

# Evidence of the Persian Empire's Multilingualism and Interpretation of DB # 70

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## 1. Introduction

The trilingual inscription of King Darius is carved on the rock of Mt. Bisitun,<sup>1</sup> which is located about 30 km east of Kermanshah on the ancient royal road connecting Babylonia, Susa, and Ecbatana (modern Hamadan), which continues through central Asia to India. Out of massive mountain ranges along the road, Mt. Bisitun rises suddenly from the plain about 500 m high; its precipitous rock is ideal for engraving reliefs and inscriptions.

The Bisitun inscription of King Darius (DB) is best known for its role as the cuneiform Rosetta stone, which played a vital role in deciphering the three kinds of cuneiform language: Old Persian, Elamite, and Akkadian.<sup>2</sup> Equally important is

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<sup>1</sup> The name *Bisitun* is not used by modern Iranians. This name was borrowed by H. C. Rawlinson from the Arabic geographer *Yāqūt*, who mentioned this site. The earliest known name of this mountain was given by Diodoros (*Diodorus Siculus* 2.13.1), who called it *hóros... Bagístanon*. Its modern name *Bisitun* 'without columns' is a result of folk etymology of Mediaeval Persian Bahistun 'with good columns'.

<sup>2</sup> The initial studies on the Bisitun inscription were about the decipherment of three different kinds of cuneiform writing. The history of scholarship on its decipherment is found in A. J. Booth, *The Discovery and Decipherment of the Trilingual Cuneiform Inscriptions* (London, New York, and Bombay: Longmans, 1902); E. A. W. Budge, *The Rise & Progress of Assyriology* (London: Martin Hopkinton, 1925); and S. A. Pallis, *The Antiquity of Iraq : A Handbook of Assyriology* (Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1956): 94-187. A short version is found in R. Kent, *Old Persian Grammar* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1953): 9-11; and P. Lecoq, *Les inscriptions de la Perse achéménide* (Paris: Gallimard, 1998): 19-30.

that DB is the longest inscription ever left by the Achaemenid Persians,<sup>3</sup> thus providing important philological and historical information for Old Persian (OP) and its contemporaneous languages: Achaemenid Elamite (AE), Achaemenid Akkadian (AA), and Official Aramaic (OfA).<sup>4</sup>

In the sixth century B.C.E. King Darius, king of the then-illiterate Persians, subjected the peoples from the Nile to the Indus.<sup>5</sup> Old Persian, the language of the ruling Persian class, did not spread beyond the Zagros mountain because the rapidity of his empire's expansion outstripped the speed of its diffusion and intelligibility among the provinces of his vast empire. Furthermore, Old Persian script, newly created during the time of King Darius, was used only for special declarations, edicts, and proclamations of the king.

Therefore, King Darius was forced to employ the contemporaneous languages of the ancient Near East for the record of his empire. For effective diplomatic communication among the provinces of the empire, Aramaic, a non-Iranian language, as a lingua franca, was chosen. It was a natural choice and a practical one: Aramaic was already widely spoken in the Levant, Egypt, and Western Iran and its alphabetic script was much easier to learn and write than the complicated Elamite or Akkadian cuneiform.

Elamite, however, became the language within the central administration in Susa, the most important city of Elam, continued to play a vital role in the bookkeeping of the administrative archives.

The peculiar linguistic situation of Achaemenid Persia encouraged multilingualism from the very beginning of its history. For the first time in the long history of the ancient Near East multilingual texts<sup>6</sup> in inscriptions became

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<sup>3</sup> OP has 414 lines in four columns, AE has 260 lines in three columns, and AA has 112 lines in one wide column.

<sup>4</sup> Throughout this study I will use the abbreviations, AE, AA, OfA, and OP for Achaemenid Elamite, Achaemenid Akkadian, Official Aramaic, and Old Persian, the languages involved in the Bisitun inscription.

<sup>5</sup> Two inscriptions (one from Persepolis (DPh 5-8) and other from Hamadan (DH 4-6)) describe his vast empire: *hacā Sakaibiš tayaiy para Sudgam amata yātā ā Kūta hacā Hindauv amata yātā ā Spardā* 'from the Scythians who are beyond Sogdiana, as far as to Nubia, from India as far as Lydia'.

<sup>6</sup> E. Campanile ("Per una definizione del testo epigrafico bilingue," in *Bilingualismo e biculturalismo nel mondo antico. Testi Linguisti* 13 [1988]: 17-8) draws up two criteria for the definition of bilingual text: 1) it must be an identical text in two versions in different languages; 2) it must show clear indication of simultaneousness on the level of its physical origin, which is located on the same object.

the norm, not the exception.<sup>7</sup> Most Achaemenid inscriptions were trilingual: Old Persian, Elamite, and Akkadian.<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, when King Darius commissioned an inscription relating his military exploits, to be inscribed on the cliff of Mt. Bisitun, he had to employ bilingual or multilingual scribes who could translate his spoken Old Persian into Elamite, the administrative language, and Aramaic, the chancery language, because there was no Old Persian writing system at the time of the initial stage of its engraving.

Consequently, DB was not originally intended as a trilingual text. When King Darius spoke his *res gestae* in Old Persian, the bilingual scribe(s), perhaps a bilingual Elamite, translated it into Elamite. The Elamite version (DBa, the caption of King Darius and then AE DB to the right side of the relief) was engraved initially on the rock of Mt. Bisitun. Then, the Akkadian version, corresponding exactly to the Elamite version in its section divisions, was added to the left side of the relief. At the time of the Akkadian version composition, the bilingual scribe(s), perhaps a bilingual Babylonian, added new pieces of information to the *res gestae*: he added statistics of the number of casualties and captives, substituted Semitic month names for Iranian month names, and employed Median forms of geographic names instead of Old Persian forms.

It was only in the final stage that an Old Persian version was added below the relief to the existing two previous versions. The OP version contains editorial changes, different from both of the two previous versions: arrangement of *res gestae* according to battles, not campaigns, minor changes of contents, and the addition of OP DB 70, which is the report about the creation of a new OP script and its dissemination into the provinces of the Achaemenid Persian empire. True to the words of King Darius in OP DB 70, four fragments of DB were found in the empire provinces: two in Akkadian from Babylon, one in Aramaic in Elephantine, Egypt, and the other in Aramaic in Saqqara in Egypt.

We now know the exact stages of the engraving of the reliefs and inscriptions in their historical context. The stages of engraving of each relief, caption, and version consequently affect the interrelations among the versions linguistically.

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<sup>7</sup> Although multilingualism has been a powerful fact of life in ancient Near East from the very beginning of its literary history, actual multilingual texts according to the definition given in n. 8 above, are very rare. See more in H. D. Galter "Cuneiform Bilingual Royal Inscriptions." *Israelite Oriental Society* 14 (1995): 25-50.

<sup>8</sup> We have only four unilingual Akkadian and one Elamite texts as well as four bilingual Elamite-Old Persian and five Akkadian-Old Persian inscriptions so far.

The archaeological findings about DB inevitably lead to the next problem: illuminating the interrelations among the versions and elucidating literary relationships among them.

