Empire, Imperial logistics, Royal Roads, GIS, Least-Cost modeling

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