

# **Reading Herodotus in Tehran**

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**April 2017**

The usage of other languages as bases for translation without any reliance on the original language - here, Classical Greek- might lead to inconsistencies between the translations as well as misunderstandings.

For example, two secondary or indirect Persian translations of Paragraph 83 of Book IV of The History of Herodotus have dealt with the concept of the paragraph in two completely different ways, one that has been composed from an English translation uses the Persian verb «از اصرار دست برداشت», that can be translated here into the English sentence “He had ceased”, where it should be “ἐπέπαυτο”, while the other that has been composed from a French translation uses the Persian verb «خودکشی کرد», that can be translated here into the English sentence “He had put himself to death”.

(For the Greek text, see: [https://www.hs-augsburg.de/~%20harsch/graeca/Chronologia/S\\_ante05/Herodot/her\\_his4.html](https://www.hs-augsburg.de/~%20harsch/graeca/Chronologia/S_ante05/Herodot/her_his4.html))

One way to achieve a reliable and direct translation is to study the possible ways in the composition of New Persian translation from Classical Greek through any Iranian language that has been used alongside either Classical or Koinē Greek in the composition of one text.

(See the attached file entitled as ‘Some Example of Comparison between Western Middle Iranian Languages and Koinē Greek’ .)

However, there are differences between the languages that might force the translators to choose syntactical structures that are different from the original structures, but convey a good and sensible content.

(See my Persian translation of the Paragraph 1 of Book VII of The History of Herodotus, and the added comments by me, on:

<http://sosol.perseids.org/alpheios/app/align-editsentence-perseids.xhtml?s=1&numSentences=1&doc=46702> )

# Some Example of Comparison between Western Middle Iranian Languages and Koinē Greek

The trilingual inscription of Šāpūr I in  
Ka'ba ī Zardošt

## Middle Persian version

'YK MNW 'ḤR LNḤ MR'ḤY YḤWWN ZK yzt'n ḥwprst'tly W ḥwk'mktly  
YḤWWNd 'YK 'LHc yzty ZNH 'wgwn ḥdbry YḤWWNd cygwn LNḤ  
YḤWWN.

kū kē pas amāh xwadāy bēh ān yazadān huparistātar ud  
hukāmagtar bēh kū ōy-iz yazad ēn ōwōn ayār bawēnd čiyōn amāh  
būd.

In order that, whoever may be lord after us, he may be pious and of  
great good will toward the gods, so that to him the gods will also be  
friends thus as they have been to us.

## Parthian version

LḤwyš MNW B'TR MN LN YḤYH W prnhw ḤWYt LḤwyš 'pr y'ztn  
CBW W krtkny twḥšywd 'YK y'zt 'dywr YḤYHnt W dastkrt 'BDWnt.

hau-iš ke pas až amāh bawēndēh ud farraxw ahēd, hau-iš abar  
yazadān xīr ud kardagān tuxšēd kū yazad ayār bawēnd ud dastgird  
karēnd.

He, also, who may be after us and may be fortunate, he, also,  
should exert himself in the affairs and rites of the gods, so that (to  
him) the gods will be friends and will make (him their) ward.



## Ancient Greek version

καὶ κεῖνος δὲ ὅστις μεθ' ἡμᾶς ἔσται καὶ εὐτυχὴς ἔσται καὶ κεῖνος ἐπὶ τὰς χρείας καὶ θρεσκείας τῶν θεῶν σπουδασάτω ἵνα οἱ θεοὶ βοηθοὶ αὐτῷ ἔσονται καὶ δαστικίρτην ἑαυτῶν ποιήσωνται.

And also that man who will be after us and will be fortunate, also let that man be eager for the affairs and rites of the gods so that the gods will be assistant to him and make a settling for themselves.

و آن مرد نیز که پس از ما خواهد بود و خوشبخت خواهد بود، آن مرد نیز بر امور و آیینهای خدایان مشتاق باشد، که خدایان یاور وی خواهند بود و برای خود اقامتگاهی بسازند.



## Ka'ba-ye Zardošt: Shapur I's inscription

The Ka'ba has been variously interpreted as a fire temple, archive, or mausoleum. Schmidt and Stronach argued about the matter without reaching a decision. In 1983 H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg interpreted the two buildings as coronation towers erected by Darius I.