The consensus of current scholarship about the interrelations among the versions is that there is a dichotomy between the sources of OP DB-AE DB and AA DB-OfA DB because the latter two agree in mentioning the statistics of casualties, preferring Semitic month names, and using Median forms rather than OP forms in some geographical names.

This hypothesis which is based on the apparent agreements between AA DB and OfA DB is misleading. Despite the close agreement between them, there are a number of critical differences between them<sup>9</sup> that could not be deduced from a single Vorlage.<sup>10</sup> Rather, OfA DB is closer to the Akkadian fragment found in Babylon, BE 3627. Both copies are abridged versions of OP-AE-AA DB: they omit geographical and personal names, and the characterizing expressions about rebels (e.g. “who said, “I am Smerdis”). In addition both employ the enigmatic word, *aluka* (BE 3627 Col. II. 10), and *lwk* (OfA DB VII. 37), which is omitted among the other versions of DB.

Accordingly, the fragments found outside Mt. Bisitun are copies from another source or Vorlage, which was an Aramaic copy of a diplomatic purpose for dissemination among the provinces of the empire. That Vorlage was an

abridged version with omission of some details in geographical and personal names. When this Vorlage on parchment arrived in Babylon and Elephantine, the scribes in the respective cities or provinces corrected it according to their literary tradition: BE 3627 omitted the formula of Ahuramazd and OfA DB incorporated the final paragraph of the tomb-inscription of Darius I (DNb, 50-60) after OfA DB Col. XI. 66.

Consequently, the Vorlage for the versions engraved on the face of Mt. Bisitun must have been different from that employed for a diplomatic function. It is a full version of King Darius’ *res gestae* with detailed facts about personal and geographical names. At the dictation of King Darius, the spoken words in oral OP must have been written phonetically in Aramaic script on parchment.

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<sup>9</sup> J. C. Greenfield and B. Porten, *The Bisitun Inscription of Darius the Great: Aramaic Version*. *Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum I.V.I* (London: Lund Humphries, 1982): 14-5.

<sup>10</sup> Here I used the term Vorlage, which is an artificial reconstruction of the original wording of King Darius or basic linguistic upon from which subsequently the versions of the Bisitun inscription were based.

The arguments for this Vorlage, which was phonetically written in Aramaic, come from the following three pieces of evidence:

- (1) King Darius himself was referring to such writing in OP DB Col. IV. 88b-92 which says 'the form of writing...in Aryan...on parchment'. This phrase certainly did not refer to an Aramaic translation of OP, such as OfA DB, found in Elephantine because the language is not 'in Aryan'. This phrase means that the newly created writing, Old Persian, was written on parchment. This sentence implies that Old Persian was written phonetically in Aramaic.
- (2) The OP in the Aramaic script was found on King Darius' tomb in Naqsh-e Rostam, which is ascribed to the time of Artaxerxes II or III. The existence of such writing opens possibility that such convention of writing OP in Aramaic script was practiced during the Achaemenid period.
- (3) Such a text is suggested in the Persepolis Treasury Texts. Every tablet has a string for attaching it to a parchment or a papyrus roll. When the order was given in Old Persian, the Elamite bilingual scribes firstly wrote that order in the Old Persian language in Aramaic script on a parchment or a papyrus roll. Later on the basis of this writing, the Elamite tablet was inscribed.

This parchment of phonetically written OP in the Aramaic script must have been the Vorlage for the versions on Mt. Bisitun. AE DB, AA DB, and OP DB were translated from this Vorlage independently. The bilingual scribes who worked on each version sometimes made some changes according to their own literary tradition. For example, the Elamite bilingual scribes, who worked on AE DB, arranged the whole *res gestae* according to campaigns. The Akkadian bilingual scribes who worked on AA DB adopted AE DB' arrangement of its contents, but added statistics about casualties and changed Iranian month names to Semitic month names according to the tradition of Mesopotamian royal inscription.

The Old Persian bilingual scribes, who learned the newly created Old Persian syllabary, made structural changes. They arranged the contents according to battles, not campaigns. Furthermore, King Darius himself also made some changes when the whole inscription was read before him.

The scribes of the Old Persian version, while trying to record King Darius's original words, would have consulted the two already extant versions, those of Elamite and Akkadian, as well as the original Aramaic version. It is therefore to be expected that these three versions influenced the Old Persian one. We may thus have the following situation: 1) the Old Persian dictation was the source of the other three versions, and 2) the Old Persian text was influenced by the other three versions and Median and other Mesopotamian literary traditions, namely those of Urartian/Hurrian and Assyrian royal inscriptions.

The archaeological evidence and the literary hypothesis compel us to study all the versions of DB comparatively. In order to identify the examples of grammatical interference among the versions, i.e., loanwords, morphological and grammatical interference, calques, etc., one needs to investigate a given word or phrase by comparing the corresponding one in all the available versions. Most of the scholarship on DB has been monolingual, but by relegating the other versions to the background. The monolingual approach has provided only a partial picture of the linguistic complexity that DB presents.

In order to study interrelations among the versions one needs a few basic tools. One such tool is to have all the available versions in one place with each version's transliteration, transcription, and translation. The juxtaposition of all the available versions will make it possible to find examples of similarity and dissimilarity, interference and innovation among the versions. Scholarship conducted in this way has been unfortunately rare.

In 1911, F. H. Weissbach published all the versions of cuneiform inscriptions of the Achaemenid period.<sup>11</sup> His was the first such attempt as well as the last one. In each inscription, Weissbach provided a transcribed Old Persian version, transliterated Elamite and Akkadian versions, and one translation, of the Old Persian. He discussed differences among the versions in his philological notes.

I wish to compare the texts of all the available versions, including the Aramaic version found in Egypt, the two Akkadian fragments found in Babylon, and the one Aramaic fragment found in Saqqara, Egypt in order to draw the literary stemma of the Bisitun inscription.

## **2. Archaeological Evidence for Multilinguality**

### ***2.1. Mt. Bisitun***

King Darius chose Mt. Bisitun, in the middle of Iran, in the realm of Media, rather than politically important southern cities like Pasargadae or Persepolis, for engraving these first reliefs and inscriptions. The engraving was probably begun late in 521 B.C.E. or in 520 B.C.E. and almost completed when the ninth pretender, the Scythian Skunkha, was added to the row of the eight pretenders.

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<sup>11</sup> F. H. Weissbach, *Die Keilinschriften der Achämeniden* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichsche Buchhandlung, 1911): 2-135.

King Darius's choice of location was no accident. It was, first of all, a practical one. The most important requirement for engraving reliefs and inscriptions was a face of solid rock. Unlike the ranges paralleling the royal road, which provide the pastures and the fields in the Median plain, the sides of Mt. Bisitun are precipitous, providing ideal surfaces for engraving reliefs and inscriptions. Mt. Bisitun is the last peak of a continuous range, skirting Kermanshah, and its summit is broken into small peaks and ridges. Although dwarfed by mountain ranges behind Mt. Bisitun, the precipitous rock, forming a semi-closed gully, is perfect for engraving.

Secondly, there are a couple of springs at the foot of Mt. Bisitun. This must have been well known to those who passed along this royal road from times immemorial. For those caravaneers who took this royal road, or for the troops who marched from Persia to Babylon and beyond, Mt. Bisitun must have been a resting-place.

