THE
SCULPTURES AND INSCRIPTION
OF
DARIUS THE GREAT
ON
THE ROCK OF BEHISTŪN IN PERSIA.

INTRODUCTION.

On the main caravan route between the city of Baghdad and the Persian capital of Teheran, at a distance of about 65 miles from Hamadan, which is built upon the site of the ancient city of Ecbatana, stands the famous Rock now known as "Bisutūn" or "Behistūn" (see map, Plate V). The name of the Rock is derived from that of the small village of Bisitūn or Bisutūn, which lies near its foot. The form of the name "Behistūn" is not used by the modern inhabitants of the country, although it is that by which the Rock is best known among European scholars. The name "Behistūn," more correctly "Bahistūn," was borrowed by the late Major-General Sir Henry Creswicke Rawlinson, Bart., G.C.B., from the Arabic geographer Yaqūt,¹ who mentions the village and its spring, and describes the Rock as being of great height, and refers to the sculptures upon it. The earliest known name of the Rock is that given by Diodorus Siculus, who calls it τὸ Βαγιστάνον ὄρος,² whence, no doubt, are derived the modern forms of the name.

In the works of many modern writers the Rock of Behistūn is described as an isolated hill, but as a matter of fact it is the last peak of a long narrow range which skirts the plain of

¹ Ed. Wüstenfeld, Tome I., p. 769.
² Lib. II., Cap. XIII.
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Karmanshah on the east. In riding from Karmanshah to the village of Bisutún, this range lies at some distance to the left of the traveller; it rises abruptly from the plain, and its summit is broken into a series of peaks and ridges. Its sides are precipitous, and in many places afford suitable surfaces whereon sculptures and inscriptions might be cut, but it is not until we come to the end of the range that we find any reliefs or inscriptions. The reason for this is not far to seek. At the foot of the last peak, which rises to a height of over 3,800 feet, bubble up a number of springs into a pool of water clear as crystal, supplying the small stream which flows by the village and away into the plain (see Plate II). Here from time immemorial caravans have halted and watered their beasts, and every army which has marched from Persia into Northern Babylonia has drunk at these famous springs. Moreover, probably by reason of the springs, the Rock was regarded as a sacred place, even as Diodorus says. It is clear that the sacred character of the mountain, and the existence of springs at its foot, and its bold and prominent position on the great highway between Persia and Babylonia, induced Darius the Great to choose the precipitous face of the mountain as a suitable place whereon to carve sculptures and texts which should commemorate his conquests for all generations.

The caravan road passes between the springs and the Rock of Behistún, and immediately before it rounds the last spur of the mountain, a narrow cleft or gully opens in the face of the rock. High up, on the left-hand side of the cleft, some five hundred feet above the level of the plain, are cut the series of sculptures and inscriptions of Darius, which may be thus described (see Plate II).

The sculptures represent Darius, accompanied by two of his officers, receiving the submission of the leaders of rebellions against his authority in various parts of his empire during the early years of his reign. The king stands with his left foot

\[1\] Lib. II., Cap. III.
General view of the rock-sculptures and inscriptions at Behistun.

I. Sculptures and inscription of Darius the Great on the left side of the cleft in the rock.
II. Sculptures and inscription of Gotarzes, and modern panel.
III. Caravan route from Kermanshah to Hamadan, passing between the rock and the springs.
IV. Springs at the base of the rock, below the caravan route.
planted on the body of the Pseudo-Smerdis, Gaumâta the Magian, who lies on his back and has his hands raised in entreaty to Darius (see Plate I, Frontispiece). The king has his right hand lifted to Auramazda, who appears amid rays of light and lightnings, and in his left hand he grasps a bow. In front of him stand nine rebel leaders, roped together by their necks and having their hands bound behind their backs (see Plate III). The last figure of the series, who wears a high, pointed cap, was added to the group at a later period; it represents Skunkha, the Scythian. Below the sculptured panel are five columns of cuneiform text in the old Persian language, which record the suppression of the revolts.

