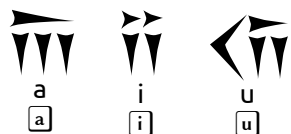Old Persian is the name applied to the Persian langauge used in the cuneiform inscriptions of the Achaemenian dynasty; it was the vernacular speech of the Achaemenian rulers.
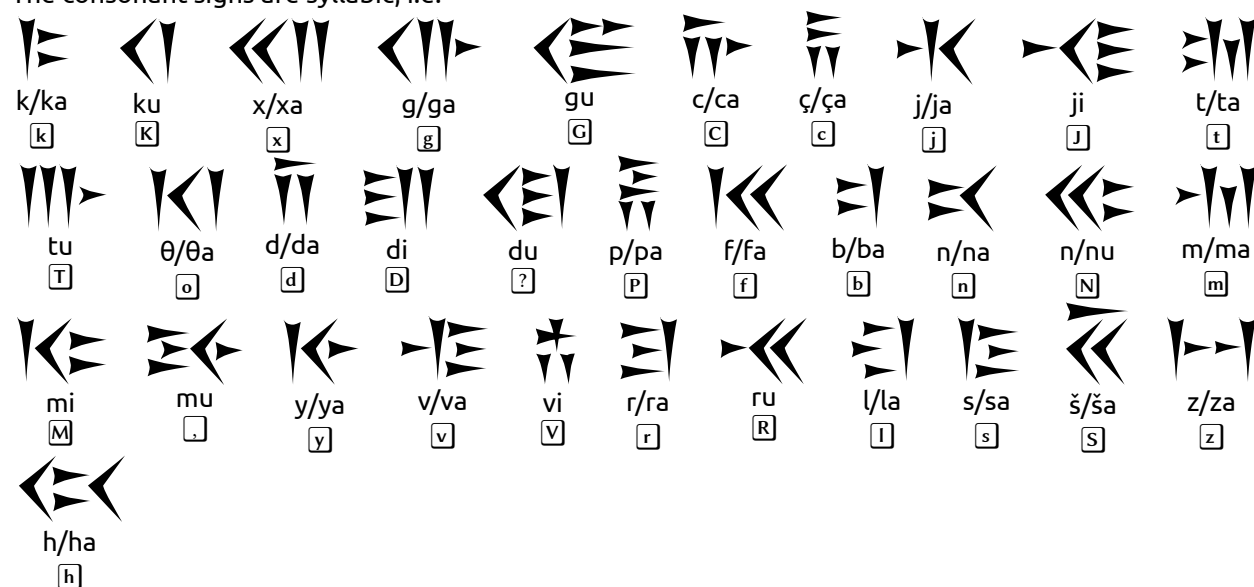
1   Writing System

[3,5]

Old Persian is written in a cuneiform script, but with only a small number of signs compared to languages such as Akkadian. There are 3 vowel signs and 33 consonant signs

1.1   Vowel Signs (3)

a	i	u
a	i	u

1.2   Consonant Signs (33)

The consonant signs are syllabic, i.e.

k/ka	ku	x/xa	g/ga	gu	c/ca	ç/ça	j/ja	ji	t/ta
k	K	x	g	G	C	c	j	J	t

tu	θ/θa	d/da	di	du	p/pa	f/fa	b/ba	n/na	n/nu	m/ma
T	o	d	D	?	P	f	b	n	N	m

mi	mu	y/ya	v/va	vi	r/ra	ru	l/la	s/sa	š/ša	z/za
M	.	y	v	V	r	R	l	s	S	z

h/ha
h

> **!** Note that 𒊿 and 𒇲 are different.
>
>   r/ra   l/la
>   r   l
>
> For example, "Darius" is 𒁹 𒈙 𒊿 𒊬 𒁀 𒐐 𒌋 not 𒁹 𒈙 𒇲 𒊬 𒁀 𒐐 𒌍