Thirdly, the Greek name given by Diodorus, Bagatanon, is from OP \*Bagastana- 'place of god(s)' It must have been a sacred place for a long time. Luschey reports that there is a small platform terrace of 10m x 10m which may have been an altar.<sup>12</sup>

Fourthly, King Darius must have captured Gaumata, his arch-enemy, in 522 B.C.E. near Mt. Bisitun. DB reports that King Darius captured and killed Gaumata the magian in a fortress, Sikayuvati, in the district of Nisaya in Media, which is located about 100 meters north in the mountain range from Mt. Bisitun.

Mt. Bisitun was a perfect place for memorializing King Darius's *res gestae*. It is one of the rare places that have attained practical, religious, and historical importance. The artistic motif, though, came from Mesopotamian tradition. The artistic representation and composition of reliefs and inscriptions differ greatly from those at Pasargadae, Susa, or Persepolis.

## ***2.2. Source of Motif in Reliefs and Inscriptions***

The artistic motifs may have been influenced by the reliefs of the Lullubi king Anu-baninni at Sar-i Pul-i Zuhab and ultimately by the Naram-Sin stele, which was

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<sup>12</sup> Diodorus (Diodorus Siculus 2.13.1) mistakenly ascribed the Bisitun inscription to the work of the legendary Assyrian queen, Semiramis. He reported that Semiramis encamped near the mountain known as Bagatanus and created a park, watered by great springs. It was sacred to Zeus. He also mentioned the cliff (seventeen stades, about two miles) and an inscription in "Syrian" letters.

transported to Susa as booty by Shutruk-Nahhunte (1185-1155 B.C.E.) and remained there at the time of King Darius. King Darius ordered a monumental record of his rise to power to be inscribed on Mt. Bisitun on the model of the famous relief of Anu-baninni, a Lullubi king near Sar-i Pul-i Zuha, 150 km further west on the royal road. He must have known these reliefs from his campaigns against Babylon and Elam.

At Sar-i Pul-i Zuha there are five similar reliefs. Two small reliefs, one high above the other, are engraved on the cliff facing the road. Around the corner of the eastern cliff, there is another high up below a large aperture in the rock. The other two are on the western cliff across the creek.

In the upper relief on the eastern cliff, King Anu-baninni faces the goddess Inanna who offers him the royal diadem. She holds a rope attached to two kneeling naked prisoners. King Anu-baninni wears a helmet and holds a sword in his left hand and a bow and an arrow in his right hand. His left foot is placed on the naked body of a prisoner. The eight-pointed star within a circle, the symbol of Inanna, is placed between the king and the goddess. In a small panel below the relief are six other naked prisoners. On the right side of the panel is an Akkadian inscription.

The artistic representation and its composition of reliefs and inscriptions became the model for the planning and engraving of DB. The reliefs of DB were carved into a flattened rectangular rock surface (3 x 5.5 m) of Mt. Bisitun. King Darius (1.72m) is accompanied by two officers standing behind him. The left one, perhaps Gaubaruva (Greek Gobryas), holds a Persian lance and the right one, perhaps Vindafarnah (Greek Intaphernes), holds a bow in front. No captions identify these two, even though there are spaces below the reliefs for captions.

King Darius stands with his left foot placed on the chest of the Pseudo-Smerdis, Gaumata, the Median magian, who lies on his back and has his hands raised in entreaty to Darius. King Darius holds a bow in his left hand and raises his right hand to chest level to Ahuramazda, the winged figure, placed above the row of pretenders. In front of him there are nine pretenders (1.17m), roped together by their necks with their hands bound behind their backs. The last captive, who wears a high pointed cap, the Scythian Skunkha, was added after King Darius had conquered Scythia in 519 B.C.E.

King Darius had his relief and inscription placed on this cultic mountain, where it happened to be near the mausoleum of Gaumata. DB is a form of personal and royal propaganda. A royal announcement in the first person singular was to be distributed all over his empire. Thus DB survives not only in the trilingual



inscription, but also in two different Akkadian fragments from Babylon<sup>13</sup> and fragments of two Aramaic versions<sup>14</sup> from Elephantine in southern Egypt a hundred years later. Darius's desire for providing his legitimacy was one of the main reasons that DB was planned, dictated, written down, and engraved, and the similar copies in Aramaic were distributed among the peoples of his empire to convince those who were not convinced of his legitimacy.

### ***2.3. Stages of Engraving Reliefs and the Inscriptions***

Since the discovery by Western scholars, there have been several hypotheses on the stages of engraving the reliefs and inscriptions, ranging from the purely conjectural, via internal evidence from the DB inscription itself, to, most importantly, archaeological observations.

H. C. Rawlinson copied the whole text in Elamite (AE DB) to the left side of the Old Persian version in the lower panel. He also noticed the poor condition of the much-erased columns to the right of the reliefs and identified another Elamite version. Three lines of the first column just below the relief of the Scythian rebel, Skunkha, were the only readable portion of this effaced version. E. Norris who later published the Elamite copy of Rawlinson, described these lines as a "Detached bit repeating part of Col. 1. 61, 62, 63" in a single plate.<sup>15</sup> Neither Rawlinson nor Norris attempted to explain the reason for the existence of two Elamite copies in DB.

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<sup>13</sup> BE 3627 (later renamed Berlin VA Bab. 1502) and Bab. 41446, both of which were found in Babylon. BE 3627 was first published by Weissbach "Ein Bruchstueck der Bisitun-Inscript. BE 3627." in *Babylonische Miszellen*. WVDOG 4 (Leipzig: J. C. Henrichs, 1903). pp. 24-26, pl. 9 and Bab. 41446 were first published in R. Koldewey, *Die Hauptburg und der Sommerpalast Nebukadnezars im Huelgel Babil. in Die Koenigsburgen von Babylon*, pt. 2, WVDOG 55 (Leipzig: J. C. Henrichs, 1932): 23-24, Abb. 2.

<sup>14</sup> They were first published in E. Sachau, *Aramaäische Papyrus und Ostraka aus einer jüdischen Militäerkolonie zu Elephantine: : Altorientische Sprachdenkmäler des 5. Jahrhunderts vor Christus*. 2 vol. (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1911): 187-205, pl. 52, 64-66 and later in A. E. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.: Century B.C.: Edited with Translations and Notes*. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1923): 248-71.

<sup>15</sup> E. Norris, "Memoir on the Scythic Version of the Behistun Inscription." *JRAS* 15 (1855): 1-213.