To the left of the Persian inscription are three columns of cuneiform text, written in the Susian character and language, and containing a translation of the first four columns of the Persian text. On two faces of an overhanging rock, above the Susian version, and to the left of the sculptures, is a single column of cuneiform text, written in the Babylonian character and language, containing a translation of the first four columns of the Persian text (see Plate IV). To the right of the sculpture were four columns of supplementary cuneiform texts, which probably referred in part to the events described in the fifth column of the Persian text; this portion of the Rock is so much weathered that only a few words of the first column, which was in Susian, are now legible.

The earliest reference to the Rock of Behistûn we find in the History of Diodorus Siculus, who flourished in the first century of our era, and who states that the sculptures on the Rock were the work of Semiramis, who caused them to be made on her march from Babylon to Ecbatana. According to this writer the great queen pitched her camp by the springs at the foot of the Rock, and planted a garden there. His description of the sculptures is not accurate, for he states that the figure of Darius is that of the queen, and the twelve figures around the king he makes to be one hundred lance-bearers standing round about her. He says that the inscriptions are written in "Syriac
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characters," and that Semiramis ascended to the top of the Rock by laying the packs and saddles of her beasts of burden one upon the other.1 Diodorus also mentions that Alexander the Great visited the Rock on his march from Susa to Ecbatana.2 According to Sir Henry Rawlinson,3 the village of Behistūn is mentioned under the form "Baptana" by the early geographer Isidore4 of Charax, who, however, supplies no description of the Rock or its sculptures.

Among the earliest European visitors to Behistūn in modern times must be mentioned Ambrogio Bembo, who travelled in Persia in the second half of the XVIIth century, and gives a comparatively accurate description of the sculptures on the Rock.5 He was followed by Otter,6 about sixty years later, who considered the figure of the god Auramazda to be a mere heraldic device. After the lapse of another sixty years, Olivier7 visited Behistūn and made a drawing of the sculptures, which he afterwards published in the account of his travels. His drawing is very faulty, for he represents Darius as seated on a throne, with his feet resting on a footstool, and his copy of the rest of the composition is inaccurate. Notwithstanding this, Hoeck,8 in his Veteris Mediae et Persiae Monumenta (Göttingen, 1818), relies chiefly on Olivier for his information, and rejects Bembo's more trustworthy narrative. The Rock was again described by Gardanne, who supposed that Auramazda and his rays of light were a cross, and thought that the figures below it represented the Twelve Apostles.9

1 Diodorus, Lib. II., Cap. XIII. (ed. Müller, Bd. I., p. 90).
2 Diodorus, Lib. XVII., Cap. CX. (ed. Müller, Bd. II., p. 207).
5 See Morelli, Dissertazione, p. 64 ff. Venice, 1803.
8 For the statements of other early travellers besides those quoted by Hoeck, see De Sacy, Mémoires sur diverses Antiquités de la Perse, Paris, 1793, p. 217 ff.
I. Attendant.
II. Darius the Great.
III. The prostrate Gaumāta.
IV. Atrina.
V. Nidintu-Bēl.
VI. Fravartish (Phraortes).
VII. Martiya.
VIII. Citrantakhma.
IX. Vahyazdāta.
X. Arakha.
XI. Frāda.
XII. Slunkhā.
A few years later Kinneir recognized that the sculptures of Behistūn belonged to the same period as those of Persepolis, and this view was shared by Keppel, who describes the sculptures at some length. In 1822, Sir Robert Ker Porter published a valuable account of the travels which he had made in Georgia, Persia, Armenia, and Babylonia between the years 1817 and 1820, and to him we owe a lengthy description of the sculptures at Behistūn, and the best drawing of them which had hitherto been published. He recognised generally the great antiquity of the sculptures, but he misunderstood their purport. He says, "The design of this sculpture appears to tally so well with the great event of the total conquest over Israel by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria and the Medes, that I venture to suggest the possibility of this bas-relief having been made to commemorate that final achievement. Certain circumstances attending the entire captivity of the ten tribes, which took place in a second attack on their nation, when considered, seem to confirm the conjecture into a strong probability. . . . . In the royal figure, I see Shalmaneser, the son of the renowned Arbaces, followed by two appropriate leaders of the armies of his two dominions, Assyria and Media, carrying the spear and the bow. . . . . Besides, he tramples on a prostrate foe; not one that is slain, but one who is a captive. . . . . He must have been a king; . . . . . including the prostrate monarch, there are precisely ten captives; which might be regarded as the representatives, or heads, of each tribe; beginning with the king, who, assuredly, would be considered the chief of his; and ending with the aged figure at the end, whose high cap may have been an exaggerated representation of the mitre worn by the sacerdotal tribe of Levi; a just punishment of the priesthood at that time, which had debased itself by every species of