1.3   Logograms (Signs That Stand for a Whole Word)

king	earth	country	god	Ahuramazada	Ahuramazada (genitive)
Q	e	4 3	6	W q	q
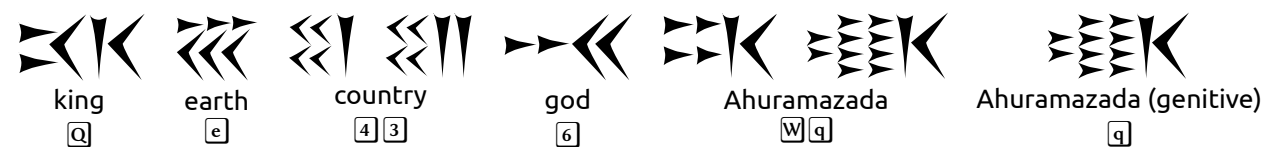
2   Behistun Inscription
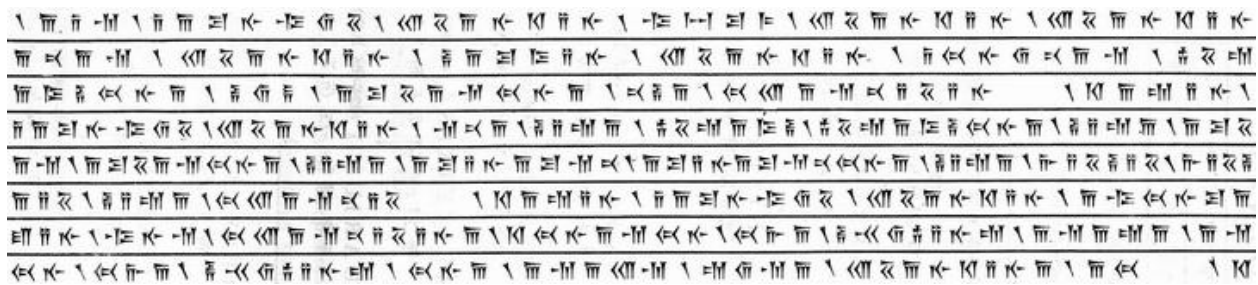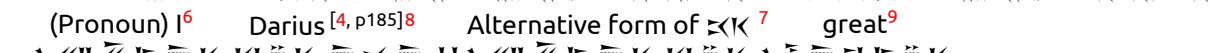
Figure 1: Behistun Inscription, Column i, lines 1-8[2]

1. 𐎠   𐎭𐎠𐎼𐎹𐎺𐎢𐏁 𐏃𐎧𐎠𐎶𐎴𐎡𐏁𐎡𐎹   𐎧𐏁𐎠𐎹𐎰𐎡𐎹 𐎺𐏀𐎼𐎣   𐎧𐏁𐎠𐎹𐎰𐎡𐎹 𐎧𐏁𐎠𐎹𐎰𐎡𐎹𐎠𐎴𐎠𐎶
    (Pronoun) I[6]   Darius [4, p185][8]   Alternative form of 𐎧𐏁 [7]   great[9]
    𐎧𐏁𐎠𐎹𐎰𐎡𐎹 𐎱𐎠𐎼𐎿𐎡𐎹 𐎧𐏁𐎠𐎹𐎰𐎡𐎹 𐎭𐏃𐎹𐎢𐎴𐎠𐎶

1. I am Darius, the great king, king of kings, the king of Persia, the king of countries, the son of Hystaspes, the grandson of Arsames, the Achaemenid.

2. King Darius says: My father is Hystaspes; the father of Hystaspes was Arsames; the father of Arsames was Ariaramnes; the father of Ariaramnes was Teispes; the father of Teispes was Achaemenes.

3. King Darius says: That is why we are called Achaemenids; from antiquity we have been noble; from antiquity has our dynasty been royal.

3   Typing Old Persian

[1]

!		7 𐏗	M 𐎷	c 𐎨		
"		8 𐏘	N 𐎴	d 𐎭		
# 𐎤		9 𐏙	O 𐎮	e 𐎠		
$ 𐎤		:	P 𐎱	f 𐎳		
% 𐎤		; 𐎠	Q 𐎹	g 𐎥		
&		< 𐏐	R 𐎼	h 𐏃		
'		= 𐏓	S 𐎿	i 𐎡		
(𐎤		>	T 𐎫	j 𐎩		
) 𐏑		? 𐎶	U 𐎢	k 𐎣		
* 𐏕		@ 𐎧	V 𐎾	l 𐎾		
+ 𐎲		A 𐎠	W 𐎺	m 𐎶		
, 𐏐		B 𐏎	X 𐎧	n 𐎴		
- 𐏐		C 𐎨	Y 𐎹	o 𐎮		
. 𐏐		D 𐎭	Z 𐏀	p 𐎱		
/ 𐏐		E □	[𐏔	q 𐎤		
0 𐏐		F 𐎳	\ 𐏐	r 𐎼		
1 𐏑		G 𐎥	] 𐏖	s 𐎿		
2 𐏒		H 𐏃	^	t 𐎫		
3 𐏗		I 𐎡	_ 𐎧	u 𐎢		
4 𐏘		J 𐎩	' 𐎺	v 𐎺		
5 𐏙		K 𐎣	a 𐎠	w 𐎺		
6 𐎼		L 𐎾	b 𐎲	x 𐎧		

y 𐎹   { 𐏏   } 𐏑
z 𐏀 | 𐏓

References

[1] egreg. How to typeset ancient Persian scripts in LaTeX.

[2] Livius. Column I, lines 1-8.

[3] Omniglot. Old Persian Cuneiform.

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[6] Wiktionary. 𐎴 𐎠 𐎶.

[7] Wiktionary. 𐎧 𐏁 𐎴 𐎹 𐎰 𐎡 𐎹.

[8] Wiktionary. 𐎠 𐎴 𐎢 𐎹 𐎭 𐎴 𐎡.

[9] Wiktionary. 𐎭 𐏀 𐎢 𐎡.