King and Thompson, who collated the three versions, did not even notice that these three lines were very similar to the later Elamite version's Col. I. 61-63. They thought these lines were referring to the event of Old Persian Col. V.<sup>16</sup>

Weissbach, although he recognized that these lines corresponded to AE Col. 62-4, thought they were part of a later Elamite version.<sup>17</sup>

It was Koenig, in 1938,<sup>18</sup> who identified these lines as part of the old Elamite version, which was later abandoned. On the basis of the chronological order of events in DB, he suggested a hypothesis about the chronological order of the engraving of the reliefs and inscriptions, as follows:

- 1) Old Persian Col. I-III was inscribed during 517-516 B.C.E.
- 2) The reliefs from Darius to Arakha, except for those of Frada and Skunkha, and the winged figure without upper parts were mounted. He maintained that the reliefs were fashioned elsewhere and mounted on the smoothed surface of the rock of Mt. Bisitun.<sup>19</sup>
- 3) The older Elamite version Col. I-IV was inscribed to the right of the reliefs. Koenig thought this version was a translation copy of the Old Persian. During this time Old Persian and Elamite minor inscriptions (DBa-i) were engraved.
- 4) The beginning of Old Persian Col. IV was inscribed during 512-511 B.C.E.
- 5) The relief of Frada and its caption (DBj) in Old Persian and Elamite were engraved during 512-511 B.C.E.
- 6) The end of Old Persian Col. IV was inscribed during 512-511 B.C.E.
- 7) The Akkadian version, to the left of the reliefs, was inscribed and Akkadian captions for the reliefs (DBb-j) were engraved during 510-509 B.C.E.
- 8) Old Persian DBa, identifying King Darius, was inscribed and the upper part of the winged figure was mounted in 508.
- 9) In order to make room for a relief of a newly captured Scythian rebel, the engravers erased the older Elamite version purposely.
- 10) A new Elamite version was inscribed to the left side of DB OP.
- 11) The Old Persian inscription identifying King Darius was inscribed above the Elamite

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<sup>16</sup> L. W. King and R. C. Thompson, *The Sculptures and Inscription of Darius The Great on the Rock of Behistun in Persia* (London: British Museum, 1907): XIII and 151.

<sup>17</sup> Weissbach, *Keilschriften*, XIII and 22.

<sup>18</sup> F. W. Koenig, *Relief und Inschrift des Koenigs Dareios I am Felsen von Bagistan* (Leiden: Brill, 1938): 15-32.

<sup>19</sup> Cameron ("The Elamite Version of the Bisitun Inscriptions." *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 14 [1960]: 60) disagreed with F. W. Koenig. Cameron, though, enumerated eight small "insets" in the reliefs: the beard, a part of shoulder or back of Darius; part of shirt and body below the arms of the second figure behind the king; and a portion of the head of one of the rebel kings.

counterpart (DBa) during 492-485.

Although F. W. Koenig held that DB OP was the original language from which other versions were translated and accordingly engraved, he was the first scholar to question the order of engraving and to emphasize its importance for understanding the interrelationships among the versions. Koenig's views on the order of engraving in DB were challenged and altered by archaeological evidence in the 1950's and 1960's.

In a letter to G. Cameron in 1951,<sup>20</sup> H. T. Wade-Gery made the following observations after an examination of plate 8 in King-Thompson's *The Sculptures and Inscriptions of Darius the Great*:

- 1) The prominent position of Elamite clearly shows that it was inscribed before the other two versions.
- 2) The Akkadian captions were inscribed next.
- 3) The OP captions were the last to be written, because they were tucked in anywhere, wherever spaces were available.

Cameron made clear that the Elamite version to the right of the reliefs was older than the other Elamite version to the left of the Old Persian version in the lower panel. He maintained that the newer Elamite version, located to the left of the OP version in the lower panel, is a slavish copy of the older Elamite version, located to the left of the reliefs on the upper panel.<sup>21</sup>

In 1963 H. Luschey together with L. Trumppelmann and F. Hinz made a trip to Mt. Bisitun to investigate the archaeology of DB. In a letter to W. Hinz in 1964,<sup>22</sup> H. Luschey and L. Trumppelmann argued that DB was intended only for the reliefs except for that of Skunkha and the Elamite caption identifying King Darius (DBa) and inscribed above the relief of King Darius.

H. Luschey<sup>23</sup> made a careful observation of the relationship between the reliefs and the inscriptions. He noticed that the old Elamite version was destroyed

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<sup>20</sup> G. Cameron ["The Persian Satrapies and Related Matters." *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 32 (1973): 51] reported that he received a letter from H. T. Wade-Gery about the order of engraving in the Bisitun inscription.

<sup>21</sup> Cameron, "Persian Satrapies," 59-68.

<sup>22</sup> W. Hinz reported its contents in "Entstehung," 95.

<sup>23</sup> H. Luschey, "Zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Monumentes Dareios' I. von Bisutun und zur Datierung der Einföhrung der altpersischen Schrift." *AA* (1967): 281-98.

by the relief of the Scythian Skunkha (DBk) and that DB OP Col. I, II, III must have been a unit of composition, because DB OP Col. IV and V are not within the space of the reliefs. Furthermore the newly engraved DB AE Col. I-III, to the left side of DB OP, extends so far to the left that DB AE Col. I almost seems to stand alone. Such an imbalance in the composition of sculptures and inscriptions is in contrast with a similar composition found in Naqsh-e Rostam, the site of King Darius's grave.

On the basis of archaeological findings by L. Truempelmann and H. Luschey, W. Hinz<sup>24</sup> suggested the following five stages of engraving DB.

- 1) The reliefs except for that of the pointed-capped Scythian Skunkha and the Elamite inscriptions identifying King Darius (AE DBa) and Gaumata (AE DBb) were the first to be engraved. AE DBa is harmonious with the general plan of the relief composition and its contents are much simpler than AE DB # 1, a later copy of King Darius's titulary.<sup>25</sup>
- 2) The old Elamite version to the right side of the relief except for DB AE # 55, which corresponds to OP # 70, was engraved. There are some changes and elaborations in the account of the titulary.<sup>26</sup>
- 3) The Akkadian version to the left of the reliefs and Akkadian captions to the reliefs were engraved.
- 4) The Old Persian version and relief captions were engraved. The Old Persian version included # 70, a new paragraph, which was engraved above the Elamite DBa. The Old Persian relief captions were usually placed above the Elamite captions, but sometimes they were placed wherever spaces were available. The Old Persian DBb, the relief caption for Gaumata, was placed to the left, because there is no space above the relief of Gaumata. Similarly Old Persian DBc and DBe, captions of Nidintu-B 1 and Martiya, were crammed into small spaces under the winged figure. OP DBd, the caption for

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<sup>24</sup> Hinz, "Entstehung," 95-98; H. Koch, [Es kundet Dareios der Koenig: Vom Leben im persischen Gro reich (Mainz/ Rhein: Philipp von Zabern, 1992: 17-20)] and M. A. Dandamaev, [Persien unter den ersten Achaemeniden (6. Jahrhundert v. Chr), trans. H.-D. Pohl (Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert, 1976: 53-75)] basically follow Luschey's study.

<sup>25</sup> DBa AE # 1 says, "I (am) Darius, the king, son of Hystaspes, an Achaemenid, king of kings. I am the present king in Persia," whereas DB AE # 1 says, "I am Darius, the great king, king of kings, the king in Persia, the king of peoples" DBa AE does not have the phrases "the great king" or "the king of the peoples".

<sup>26</sup> Now "the great king" (*mSUNKI iršara*) is added, after the name of King Darius, and "the present king in Persia" (*lan mSUNKI mPars*) Now "the great king" (*mSUNKI iršara*) is added, after the name of King Darius, and "the present king in Persia" (*lan mSUNKI mParš ip.ikki*) was changed to "the king in Persia" (*mSUNKI hParšip.ikki*) was changed to "the king in Persia" (*mSUNKI hParšip.ikka*).