"idolatrous compliance with the whims, or rather wickedness of the people, in the adoption of pagan worship. . . . .
"Doubtless, the figure with the inscription on his garments, from the singularity of the appendage, must have been some noted personage in the history of the event; and, besides, it seems to designate a striking peculiarity of the Jews, who were accustomed to write memorable sentences of old, in the form of phylacteries, on different parts of their raiment.
"What those may mean, which cover the garment of this figure, we have no means of explaining, till the diligent researches of the learned may be able to decipher the arrow-headed character." ¹

Although, as we have seen, the sculptures of Behistūn had been sketched by several travellers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, nothing had been done to render the columns of inscriptions available to the learned for examination and study. To make copies of the texts is a very difficult matter, because, as already said, they are cut upon the face of a nearly precipitous rock, some five hundred feet above the level of the plain. It is possible to approach to within two hundred feet of the inscriptions by climbing up the masses of detached rock and boulders at the foot of the mountain, but at this point the rock suddenly rises almost perpendicularly, and the scaling of it is accompanied with considerable risk.

The first to overcome the difficulties was Sir Henry Rawlinson,² to whose labours the decipherment of the cuneiform inscriptions is largely due. In the year 1833, when still a lieutenant in the Indian service, he and other officers were selected to proceed to Persia to assist the Shah in training his army. In 1835 he was sent to Kermanshah as Military Adviser and Assistant to the Governor of that Province. On his way thither

¹ Travels, Vol. II., p. 159 ff.
² This distinguished scholar was born at Chadlington Park, Oxfordshire, on April 11th, 1810, and he died on March 5th, 1895, aged eighty-four years.
General view of the rock-sculptures and inscriptions of Darius the Great.

(The camera was tilted to take this photograph.)

I. Babylonian Version on left side and face of overhanging rock.

II. The three columns of the Susian Version below the overhanging rock and extending to the left if it.

III. Scarped rock below the inscriptions.

IV. Sculptures.

V. First three columns of the Persian Text. Col. IV and V are shown by the rock-face on the right of the picture.
RAWLINSON’S WORK AT BEHISTÜN.

he passed Hamadan (Ecbatana), and took the opportunity of copying the cuneiform inscriptions which are cut on the face of a rock in a ravine of Mount Elwend near that city. From these inscriptions, by independent study, he succeeded in obtaining the key to the values of the old Persian cuneiform signs. During the period of his residence at Kermanshah, from 1835 to 1837, he devoted his leisure to the examination of the inscriptions on the Rock of Behistûn, which is little more than twenty miles from that city. By the end of 1837 he had obtained copies of about one-half the columns of the Persian text, and the rendering of it which he made at this time proves that he was far in advance of every investigator of the subject. The incidents of his military career made it necessary for him to abandon his studies at Behistûn until 1844. In the summer of that year he returned thither with Mr. Hester and Captain Jones, K.N., and with their help he was enabled to finish his copies of the Persian text, and to make a complete copy of the Susian Version. The difficulty of carrying out the work is best described in his own words:—

"On reaching the recess which contains the Persian text of the record, ladders are indispensable in order to examine the upper portion of the tablet; and even with ladders there is considerable risk, for the foot-ledge is so narrow, about eighteen inches, or at most two feet in breadth, that with a ladder long enough to reach the sculptures sufficient slope cannot be given to enable a person to ascend, and, if the ladder be shortened in order to increase the slope, the upper inscriptions can only be copied by standing on the topmost step of the ladder, with no other support than steadying the

"body against the rock with the left arm, while the left hand
"holds the note-book, and the right hand is employed with the
"pencil. In this position I copied all the upper inscriptions,
"and the interest of the occupation entirely did away with any
"sense of danger.