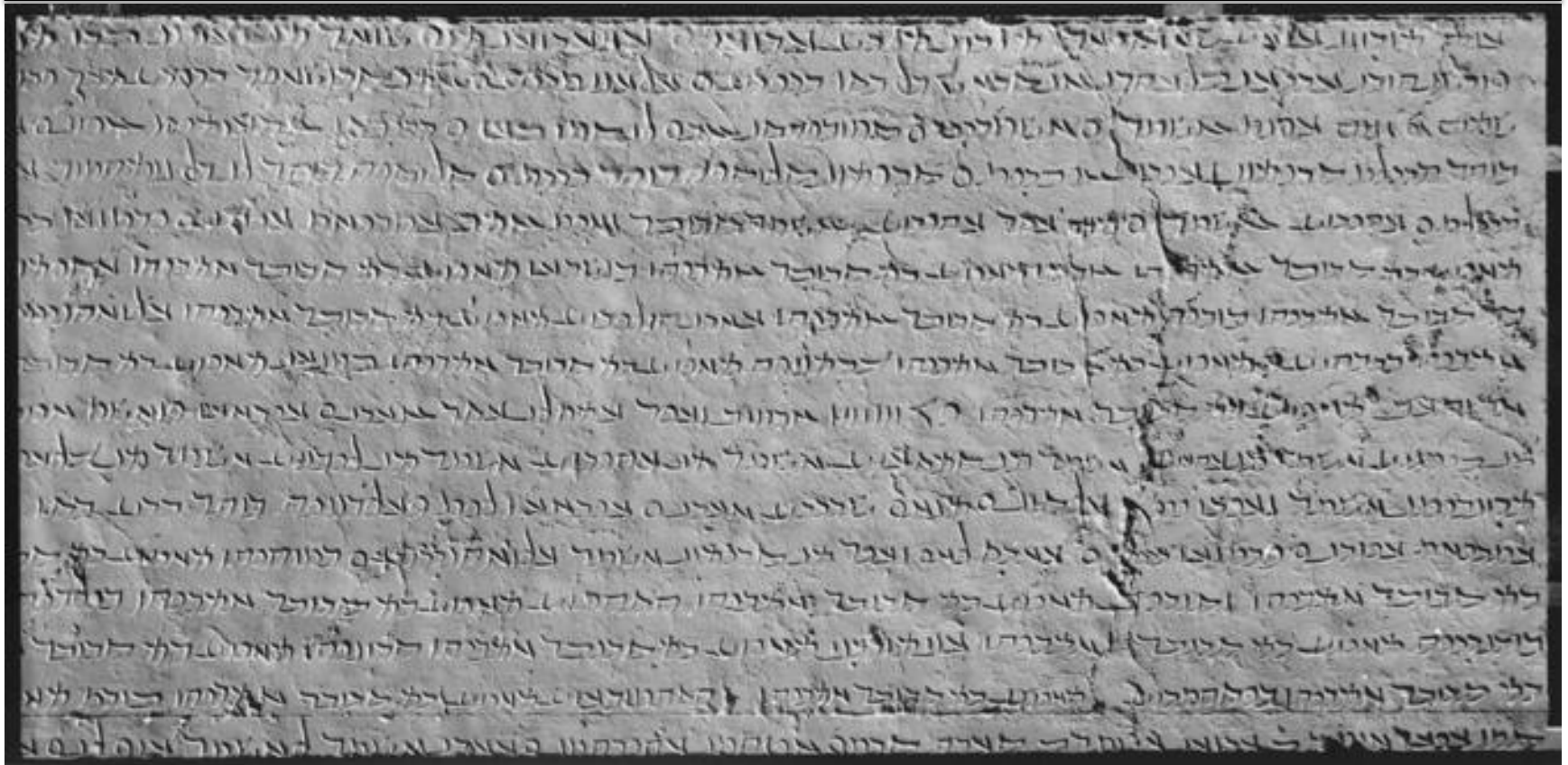
The interpretation of the Ka'ba as an archive building for the Avesta Codex is based on the word *bwny BYT'* (*bunxānag*) in the KKZ inscription. The word only appears in this single royal inscription, although it may now be compared with Bactrian *bonokadgo* "family estate". The Middle Persian term was translated earlier as "library" or "archive" and taken as referring to the Ka'ba. H. Humbach and M. Back questioned W. B. Henning's interpretation of the word and disproved his theory.