Phraortes, was engraved on his skirt because of the lack of space. The new paragraph, OP DB # 70, reports the recent invention of the OP script. It says, "the form of writing" which I made, besides, in Aryan." The corresponding AE DB # 55 is more specific and elaborate. It says "I made the other text in Aryan, which existed formerly neither upon clay nor on parchment." Because the Old Persian version was a retranslation of the spoken words of King Darius with consultation of the Elamite version, there are some changes King Darius made at the time of OP DB engraving when the text was read before him (OP DB IV.91).

- 5) The relief of the newly captured Scythian, Skunkha, was engraved on the first column of the old Elamite version. Then the exact copy of AE DB was engraved to the left side of Old Persian version in the lower panel.

Hinz's position has been generally accepted. J. Wiesehoefer proposed a very similar order for the engraving of DB with minor changes as follows:<sup>27</sup>

- 1) The reliefs except for that of the Scythian Skunkha and Elamite DBa, identifying King Darius, above the relief of King Darius, were engraved first.
- 2) The older Elamite DB Col. I-IV of 323 lines to the right of reliefs and Elamite captions for reliefs (DB b-j) were engraved. The changes in the first section of the Elamite Version (DB # 1) from the Elamite caption for King Darius (DBa) means that revision took place already at that early stage.
- 3) The Akkadian version of 112 lines and Akkadian captions DBb-j were engraved. The only room available at that time for the Akkadian version was to the left side of the reliefs. The captions for AA DBb-j were placed or crammed under the reliefs wherever possible. Lack of space forced the engravers to omit the caption for the relief of King Darius. The captions for Gaumata and Acina were placed together under the Elamite caption of Gaumata.
- 4) During this time, Old Persian script was invented. The Old Persian version was placed in four columns under the reliefs. Unlike the Elamite and Akkadian versions, the Old Persian version has a new section (OP DB # 70) mentioning a new script (Old Persian script). Later an Elamite paragraph (AE # 55), which corresponds to Old Persian # 70, was engraved above Elamite DBa, because of the lack of space. Old Persian # 70 must have been planned when the OP scribes started engraving OP DB. AA DB lacks this paragraph because of the lack of space.
- 5) In the third year of Darius' reign, 518 B.C.E., King Darius successfully conquered Scythia and killed the Scythian pretender, Skunkha. The relief of this newly captured pretender and its captions in Old Persian and Elamite were added. Because of this new

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<sup>27</sup> J. Wiesehoefer, *Ancient Persia: From 550 BC to 650 AD*. trans. Azizeh Azodi (London/New York: I. B. Tauris Publishers, 1996): 13-21.

addition, the old Elamite version had to be abandoned. A new Elamite version was engraved to the left side of the Old Persian version and below the Akkadian version.

- 6) The accounts of the second and third year of King Darius (OP DB Col. V (= 71-76) were engraved to the right of OP. Lack of space made it impossible to make corresponding versions in Akkadian and Elamite.
- 7) OP DBa, the caption for King Darius was engraved. This titulary follows not AE DBa, but OP DB Col. I.1-11, which is a more elaborate and later version.

The main differences between Hinz and Wiesehoefer are the order of the Elamite caption for Gaumata (DBb) and the Old Persian caption for King Darius (DBa). Hinz maintained that AE DBb, the caption of Gaumata, had been engraved together with AE DBa, before other AE captions were engraved. He did not provide any argument for this position. Wiesehoefer, however, assigned the time of engraving the Elamite DBb to the time of the engraving of the other AE captions. Although the usual position of the AE captions is above the reliefs, the engravers could not find a space except below the relief. Elamite DBa already occupied the usual space for the Elamite captions, the space above the relief. Therefore, the Elamite DBb was engraved below the relief of the recumbent Gaumata. There is nothing unusual about this space assignment. Thus, I agree with Wiesehoefer's position that the Elamite DBb was engraved together with the other Elamite captions.

In order to assign the correct order of engraving to the OP DBa, it is necessary first to make the following orthographic observation. Hinz assigned it to the fourth stage, when the OP version and other relief captions were engraved. Although Hinz did not mention OP DB Col. V, it is assumed from his discussion that OP DBa was engraved before DB Col. V. Wiesehoefer, however, considered OP DBa to be the last engraving, even after Old Persian DB Col. V. The most striking orthographic feature of OP DBa is the unusual position of the word divider. It is placed before a blank space, which indicates a new section. Throughout the whole corpus of Old Persian DB, a word divider is placed after the blank space. This fact supports Wiesehoefer's position, that OP DBa was the last inscription to be engraved on the rock of Mt. Bisitun.

Such archaeological findings, in turn, can be incorporated into the larger questions about the literary composition among the versions and fragments, such as, what is the relationship between the versions and fragments of DB?; what language was written at the dictation of King Darius?; why do the versions and fragments of DB have similarities and dissimilarities? Such questions would be unanswerable without the evidence of archaeological data. There are some of obvious literary

hints to be gleaned from archaeological observations: 1) The oral dictation of King Darius was given in OP; 2) AE DB is an almost identical copy of the older AE DB.

### 3. Chronology of Stages of Literary Composition

The variants among the versions, i.e., additions or omissions of a word, phrase, or paragraph, point to a complex history of editorial work. The difficulty of access to the Bisitun inscription and the task of engraving one version from the translation of the other complicate the establishing of a stemma. Because of its physical inaccessibility, there are only a few editions of the cuneiform. Schmitt is the only one who provided photos of the cuneiform together with transliteration, transcription, and translation.

To make matters more complicated, we have seven different versions of King Darius's *res gestae*: three versions, AE DB, AA DB, and OP DB, which are engraved on the face of Mt. Bisitun, two groups of Aramaic fragments in papyrus (an extensive one from Elephantine [OfA DB], and one fragment from Saqqara [Segal 62]), and two stone fragments in Akkadian from Babylon..

I will begin with one of the perennial questions about the Bisitun inscription: which one is the original? Then I will suggest a stemma of DB versions and fragments.

#### 3.1. *Vorlage*

The search for a *Vorlage* has resulted in different answers among scholars. Cowley thought AA DB was the original and official text because Akkadian continued to be used in the capital. He thought that the number of executed and captured was recorded only in the official text. Roessler (1938, 11-12) argued that AE DB was the original and that OP and AA DB were mechanical and word-for-word translations of AE DB. He also maintained the authors of AA DB were Elamites. Similarly, Gershevitch maintained the priority of the Elamite version over the Old Persian.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> I. Gershevitch ["The Alloglottography of Old Persian." *TPhS* (1979): 114-190] maintained that the Old Persian version of DB is a retranslation (*Ruekueersetzung*) of Elamite into Persian. Thus, he argued, the original wording of Darius lies in the Elamite version, recorded by Elamite scribes who simultaneously translated at the dictation of King Darius? oral Old Persian.