"To reach the recess which contains the Scythic transla-
tion of the record of Darius is a matter of far greater
difficulty. On the left-hand side of the recess alone is there
any foot-ledge whatever; on the right hand, where the recess,
which is thrown a few feet further back, joins the Persian
tablet, the face of the rock presents a sheer precipice, and it
is necessary therefore to bridge this intervening space between
the left-hand of the Persian tablet and the foot-ledge on the
left-hand of the recess. With ladders of sufficient length, a
bridge of this sort can be constructed without difficulty; but
my first attempt to cross the chasm was unfortunate, and
might have been fatal, for, having previously shortened my
only ladder in order to obtain a slope for copying the Persian
upper legends, I found, when I came to lay it across to the
recess in order to get at the Scythic translation, that it was
not sufficiently long to lie flat on the foot-ledge beyond. One
side of the ladder would alone reach the nearest point of the
ledge, and, as it would of course have tilted over if a person
had attempted to cross in that position, I changed it from a
horizontal to a vertical direction, the upper side resting firmly
on the rock at its two ends, and the lower hanging over the
precipice, and I prepared to cross, walking on the lower side
and holding to the upper side with my hands. If the ladder
had been a compact article, this mode of crossing, although
far from comfortable, would have been at any rate practic-
able; but the Persians merely fit in the bars of their ladders
without pretending to clench them outside, and I had hardly
accordingly begun to cross over when the vertical pressure
forced the bars out of their sockets, and the lower and
unsupported side of the ladder thus parted company from the
upper, and went crashing down over the precipice. Hanging
Map of Western Persia and Mesopotamia, showing the position of Behistún.
on to the upper side, which still remained firm in its place, 
and assisted by my friends, who were anxiously watching the 
trial, I regained the Persian recess, and did not again attempt 
to cross until I had made a bridge of comparative stability." 1

Of the Babylonian Version he had, at this time, only succeeded in making copies of the small detached inscriptions, or epigraphs, which are cut below the figures in the relief; the main portion of the Babylonian text was still inaccessible. The matter stood thus until 1847, when Sir Henry Rawlinson returned once more to Behistún in the autumn of that year, and proceeded to make arrangements for obtaining a copy of the Babylonian Version. On this occasion he provided himself with ropes, planks, ladders; etc., and took with him some Kurdish mountaineers to assist him in making a paper squeeze of the inscription, as the position of the text on the rock had hitherto prevented him from making a copy by hand, as he had done in the case of the other versions. His description of the method by which he succeeded in making the paper squeeze is as follows:

"The Babylonian transcript at Behistún is still more difficult to reach than either the Scythic or the Persian tablets. The writing can be copied by the aid of a good telescope from below, but I long despaired of obtaining a cast of the inscription; for I found it quite beyond my powers of climbing to reach the spot where it was engraved, and the craigsmen of the place, who were accustomed to track the mountain goats over the entire face of the mountain, declared the particular block inscribed with the Babylonian legend to be unapproachable. At length, however, a wild Kurdish boy, who had come from a distance, volunteered to make the attempt, and I promised him a considerable reward if he succeeded. The mass of rock in question is scarped, and it projects some feet over the Scythic recess, so that it cannot be approached by any of the ordinary

