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Detail from above the entrance of Tehran's fire temple, 1286š/1917–18. Photo by © Shervin Farridnejad

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Aliyari Babolghani, Salman, *Taḥrīr-e ʿīlāmi-ye katibe-ye dāryuš-e bozorg dar bisotūn. pīšgoftār, dastur-e ʿīlāmi-ye haḫāmanešī, ḥarfnevisī, tarǧome, moqābele bā taḥrīrhāye digar, yāddāšthā va vāže-nāme [The Elamite Version of Darius the Great's Inscription at Bisotun. Introduction, grammar of Achaemenid Elamite, transliteration, Persian translation, comparison with other versions, notes and index],* Tehran: Našr-e Markaz. 1394š/ 2015. Pp. 268. ISBN 978-964-213-272-0.

Yazdan Safaee

Achaemenid Elamite, Old Persian, and Achaemenid Babylonian are the languages by which Darius the Great presents the account of his vital triumphs in his monumental relief in Bisotun. Since this inscription has been a crucial key to the decipherment of cuneiform script and definitely a milestone to grasp many ancient languages, scholars have been paying proper attention to dealing with it. However, before the book under review being published one could see the lack of a direct translation from one of these three versions of Bisotun inscription into Persian by Iranian scholars. It is worth pointing out that there is more than a hundred years gap between Aliyari's work and one of the most important scholarly treatment of the Elamite version of the aforementioned inscription, Weissbach's *Die Keilinschriften der Achämeniden* in 1911. Yet, the Elamite language has attracted more attention in recent decades. In this

regard, the edition by Grillot-Susini, Herrenschmidt, and Malbran-Labat is a must-read work[1]. The present book is the first attempt to treat the Achaemenid Elamite version of Bisotun inscription in Persian, which is the product of the author's doctoral thesis.

The book consists of an introduction and four parts, in which the author deals with the grammar of Achaemenid Elamite, the transliteration and the Persian translation, followed by notes, a comprehensive glossary and bibliography. The introduction is dedicated to a description of the Bisotun monument and the versions of the inscription, the research background and finally the methodology. As Elamite is a less well-known language for the Persian-speaking audience, the author's main goal has been to introduce the Elamite language while examining the inscription.

In the beginning of his first chapter, which focuses on the grammar, Aliyari summarises up-to-date information on the word "Elam", the scripts by which the Elamite language has been written and a brief history of the language. Despite the silent and isolated nature of Elamite, which is considered to be an important barrier in tackling the linguistic problems, Aliyari has managed to reach an understanding of the phonology by picturing a general view in first step and then going through the details. Since the text is in Achaemenid Elamite, the author has concentrated on those language varieties which are common in Achaemenid Elamite rather than the older versions of Elamite. In order to clarify the subject, one can refer to case of 'h' which was eliminated in Achaemenid Elamite due to which the author omits it from the list of consonants.[2]

Next, in the same chapter, Aliyari deals with the morphology in which he treats nominal morphology, case, adjectives, pronouns, verbal morphology, adverbs, numerals, and interjections. On account of their importance, the author has principally focused on nominal morphology, pronouns, and verbal morphology. Nominal inflection divides into two genders, animate and inanimate. Achaemenid Elamite has demonstrative, personal, possessive, reflexive, relative, indefinite, and resumptive pronouns. Aliyari believes that the language has one verbal conjugation and two nominal conjugations and thus he does not follow the idea of some Elamitologists[3] who think of a third nominal conjugation. In case of necessity, Aliyari demonstrates the differences between Middle and Achaemenid Elamite conjugations. In the content of this chapter, the author deals with syntax containing word order and typology, agreement, agreement for kinship nouns, numbers, prepositions and postpositions, resumptive pronouns, negative and prohibitive particles, conjunction, relative clauses, and finally direct discourse.

The second chapter is dedicated to transliteration, Persian translation, and comparison with other versions. The narrative part consists of a lengthy sequence of events: the defeat of Gaumāta, the ascending to the throne by Darius and various campaigns against the rebels. The comparisons are mentioned

1-. Grillot-Susini, Françoise, Clarisse Herrenschmidt & Florence Malbran-Labat. 1993. «La Version Élamite de la Trilingue de Behistun: un Nouvelle Lecture», *Journal Asiatique* CCLXXXI 1- 2: 19- 59.

2-. However, Stolper who deals with the Elamite language in a broader way mentions it. See Stolper, Matthew w. 2004. Elamite, In Woodard, Roger D. (ed.), *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the World's Ancient Languages*, pp. 60-94. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

3-. Grillot-susini, Françoise [avec la collaboration de Claude Roche]. 1987. *Éléments de Grammaire Élamite*. Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations. Especially, see p. 33 where she writes as follows: «Il existe une conjugaison verbale et trois conjugaisons nominales; ces conjugaisons nominales sont construites sur les deux participes et sur la base verbale». And see also p. 35 for the third nominal conjugation.

in the footnotes. In case of personal names, Aliyari gives the Old Persian transcriptions. However, the same is not always true for the Achaemenid Babylonian variants. For example, Aliyari does not mention Achaemenid Babylonian variants for Auramazda. He tries, however, to show the differences between the versions by giving their translations (from Old Persian, Achaemenid Babylonian and Aramaic) in footnotes.

Photographing the inscription and re-examining previous studies have potentially enabled Aliyari to reach to a better reading.[4] The book, however, does not include any photographs, so any assessment on his readings should be taken with caution, or at least be postponed until the time when the photos are at disposal. The author tries to follow the original text as closely as possible but also pays attention to the eloquence of the writing. His Persian translation is clear and fluent.

Acquisitive notes on controversial issues from the inscription, in chapter 3, are intended to clarify the reasons for author's choices for transliteration and translation. Most of them are philological, but some of them deal with historical and/or cultural points. Next, there is a glossary, followed by a comprehensive bibliography.

Concerning the growing attention to the role of the Elamite elements in our understanding of cultural, historical, and socio-political aspects of Achaemenid Empire, we can consider the book under review as a definite progress in this field of study. To highlight the importance of the book, one can point out that it offers a manual for Achaemenid Elamite followed by a well-examined text which is completely thought-provoking for those who are intended to acquire knowledge of Achaemenid Elamite, which is about to place in the centrality of academic interests on this very subject.

4-. In his paper, Ela Filippone refers to Aliyari's reading several times: Filippone, Ela. 2016. Goat-Skins, Horses and Camels: How did Darius' army cross the Tigris? In Redard, Céline. (ed.), *Des Contrées Avestiques à Mahabad, via Bisotun: Études Offertes en Hommage à Pierre Lecoq*, pp. 25-60. Paris: Recherches et Publications.