The general consensus among scholars is that OP DB is the Vorlage. Weissbach, Cameron, Dandamaev,<sup>29</sup> and Schmitt maintained that OP DB was the original. They failed, however, to give the precise meaning of “original.” The loose definition of “original” in their discussions would give the wrong impression that the extant OP DB is the Vorlage for all the other versions. For example, Cameron argues for the originality of OP DB as follows:

There is really no question regarding the language of the original prototype of the monumental trilingual inscriptions. It has been long known that the Akkadian versions do not render good Akkadian, and that in word order they follow in almost servile fashion that existing in the Old Persian copies. Further, there are a few Old Persian words in the Akkadian copies but only a single Akkadian word in the Old Persian versions. Thus, while there may still be some doubt whether an Aramaic translation of the Old Persian was not an intermediate ancestor of the Akkadian, it is certain that neither the Akkadian nor its possible Aramaic prototype can have been the original version of the Achaemenid inscriptions. Nor was Elamite that prototype. By contrast with the few Old Persian loan words in Akkadian, the number in the Elamite versions is enormous.

The imprecision of the definition of “original” is at the root of the problem. In his description, Cameron did not distinguish the oral OP DB from the extant written OP DB which was engraved on the face of Mt. Bisitun. When King Darius intended to engrave OP DB, he changed some passages from what he originally had said. AE DB, the “slavish” copy of the old AE DB, is the translation of the original OP DB. Thus, when there is a difference in contents between OP DB and AE DB, the latter is closer to the original OP DB, than the extant OP DB. One of the most prominent examples is OP DB IV. 39f = AE DB III. 65.

OP: *dahayaušmaiy duruv ahatiy* “Let my people be safe.”

AE: *mdayaušmi tarma ašdu* “Let my people be safe.”

AE *mdayaušmi tarma ašdu* is a phonetic rendering of OP into AE. This AE phrase is a phonetic rendering of OP *\*dahayaušmaiy duruv astuv* ‘may my people be safe’ which was the original oral OP of King Darius.

This phrase is one of the cases where King Darius revised and changed the original text. AE still has the original *aš-du* from OP 3 sg. act. inv. *\*astuv* whereas DB OP replaced it with 3 sg. act. pres. subj. *ahatiy*. Therefore we have two layers

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<sup>29</sup> M. A. Dandanaev, *Persien unter den ersten Achaemeniden* (6. Jahrhundert v. Chr), trans. H.-D. Pohl (Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert, 1976): 79.



of 'the original text' in DB. One is King Darius's oral dictation, which was translated into the old AE DB that survived as the extant AE DB. The other one, the extant OP DB, is the corrected version of the oral OP DB, which King Darius revised and changed from his original text.

In a strict sense, however, the corrected version of the oral OP, the extant OP DB, is not the Vorlage, because the changes seen in the extant OP DB did not affect AE DB, AA DB, and the fragments found outside of Mt. Bisitun. Thus, the Vorlage is the oral OP of King Darius, from which the extant AE DB was translated. In that case, was it written down in Elamite or was it written down in a different language? In other words, when the bilingual scribes heard and recorded the *res gestae* of King Darius, did they translate the oral OP into Elamite and engrave it in Elamite on the tablets? It might have been impossible for them to engrave such a long *res gestae* of OP into Elamite on the spot. They must have written with a more manageable script available at that time.

### 3.1.1. Vorlagen in Aramaic Script

I propose a working hypothesis to explain the discrepancies found among the three versions and the four fragments of DB. There are two Vorlagen: one for AE DB, AA DB, and OP DB, and the other for OfA DB, Segal 62, BE 3627, and Bab. 41446.

Current scholarship on the stemma of DB is summarized by R. Schmitt as follows:

Closely connected with one another are no doubt the Old Persian and the Elamite texts on the one hand and the Aramaic and the Babylonian versions on the other. The two latter agree notably in including the numbers of enemies killed or captured. They also go together in preferring the Semitic month names and particular forms of certain geographical names and in employing when occasion arises, forms with Median instead of Old Persian dialectological features.

This hypothesis on which Schmitt bases his argument comes from the seeming agreement between AA DB and OfA DB. This hypothesis, however, is untenable when the two texts are contrasted in detail. Despite the close agreement between them, there are a number of critical differences, which Greenfield-Porten divided into seven categories: 1) Aramaic additions; 2) variant expressions; 3) variant formulations of the same expressions; 4) variant casualty figures; 5) omissions; 6) scribal omissions explicable by homoeoteleuton; 7) textual corruption. These differences can not be explained unless they came from two

different sources. Therefore, it is more likely that OfA DB and BE 3267 are copies from one Vorlage, while there is another one for AE DB, AA DB, and OP DB.

*3.1.1.1. Vorlage for AE DB, AA DB, and OP DB = OP in Aramaic Script*

The Vorlage for AE DB, AA DB, and OP DB was OP, the words of King Darius, in Aramaic script. There are three pieces of evidence to support the priority of a phonetically written OP text in Aramaic script.

- (1) One piece of evidence comes from the correct understanding of OP DB # 70: IV. 89b-90a (= AE DB # 55: IV. 2b-5a), which is about copying and dissemination of the res gestae:

OP DB IV. 89b-90a.

(89b) *ima : dipicicam : taya : adam : akunavam : patišam : ariyā : utā : pavast* (90) *āyā : utā : carmā : gar[ftam] : āha*

“This is the form of writing which I made, moreover, in Aryan. Both on clay tablet[s] and on parchment it has been placed.”

AE DB # 55: IV. 2b-5a

(2b) *mu htuppi.me* (3) *da'e.ikki hutta hariya.ma* (4) *appa šašša inni šari kutta hhala*-(5) *tuku kutta KUŠ.meš.ukku*

“I made the other text in Aryan, which existed formerly neither upon clay nor on leather (parchment).”

The interpretation of these sentences is crucial. The phrase ‘the form of writing...in Aryan...on parchment’ certainly did not refer to an Aramaic translation of OP, such as OfA DB, found in Elephantine, because it is in Semitic, but not ‘in Aryan’. Therefore King Darius’s saying ‘the writing..in Aryan..on parchment’ can mean one of the following two choices: 1) the language of Old Persian was written on parchment in Aramaic script; or 2) Old Persian cuneiform script was drawn on parchment.

The latter is out of question at the time of King Darius? oral dictation, because the Old Persian script was not yet invented. Evidence for the former also comes

from an Aramaic inscription in OP language to the right of the doorway of King Darius's tomb at Naqsh-e Rostam.<sup>30</sup>

- (2) Beneath the Elamite version of DNB, there is a much damaged inscription in Aramaic script. Initially Herzfeld thought that it was an Aramaic copy of the Old Persian version on the tomb of King Darius. Later he discovered that it was Persian written in Aramaic. He deciphered two phrases, *hšyty wzrk* and *m'hy*, which are Aramaic transliterations of the OP phrases, *xšāyathiya vazarka* 'the great king' and *māhayā* 'in the month'. He published 25 lines of what he could see. Henning dated it in the early Seleucid period because he claimed that he saw the name *slwk* in line 4, which has not been confirmed by other scholars. Rosenthal suggested that it was later than King Darius's time on the basis of paleographical grounds.

Altheim certainly showed that they are OP words in Aramaic script. R. Frye dated this inscription to the time of a later Achaemenid ruler, such as Artaxerxes II or III.<sup>31</sup> On the basis of three criteria, paleography (between Darius I to Seleucus II), proper names mentioned (*Darayavahuš Artaxšasa*, or *slok*), and the nature and place of the inscription, he suggested that the order of actual engraving was given by an imperial ruler. He suggested three candidates: an Achaemenid ruler, a Seleucid king, or a local Frataraka. The latter two are out of question because OP had already been forgotten during their times. Accordingly Frye dated this inscription to the time of Artaxerxes II or III.