1 Archaeologia, Vol. XXXIV., 1852, p. 74 f.
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"means of climbing. The boy's first move was to squeeze himself up a cleft in the rock a short distance to the left of the projecting mass. When he had ascended some distance above it, he drove a wooden peg firmly into the cleft, fastened a rope to this, and then endeavoured to swing himself across to another cleft at some distance on the other side; but in this he failed, owing to the projection of the rock. It then only remained for him to cross over to the cleft by hanging on with his toes and fingers to the slight inequalities on the bare face of the precipice, and in this he succeeded, passing over a distance of twenty feet of almost smooth perpendicular rock in a manner which to a looker-on appeared quite miraculous. When he had reached the second cleft the real difficulties were over. He had brought a rope with him attached to the first peg, and now, driving in a second, he was enabled to swing himself right over the projecting mass of rock. Here with a short ladder he formed a swinging seat, like a painter's cradle, and, fixed upon this seat, he took under my direction the paper cast of the Babylonian translation of the records of Darius. . . . I must add, too, that it is of the more importance that this invaluable Babylonian key should have been thus recovered, as the mass of rock on which the inscription is engraved bore every appearance, when I last visited the spot, of being doomed to a speedy destruction, water trickling from above having almost separated the overhanging mass from the rest of the rock, and its own enormous weight thus threatening very shortly to bring it thundering down into the plain, dashed into a thousand fragments. (Ibid., p. 75 ff.)

The paper squeezes referred to above, after being exhibited in the lecture rooms of various learned societies in London, were presented by Sir Henry Rawlinson to the Trustees of the British Museum, where portions of them are preserved to this day. Owing, however, to their frequent use by him when preparing his edition of the texts for press, and the constant handling of them in later years by English and
Continental scholars, and to the friable nature of the paper of which they were made, many of them crumbled and fell to pieces. Now whilst the paper squeezes were decaying, the inscriptions on the face of the Rock of Behistûn were also perishing rapidly.

Among the travellers in Persia since Rawlinson's time, the only one who made any attempt to re-examine any portion of the inscription is Prof. Williams Jackson, who in 1903 succeeded in reaching the ledge below the Persian text, and in collating doubtful passages in the lower portions of the first four columns of that version.¹

In connexion with the publication of cuneiform texts undertaken by the Trustees of the British Museum, it was decided to issue a revised edition of the Babylonian version of the Behistûn Inscription, which had been included by Sir Henry Rawlinson in the Trustees' publication, "Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia," Vol. III, pl. 39 and 40. The imperfect state of the paper squeezes made by Rawlinson in 1844 and 1847 rendered them insufficient for this purpose, and it was clear that no trustworthy revision could be ensured without a careful collation of the inscriptions on the rock itself. Accordingly in the spring of 1904, Mr. L. W. King, who was then conducting excavations at Kuyunjik (Nineveh) for the Trustees, was instructed to proceed to Behistûn, in order to collate the texts, and to make measurements and take photographs; and Mr. R. C. Thompson was dispatched from England to assist him. Mr. King left Mosul on the 19th April, and, proceeding via Arbil, Altun Kupri, Kerkuk, Taik, Tuz Khurmati, Khanîkin, the Zagros Pass, and Kermanshah, arrived at Behistûn on the 6th May. In order to approach the inscribed face of the rock he decided to employ cradles

Method employed to reach the inscriptions.

suspended from above, similar to those which he had used in copying rock-inscriptions in Assyria, as this was the only possible way of reaching the Babylonian Inscription, and of making a satisfactory copy of it. By climbing up a ravine round the end of the mountain, he succeeded in reaching a natural ledge about 200 feet above the inscription. Here iron crowbars were driven into crevices in the limestone, and ropes, made fast to them, were shaken with some difficulty down the uneven face of the rock, until their ends reached the ledge which is hewn in the surface below the inscription, and is rather less than 200 feet above the foot of the cliff (see Plate VII). This lower ledge was reached by climbing from below. Cradles made of wood from packing cases and mule-girths were slung from the pendent ropes and were raised or lowered, according to the position of the text under examination, by natives stationed on the natural ledge above. As some misconception exists regarding the true dimensions of the sculptures and inscriptions, the following detailed measurements made by Mr. King are given.

