

INSCRIPTION OF DARIUS

ON THE ROCK AT BEHISTUN.

TRANSLATED BY

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THE great triumphal tablet of Darius Hystaspes, exhibiting the figures of the victorious king and his attendants and of ten vanquished chiefs, and accompanied by a record in three languages, which extends to nearly a thousand lines of Cuneiform writing, is engraved on the face of a precipitous rock at Behistun¹ near the town of Kermanshah on the Western frontiers of Media.

The inaccessibility of the Sculptures, which are at the height of at least 400 feet above the plain, had deterred all the early Persian travellers from attempting to copy the Inscriptions. At length however Major Rawlinson, who was employed on military

¹ To Βαγίστανον ὄρος of the Greek; *i.e.* *Bax-istan* or "Place of the God."

duty in the province, succeeded in scaling the rock in the autumn of 1835; and between that period and the close of 1837 when his services were transferred to Teheran, having repeatedly visited the spot, he contrived to make a copy of a considerable portion of the Arian version of the record. During the two following years he was busily employed in decyphering and translating the portion which he had thus copied, and his various letters upon the subject were read before the Royal Asiatic Society on January 4, 1840, as reported in the *Athenæum*, No. 639, p. 79. An interval of inaction now occurred, as Major Rawlinson was summoned to take part in the Afghan war; but in 1843 he returned to Baghdad, and in the summer of the following year he once more visited Behistun; and on this occasion as he was furnished with ladders, he completed his copy of the Arian text, and also recovered considerable portions both of the Scythic and Semitic versions.

The long expected Memoir on the Arian or Persian text of the great Behistun Inscription was completed in 1843, and was published in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* for 1846. There were still however some passages in the Arian text which required verification and completion, while of the other versions, especially of the Semitic version, the value of which as a key to the decyphering of the independent inscriptions of Assyria and Babylonia

was becoming daily more apparent, large portions were entirely uncopied, so that one more visit to the Behistun rock was deemed indispensable. This was accordingly accomplished in 1848, when Major Rawlinson not only obtained a large list of emendations and restorations of the published Arian text, but also carried off his most valuable trophy in a complete set of paper casts of the entire Scythic and Semitic versions, so far as the writing could be at all distinguished on the rock.

In the following year Major Rawlinson returned to England and published the latest results of his labours, the corrections of the Persian text appearing in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* under date Feb. 1, 1850, and the Semitic text being given at length with an analysis in the 14th volume of the *Journal* early in the ensuing year.

On returning to Baghdad at the close of 1851, Major Rawlinson handed over his casts of the Scythic version to Mr. E. Norris, the well known Oriental scholar, who published from them an independent translation of the great Behistun Inscription in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* for 1852.

The translation which here follows is based upon Major Rawlinson's original reading of the Arian text as published in 1846, but it also includes his emendations of 1850, and is further strengthened by

additions from Mr. Norris's Scythic Memoir of 1852, while in a few instances advantage has been taken of Monsieur Jules Oppert's matured dissection of the Semitic version published in 1858, to give greater completeness to the record.

The translation given by Professor Rawlinson in his *Herodotus*, Vol. ii. p. 590, has also been compared, and German criticism has occasionally furnished an improved reading.



TRANSLATION OF THE INSCRIPTION.

COLUMN I.

Paragraph 1 I am DARIUS, the great King, the King of Kings, the King of Persia, the King of the provinces, the son of HYSTASPES, the grandson of ARSAMES, the Achæmenian.

2 Says DARIUS the King:—My father was HYSTASPES; of HYSTASPES the father was ARSAMES; of ARSAMES the father was ARIYARAMNES; of ARIYARAMNES the father was TEISPES; of TEISPES the father was ACHÆMENES.

3 Says DARIUS the King:—On that account we are called Achæmenians; from antiquity we have descended; from antiquity those of our race have been Kings.

4 Says DARIUS the King:—There are eight of my race who have been Kings before me, I am the ninth; for a very long time¹ we have been Kings.