The Aramaic version in Naqsh-e Rostam is a rare case but clearly shows that such writing did exist during the time of Achaemenid Persia. It was chiseled on the rock to guarantee its permanence. Most other texts perished because they were written on parchment.

- (3) The scribal practice of the Persepolis Treasury Texts (PTT) also gives an important clue to the use of such writing. Cameron, in his discussion of how the PTT were written, concluded that the Elamite translations of Old Persian orders were in fact retranslations of the official written language, namely Aramaic. They were not written on the clay tablets in Elamite at the time of the order, but written in Aramaic with ink on papyrus or parchment. Then the Aramaic order was retranslated into Elamite on clay tablets for storage.

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<sup>30</sup> E. Herzfeld, "Reisebericht." ZDMG 80 (1926): 244 and Altpersische Inschriften. Ergänzungsband 1 (Berlin: D. Reimer, 1938): 12; R. N. Frye, "The 'Aramaic' Inscription on the Tomb of Darius." IrAnt 17 (1982): 85-90, pl. 1-9.

<sup>31</sup> Frye, "Aramaic Inscription," 90.

Similarly in the Bisitun inscription it is likely that the oral OP DB was written in Aramaic before AE DB was chiseled out. The reason for writing in Aramaic is a practical one. Writing Aramaic on papyrus or on parchment is much easier than impressing Elamite or Akkadian on clay tablets.

Such a method of writing Old Persian in Aramaic presupposed a period when the oral Old Persian was first written phonetically in Aramaic.<sup>32</sup> In the literary stages of DB, the oral OP DB had been written phonetically first in Aramaic before the old AE DB was engraved. When the engravers started to chisel out AE DB, they must have possessed that copy of OP DB in Aramaic script. When the engravers arranged the *res gestae* on the basis of a copy of OP DB in Aramaic, they divided it into segments, each one beginning with a phrase: "King Darius says." The scribe of AE DB, perhaps an Elamite bilingual, divided the segments according to military action by campaigns. The engravers of AA DB later adopted this method.

If we now compare AE DB and AA DB, they are different not in their divisions of segments, but in contents. AA DB is much more elaborate than AE DB in mentioning casualty number, and other essential information. The scribes/engravers of AA DB added more information according to the model of NA royal inscriptions, with which they were familiar. One of the other innovations of AA DB includes the use of Median forms, rather than Old Persian

Therefore, one *Vorlage* is proposed as a master copy for AE DB, AA DB, and OP DB. The differences among the versions can be attributed to individual characteristics of each version's scribes. Thus the interrelation among the versions may be schematized as follow:

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<sup>32</sup> Cameron (PTT 30) maintained that the writing practice of Middle Persian Aramaic heterograms began even before the invention of Old Persian script as follows: "...Later, when need arose for translation into Persian by bilingual scribes, it would quickly be seen that the Aramaic writing of specific words could continue, especially if now and then one added certain endings which could suggest to the writer and reader alike what Persian words were intended. It would be difficult indeed to believe that such a method of writing could have arisen at all if from the beginning all Persian words had been translated by means of Aramaic characters, for in that case there would never have been any occasion for the entry of Aramaic logograms into the written text."

Evidence of the Persian Empire's Multilingualism and Interpretation of DB # 70

<table 1> Stemma of AE DB, AA DB, and OP DB

(1) Oral OP DB of King Darius

(2) OP in Aramaic Script: Vorlage for the versions on Mt. Bisitun

(3a) the old AE DB

(3b) AA DB

(3c) OP DB

by Elamite scribe

by Akkadian scribe

by OP scribe

arrangement by campaigns

innovations:

innovations:

arrangement by campaigns

by battles

casualty numbers

Semitic month

3.1.1.2. *Vorlage for OfA DB, Segal 62, BE 3627, and B 41046 = Oral OP in Aramaic Translation in Aramaic Script = Diplomatic Copy*

The reasons for writing in Aramaic were diplomatic. It is well known that the Achaemenids adopted Aramaic as the vehicle for written communication among the various regions of the vast empire with its different languages and peoples.

I propose another Vorlage for the fragments found outside of Mt. Bisitun for the following two reasons: 1) interpretation of OP DB IV. 91b-92 = AE DB IV. 8b-10; 2) similarities among the fragments.

Firstly, King Darius himself says at the end of the last paragraph of his res gestae that he sent the copy to the provinces of his empire.

OP DB IV. 91b-92.

(91b) *pasāva : ima : d-(92) ipicicam : f[r]āstāyam : vi[s]padā : antar : dahayāva] : kāra : hamāt]axšatā*

“Afterwards I [sent] this form of writing to everywhere to the peoples. Peoples strove to use it.”

AE DB IV. 8b-10.

(8b) *meni htuppi.me am-(9) minnu mdayauš marrita hati.-(10) ma [m]u tinkiya mtaššupe sapiš*

“Then I sent the same text among all the peoples. People copied (the texts).”

Both versions report that King Darius himself sent the copy (OP *ima dipicicam* ‘this form of writing’ and AE *htuppi.me amminnu* ‘the same text’ for diplomatic purposes. He also reported that after it had arrived in each province, the people copied this (OP *kāra hamāt]axšatā* and AE *mtaššupe sapiš*). From these sentences, three facts can be inferred:

- (1) The text, which King Darius sent out for diplomatic purposes, OP *ima dipicicam* and AE *htuppi.me amminnu*, was the same text as the one just mentioned in OP DB IV. 89b-90a, when he introduced a new form of writing. The main difference between *ima dipicicam* in OP DB IV.89 and *ima dipicicam* in OP DB IV. 91f. is that the latter is modified by a relative clause, *taya adam akunavam patišam ariyā* “which I made, besides, in Aryan.” King Darius himself made a distinction: the former is an Aramaic translation in Aramaic script for diplomatic purposes and the latter is OP in Aramaic, which was written in OP as *ima dipicicam...ariyā..carmā* “this form of writing....in Aryan...on the parchment.”
- (2) King Darius reported that the diplomatic copy had already been sent to all the provinces. In other words, it had been sent away before the invention of OP script. Therefore, the time of making this Vorlage is contemporaneous with the time of the other Vorlage for the DB versions on Mt. Bisitun.
- (3) When this copy arrived in each province, its people (scribes) copied it into their indigenous languages. Thus, the fragments of DB are copies from this Aramaic Vorlage, which was lost, because it was written on parchment. These facts suggest a different Vorlage from that of the DB versions on Mt. Bisitun, a Vorlage which was written in a language that the peoples of his empire could understand well enough to copy it into their languages. It was a Vorlage in Aramaic language in Aramaic script. There is enough evidence among the fragments of DB to support a separate Vorlage for them.