The height of the sculptured panel from the ledge on which Darius and the prisoners stand is 10 ft., and its total width, including the additional figure on the right, is about 18 ft. The figure of Darius is 5 ft. 8 in. high; the figures of the two attendants are each 4 ft. 10 in. high; the height of each prisoner is 3 ft. 10 in. The height of Auramazda, from the crest of his head-dress to the bottom of the rays, is 3 ft. 9 in., and the greatest width of the figure is 4 ft. 2 in. The space between the lowest rays and the head of the third captive measures only 6½ in. The last figure in the group of captives is that of Skunkha, the Scythian, a later addition; to make room for which, a portion of the first column of the supplementary texts, 3 ft. 1 in. to 3 ft. 2 in. wide, was cut away. The total height of Skunkha in his peaked cap is 5 ft. 11 in.

The god Auramazda is represented as a bearded figure. He wears a cylindrical head-dress, with horns, surmounted by
Key to the positions of the Persian Text and of the Susian and Babylonian Versions of the great Trilingual Inscription of Darius at Behistun.
a solar disk, with a small double disk in the centre, from which project eight rays. The right hand of the god is raised, showing the palm, and in his left hand he holds a ring; on each wrist he has a bracelet, and he is arrayed in a plain robe with open, hanging sleeves, fastened round the waist by a girdle. He stands within a circle, from which proceed flames or rays of light; below him, on each side, is a flash of three-forked lightning; see Plate VIII, and his figure, reduced from a scale-drawing by Mr. King, on Plate XIII.

The figures of Darius and his two attendants are carved in greater detail than those of the god and the prisoners; and their hair and beards are elaborately curled (see Plate XIV). The king wears a richly decorated crown, and each attendant a broad fillet ornamented with eight-leaved rosettes; the dress of each of the three figures is the same, and is fastened round the waist with a girdle, one end of which terminates in a tassel. The king holds a bow, and the first attendant bears a bow and a quiver with arrows; the bow’s ends are in the form of ducks’ heads. The second attendant grasps a spear. A careful examination of the figures of the prisoners has led to the conclusion that they are portraits; they have been described as bare-footed, but, as a matter of fact, some wear shoes, and the others high boots, with or without fastenings.

The following are the measurements of the columns of text:—

**Persian Text:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column</th>
<th>Height</th>
<th>Width</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>12 ft. high</td>
<td>6 ft. 1(\frac{1}{2}) in. wide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>12 ft. 1(\frac{1}{2}) in. high</td>
<td>6 ft. 1(\frac{3}{4}) in. wide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>11 ft. 10(\frac{1}{2}) in. high</td>
<td>6 ft. 1(\frac{3}{4}) in. wide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>11 ft. 7(\frac{1}{2}) in. high</td>
<td>6 ft. 1(\frac{3}{4}) in. wide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>5 ft. 8 in. high</td>
<td>5 ft. wide</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Between the last lines of Columns I.–IV. and the ledge is a space varying in height from 1 ft. 2 in. to 9 in.; and between the last line of Column V. and the ledge is a space of 7 ft. 2 in.
At the foot of the Rock, just above the spring, is a bas-relief of the Parthian Period. This relief contained two distinct compositions. In one of these, which is 28 ft. 6 in. broad, are sculptured colossal, bearded figures from eight to nine feet in height; only three of these now remain, two on the left and one on the right. The central portion of this half of the relief was destroyed about one hundred years ago by the builder of the caravanserai in the village of Bīsutūn, who sunk in it a tablet (which rises to the top of the sculptured surface, and is 12 ft. wide) to commemorate his work. In the other composition, which is 18 ft. broad and 10 ft. 6 in. high, the figures are in lower relief and on a smaller scale; though they are much mutilated and weathered, it is possible, at the moment when the sun is leaving the surface of the rock, to make out certain details (see Plate IX). In the centre is a horseman, and above his head is a winged figure flying to crown him with a wreath; he is unhorsing a second horseman. From the mutilated Greek inscription which is found on the smooth surface of the rock above the sculptures, we learn that the victorious horseman is the Parthian king Gotarzes, A.D. 46–50, and that his vanquished
View of Columns I–IV of the Persian Text at Behistún, from the ledge below the inscriptions.