Source: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/kaba-ye-zardost>

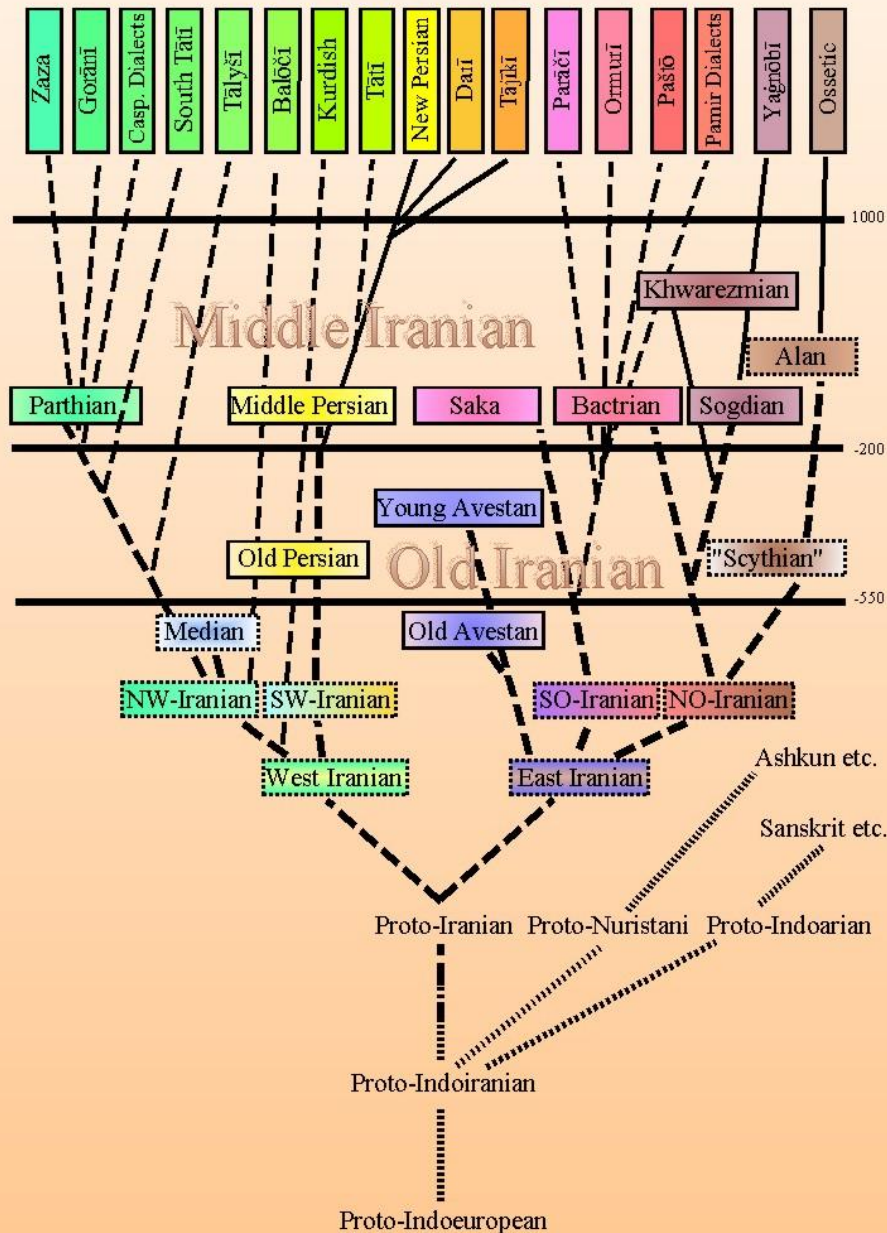


Picture from Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Ka%27ba-ye\\_Zartosht\\_33.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Ka%27ba-ye_Zartosht_33.jpg)

# The Parthian version of Shapur I's inscription



## Modern Iranian



## Parthian language

The **Parthian language** is one of the Iranian languages. Parthian was the language of the Parthian State (ca. 247 BC – ca. 230 AD).

Parthian writing system was derived from Aramaic, employing a high incidence of Aramaic words only as ideograms or logograms.

See the Iranian language branches at: <http://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/didact/idg/iran/iranstam.htm>