Secondly, there is internal evidence of unity among the fragments of DB. OfA DB is much closer to the Akkadian fragment, found in Babylon, BE 3627, than AA DB. Greenfield-Porten compare AA DB with BE 3726-OfA DB. The correspondences between BE 3672 and OfA DB are too close to be coincidental. Greenfield-Porten characterized them as slightly variant and abridged versions of the original (i.e., AE DB, AA DB, OP DB). They tend to omit the geographical locations for an act and the characterizations of a pretender. The close similarities suggest that they derived from a common source, the Vorlage in Aramaic language and in Aramaic script, which had been sent by King Darius for diplomatic purposes.

There are also two short fragments, one in Akkadian and the other in Aramaic. Bab. 41336, an Akkadian fragment of DB, which was found in the city palace at Babylon, not far from BE 3627; it was part of a version engraved on both the front and the back of three standing steles. It looks like another copy of the diplomatic Vorlage of DB. Segal 62, which Wesselius maintained was part of DB, found in Saqqara in Egypt. It is also a copy of the diplomatic Vorlage.

Thus the interrelations between the fragments may be represented as follows:

<Table 2>: Stemma of the Fragments of DB

(1) Oral OP DB of King Darius

(2) Aramaic Translation in Aramaci script by Aramean bilingual scribes: Vorlage for diplomatic use

(3a) BE 3627 (3b) Bab. 41446 (3c) OfA DB (3d) Segal 62  
innovations innovations  
omission of AM addition of DNb  
intended for Babylonians

#### 4. Conclusion

The peculiar linguistic situation of Achaemenid Persia encouraged multilingualism from the very beginning of its history. For the first time in the long history of the ancient Near East multilingual texts<sup>33</sup> in inscriptions became the norm, not the exception.<sup>34</sup> Most Achaemenid inscriptions were trilingual: Old Persian, Elamite, and Akkadian.

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<sup>33</sup> E. Campanile ("Per una definizione del testo epigrafico bilingue," in *Bilingualismo e biculturalismo nel mondo antico*. *Testi Linguisti* 13 [1988]: 17-8) draws up two criteria for the definition of 'bilingual text': 1) it must be an identical text in two versions in different languages; 2) it must show clear indication of simultaneousness on the level of its physical origin, which is located on the same object.

<sup>34</sup> Although multilingualism has been a powerful fact of life in ancient Near East from the very beginning of its literary history, actual multilingual texts according to the definition given in n. 8 above, are very rare. See more in H. D. Galter "Cuneiform Bilingual Royal Inscriptions." *IOS* 14 (1995): 25-50.

Therefore, when King Darius commissioned an inscription relating his military exploits, to be inscribed on the cliff of Mt. Bisitun, he had to employ bilingual or multilingual scribes who could translate his spoken Old Persian into Elamite, the administrative language, and Aramaic, the chancery language, because there was no Old Persian writing system at the time of the initial stage of its engraving.

Consequently, DB was not originally intended as a trilingual text. When King Darius spoke his *res gestae* in Old Persian, the bilingual scribe(s), perhaps a bilingual Elamite, translated it into Elamite. The Elamite version (DBa, the caption of King Darius and then AE DB to the right side of the relief) was engraved initially on the rock of Mt. Bisitun. Then, the Akkadian version, corresponding exactly to the Elamite version in its section divisions, was added to the left side of the relief. At the time of the Akkadian version? composition, the bilingual scribe(s), perhaps a bilingual Babylonian, added new pieces of information to the *res gestae*: he added statistics of the number of casualties and captives, substituted Semitic month names for Iranian month names, and employed Median forms of geographic names instead of Old Persian forms.<sup>35</sup>

It was only in the final stage that an Old Persian version was added below the relief to the existing two previous versions. The OP version contains editorial changes, different from both of the two previous versions: arrangement of *res gestae* according to battles, not campaigns, minor changes of contents, and the addition of OP DB # 70, which is the report about the creation of a new OP script and its dissemination into the provinces of the Achaemenid Persian empire. True to the words of King Darius in OP DB # 70, four fragments of DB were found in the empire? provinces: two in Akkadian from Babylon, one in Aramaic in Elephantine, Egypt, and the other in Aramaic in Saqqara in Egypt.

We now know the exact stages of the engraving of the reliefs and inscriptions in their historical context. The stages of engraving of each relief, caption, and version consequently affect the interrelations among the versions linguistically. The archaeological findings about DB inevitably lead to the next problem: illuminating the interrelations among the versions and elucidating literary relationships among them.

A literary theory of the interrelations among the versions defies the ability of scholars to create a simple stemma. We have three different versions of King Darius? *res gestae* carved on the face of Mt. Bisitun: Elamite, Akkadian, and Old

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<sup>35</sup> R. Schmitt, *The Bisitun Inscriptions of Darius the Great, Old Persian Text. Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum I.I.I* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1991): 20.



Persian. In addition we have fragments of DB outside Mt. Bisitun: an Aramaic version of fragments, in Elephantine (OfA DB), a small fragment in Saqqara (Segal 62), and two different fragments in Akkadian found in Babylon (BE 3627 and Bab. 41446). Archaeological findings and linguistic evidence among the versions would suggest a complicated, but plausible, stemma among the versions. My working hypothesis about the stemma of DB is this: on the one hand, the three versions on Mt. Bisitun came from one literary source that was dictated by King Darius and written in Aramaic script; on the other hand, the fragments found in Babylon, Elephantine, Saqqara, are copies from another literary source, also written in Aramaic, for diplomatic purposes. Here I suggest the interrelation between the versions on the Bisitun inscription together with fragments and papyrus, local translation of that inscription:

<Table 3> : Stemma of the Bisitun Inscription

(1) Reliefs (except for DBk) + AE DBa.

\*"I am the present/ cultic (lan) king"

\*use of pseudologogram mNU.MAN.

(2) AE DBb-j: mNU.MAN writing.

(3) Oral Dictation of King Darius and Urvorlage

\*only history of revolts

\*oral OP in Aramaic script = Urvorlage

(4) Editorial Changes

\*addition of introduction and conclusion

\*changes in titulary, different from AE DBa

\*employment of literary devices

\*based on Urvorlage, two Vorlages made

(5) OP DB in Aramaic script (F5) Aramaic translation in Aramaic

= Vorlage A for DB versions= Vorlage B for DB fragments

\*expanded version of Urvorlage\*abridged version

"king of kings, king of the peoples" added\*includedbattlefield statistics

\*divided by campaigns\*mentioned 'lwk

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(F6a) BE 3627 (F6b) Bab. 41446

\*omitted Ahuramazd \*included statistics

\*mentioned alluka (F7a) OfA DB (F7b) Segal 62

\*included statistics

\*mentioned *'lwk*

(6) The OLD AE DB

+ AE DB b-j

\*divided by campaigns

(7) AA DB + AA DB b-j

\*divided by campaigns

\*included battlefield statistics

(8) OP DB + OP DBb-j with Editorial Changes

\*divided by battles

\*added a new section (OP #70)

(9) OP/ AE DBk

\*capture of the Scythian pretender, Skunkha

\*the Old AE DB abandoned

(10) The New AE DB

to the left side of OP DB

\*slavish copy of (6).

(11) Addition of AE DB #55 above AE DBa

\*translation of OP DB 70.

(12) OP DB V

\*The second and third year campaign

(13) OP DBa

\*translation of AE DBa

\*word-divider before vacant space

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