I. Overhanging rock with Babylonian Version.
II. Projecting rock-face, with the Susian Version.
III. Gap in the ledge between the Susian and Persian Versions; in the distance are the village and caravanserai of Bisitun.
IV. Corner of the sculptured panel.
V. Cradle in position for examining the central portion of Col. IV of the Persian Text.
foe is Meherdates. 1 Behind Gotarzes are the remains of another mounted figure, with his lance in rest.

Near the Rock, and about a quarter of a mile from the Inscription of Darius, is a rude monolith, on which are sculptured figures in low relief. The monolith is a rough six-sided rock, which has rolled down from the mountain above, and now rests not far from the foot of the cliff, on the sloping ground some distance above the plain. The rock has not been hewn into shape, and the figures are sculptured on three of its sides (see Plates X and XI). The central figure is probably that of a king, bearded, and wearing a tunic which reaches to his knees and is fastened round his body by a girdle ornamented with disks, the two ends hanging in front of him. On his head is a small round cap with a bow on each side and two streamers which fall over the shoulders to the waist; round his neck is a collar or necklace. He wears pleated trousers, which are tucked into high boots that rise to the calf. The upper part of the figure is represented full-faced, but the feet are in profile and turn to the right. His right hand rests on a small altar, and he holds a cup in his left. On each side of him is the figure of an attendant, who wears a plain tunic and trousers. The figure on the right (see Plate XI) holds with both hands a curved object, much broken, which may be either a branch with a flowering top, or a cornucopia; that on the left (see Plate X) holds in his right hand a staff or spear, which rests upon the ground. Both figures lean towards the king. The measurements of the rock and its sculptures are as follows:

- **Figure of the king.** Height 5 ft. 7 in. Including the cap, 6 ft.
- **Figure on the right.** Height 5 ft. 4 in.
- **Figure on the left.** Height 5 ft. 6 in.

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1 For the Greek text, see *C.I.G.*, III., No. 4674; compare also Geiger and Kuhn, *Grundriss der Iranischen Philologie*, Bd. II., p. 594 f., Strassburg, 1904.
The width of the four sides of the monolith at the height of the top of the altar are:

- Front face ... 4 ft. 6 in.
- Right side ... 6 ft. 4 in.
- Left side ... 6 ft. 3 in.
- Back ... 7 ft. 9 in.

The top of the rock is flat.

The workmanship of the sculptures is exceedingly rough, and they can hardly be assigned to a date earlier than the Parthian Period; moreover, the streamers and other details of dress on the central figure suggest that it probably represents some Sassanian king. ¹

Near this monolith, on the steep slope between the plain and the foot of the Rock, are large numbers of broken burnt bricks, showing that a building, probably of the Sassanian Period, once stood here. The site has now been filled up by the earth and débris which have been washed down by the rains from the cliff above. There are traces of a track from the spring round the end of the cliff into this higher ground, passing among the fallen rocks to the left of the present caravan route to Hamadan. On the other side of the caravan route many of the fallen blocks have been shaped where they lie, but they have not been removed. Among them are a few modern gravestones. The building for which the blocks were prepared probably stood near the monolith, 250 to 300 feet above the plain, and commanded an extensive view. Here it would be sheltered by the projecting end of the range from the high wind which sometimes, for days together, blows down the valley from the direction of Kermanshah.