5 Says DARIUS the King:—By the grace of ORMAZD I am King; ORMAZD has granted me the empire.

6 Says DARIUS the King:—These are the countries which belong to me, by the grace of ORMAZD I have become King of them, Persia, Susiana, Babylonia, Assyria, Arabia, Egypt, those which are of the sea,² Sparta, Ionia, Media, Armenia, Cappadocia, Parthia, Zarangia, Aria, Chorasmia, Bactria, Sogdiana, Gandara, the Sacæ, the Sattagydes, Arachosia, and Mecia, in all twenty-three countries.

7 Says DARIUS the King:—These are the countries which belong to me; by the grace of ORMAZD they have become subject to me, they have brought tribute to me. That which has been said unto them by me, both by night and by day it has been performed by them.

¹ Or, in a double line.

² *I.e.*, the Islands of the Mediterranean.

8 Says DARIUS the King :—Within these countries whoever was good, him have I cherished and protected ; whoever was evil, him have I utterly destroyed. By the grace of ORMAZD these countries have obeyed my laws. As to them it has been said by me, thus has it been done by them.

9 Says DARIUS the King :—ORMAZD granted me the empire. ORMAZD brought help to me so that I gained this empire. By the grace of ORMAZD I hold this empire.

10 Says DARIUS the King :—This (is) what was done by me, before I became King. He who was named CAMBYSES¹ the son of CYRUS of our race, he was here King before me. There was of that CAMBYSES a brother named BARDES ; he was of the same father and mother as CAMBYSES. Afterwards CAMBYSES slew this BARDES. When CAMBYSES slew BARDES it was not known to the state that BARDES was killed. Then CAMBYSES proceeded to Egypt. When CAMBYSES had gone to Egypt, the state became wicked ; then the lie became abounding in the land, both in Persia and in Media, and in the other provinces.

11 Says DARIUS the King :—Afterwards there was a certain man, a Magian, named GOMATES. He arose from Pissiachádá, the mountain named Arakadres, from thence ; on the 14th day of the month Viyakhana² then it was that he arose. To the state he thus falsely declared : “I am BARDES the son of CYRUS, the brother of CAMBYSES.” Then the whole state became rebellious ; from CAMBYSES it went over to him, both Persia and Media, and the other provinces. He seized the empire ; on the 9th day of the month Garmapada,³ then it was he thus seized the empire. Afterwards CAMBYSES killing himself died.

12 Says DARIUS the King :—The empire, of which GOMATES, the Magian, dispossessed CAMBYSES, that empire

¹ Kabujiya.

² The 12th month.

³ The 5th month.

had been in our family from the olden time. After GOMATES the Magian had dispossessed CAMBYSES of Persia and Media and the dependent provinces, he acted with his own party he became King.

13 Says DARIUS the King:—There was not a man, neither Persian, nor Median, nor any one of our family, who could dispossess of the empire that GOMATES, the Magian. The state feared him exceedingly. He slew many people who had known the old BARDES; for that reason he slew the people “Lest they should recognize me that I am not BARDES the son of CYRUS.” There was not any one bold enough to say aught against GOMATES the Magian until I arrived. Then I prayed to ORMAZD; ORMAZD brought help to me. On the 10th day of the month Bágayádish¹ then it was, with my faithful men² I slew that GOMATES, the Magian and the chief men who were his followers. The fort named Sictachotes, in the district of Media, named Nisæa, there I slew him; I dispossessed him of the empire. By the grace of ORMAZD I became King; ORMAZD granted me the sceptre.

14 Says DARIUS the King:—The empire that had been wrested from our race, that I recovered, I established it in its place; as in the days of old; thus I did. The temples which GOMATES the Magian had destroyed, I rebuilt; I reinstated for the state the sacred chaunts and (sacrificial) worship, and confided them to the families which GOMATES the Magian had deprived of those offices. I established the kingdom in its place, both Persia and Media, and the other provinces; as in the days of old; thus I restored that which had been taken away. By the grace of ORMAZD I did this. I laboured until I had established our family in its place as in the days of old. I laboured, by the

¹ The 1st month.

² Or, with a few men.

END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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