The last work to be noticed in connexion with the rock sculptures at Behistûn is opposite the village of Bisutûn. Here, at some height above the plain, the face of the rock has been

¹ For other descriptions of this monolith, see Oskar Mann, Globus, Bd. LXXXIII., No. 21, June, 1903, p. 328; Williams Jackson, Persia, Past and Present, p. 210 ff., New York, 1906.
The god Anumazda on the rock-sculpture at Behistun.
cut away and a smooth surface formed, which measures from 80 to 100 feet in height, and from 500 to 540 feet in width (see Plate XII). The total width of the space on the rocks on which workings are visible is about 600 feet, and the tool-marks of the masons, which are in curved lines, are still to be seen on the half-prepared surface of the rock. Above the cutting the natural rock projects irregularly, in some places, for several feet. Immediately in front of it is a terrace, or platform, made of earth and rocks, heaped up and extending forward from the rock for a distance of nearly 300 feet. This platform was never finished, and its front edge still retains the angle formed by the earth and stones as they were thrown down from above.

At the base of the slope are the remains of a massive wall, apparently unfinished, formed of rough-hewn stones, and clearly intended to serve as the retaining wall of the platform.

According to some, the rock was cut away and smoothed to receive colossal sculptures, but a careful examination of the whole area suggests that it was intended as the site of a palace, possibly of some Sassanian king. If this view be correct, the palace would have been built up against the mountain, and some of its chambers would have been hewn out of the living rock. The sole disadvantage of the site is the absence of water, but it would have been quite easy to cut an underground conduit from the springs, which are opposite to the sculptures of Darius and Gotarzes, whence an ample supply could have been obtained. The palace itself was never begun, and when only half prepared the site was abandoned. The portion of the platform nearest the mountain is covered with large rocks, some of which are the result of the old workings, while others have fallen from the cliff above. At both ends of the worked surface of the rock the lower portions are in a more unfinished state than those of the centre, and it is evident that the masons worked down the rock in ledges, clearing and smoothing the surface as they went. The platform was made chiefly of the débris removed from the workings. From a spectator in the plain below it hides
the lower portion of the smoothed surface of the rock, a fact which indicates that the worked area was not intended to receive sculptures. However, the platform would have formed an admirable site for a palace, enabling the occupants to obtain an extensive view of the plain, and rendering the building itself visible from a considerable distance.

By far the most important of all the inscriptions of the Achaemenian kings yet discovered, is the great Trilingual Inscription of Darius on the Rock at Behistūn. Of the part which this valuable document has played in cuneiform decipherment no detailed description need be given here. It is sufficient to say that, although from the short inscriptions found at Persepolis and copied by Niebuhr and other travellers, Grotefend, Rask, Saint Martin, Burnouf, and especially Lassen, had succeeded in identifying correctly the values of many of the Persian characters, it was not until Sir Henry Rawlinson had made copies of the long text of Behistūn, that any real advance was made in the understanding and interpretation of the Old Persian language. Rawlinson was the first to translate correctly an Old Persian cuneiform text of any length, and the conclusions which he arrived at in 1847 are accepted by scholars to-day with comparatively small modifications. His "Memoir" on the Persian text of the Behistūn Inscription was published in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, and is the foundation of all subsequent researches.

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1 For authorities on the subject, see above, p. xvii, note 1.
2 See Journal Royal Asiatic Society, Vol. X. and Appendix to Vol. XII. The other principal editions of the text are: Kossowicz, Inscriptiones Palaeo-Persicae Achaemenidarum, St. Petersburg, 1872; Spiegel, Die Altpersischen Keilschriften, Leipzig, 1881; Weissbach and Bang, Die Altpersischen Keilschriften, Leipzig, 1893. Among translations of portions of the text may be mentioned those by F. Müller in the Wiener Zeitschrift, 1887, 1897, etc.; Gray, American Journal of Philology, 1900, etc.; and for important philological discussions, see Bartholomae in Grundriss der Iranischen Philologie, I, p. 152 ff., 1895; Foy, Zeits. für vergleichende Sprachforschungen, Bd. XXXV., pp. 1 ff., 1897; Bartholomae, Altiranisches Wörterbuch, Strassburg, 1904; Justi, Indogermanische Forschungen, Bd. XVII. (Anzeiger), p. 84 ff., 1905; Williams Jackson, Persia, Past and Present, p. 196 ff., etc.