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80) Two Fake Old Persian Tablets (Malformed, incomplete copies of DSe and DHa/DPh) — With great thanks to Rüdiger Schmitt.

Introduction

Schmitt's book "Pseudo-altpersische Inschriften: Inschriftenfälschungen und moderne Nachbildungen in altpersischer Keilschrift" which is a great investigation on fake Old Persian tablets has divided the fake ones into three categories, Inauthentic Achaemenid inscriptions, Forgeries and imitations.

In the section 3 of this famous book there are discussions on modern forgeries and these two we are going to introduce are examples of modern forgeries (Skjærvø 2008, 217-8).

Some months ago a picture of a gold tablet and a stone piece with cuneiform on were sent to me by a friend from Khuzestan. The place they were sent from would take anybody's attention. But their shapes were quite dissimilar to the genuine existing ones. Since the tablets are not available, nothing can be said about their exact size.

Gold Tablet Size: ? × ? × ? – Material: Gold – Language: Old Persian

The cuneiform is carved on a very thin piece of gold sheet which its traces can be seen on its back. The tablet has eighteen lines carved in a two-line box with four holes on the four corners of the tablet and two ruptures can be seen, one in the third line and another one covering line fifteen and sixteen.

The graphemes are badly carved and sometimes with illogical space between them.

This is an incomplete copy of DSe. The Old Persian version of this inscription is not preserved as complete and has been restored based on the Akkadian version which is almost complete. DSe is in three languages which the OP version consists of 11 broken fragments (Schmitt 2009:14 Kent 1953: 110)

The photo was also sent to Professor Rüdiger Schmitt and he also commented that since it breaks off in § 2 in the midst of the self-predication of the Great King and ending just at this point is without any parallel therefore it is entirely impossible. Moreover, a tablet with four holes in the corners likewise is unparalleled. And a further reason is that the characters themselves are engraved quite carelessly. This does not agree with the value of a gold tablet.

Since the text of DSe is nowhere preserved completely, but is composed only from a number of fragments (on various materials), the forger must have used some modern edition. Schmitt believes that the forger must have used Ralph Norman Sharp's.[1], [2]

§ 1

1. b-g : v-z-r-k : a-u-
2. r-m-z-d-a : h-y : i-
3. m-a-m : b-u-m i-i-m :
4. a-d-d-a : h-y : a-v-m
5. : a-s-m-a-n-m : a-d-d-
6. a : h-y : m-r-t-i-y-m
7. : a-d-d-a : h-y : š-i-y-
8. a-t-i-m : a-d-d-a : m-
9. r-t-i-y-h-y-a : h-y
10. : d-a-r-y-v-u-m : XŠ-
11. m : a-ku-u-n-u-š : a-i-

12. v-m : p-r u-u-v-n-a-m
   13. : XŠ-m : a-i-v-m : p-ru -
   14. u-v-n-a-m : f-r-m-a-t-
   15. a-r-m :

§ 2
   15. a-d-m : d-a-r-y-
   16. v-u-š : XŠ : v-z-r-k
   17. : XŠ : XŠ-y-a-n-a-m : XŠ
   18. : d-h-y-u-n-a-m :

Transcription

§ 1 [1]baga vazṛka A.u[2]ramazdā haya i[3]mām būmĭm [4]adadā haya avam [5]asmānam adad[6]ā haya martiyam [7]adadā hayašiy[8]ātim adadā ma[9]rtiyahyā haya [10]Dārayava.um xšāyaθiya[11]m akunau̯š ai̯[12]vam parūnām [13]xšāyaθiyam ai̯vampar[14]ūnām framāt[15]āram.
§ 2 adam Dāraya[16]va.uš xšāyaθiya vazṛka [17]xšāyaθiya xšāyaθiyānām xšāyaθiya [18]dahyūnām

Translation

§ 1 [1-15] A great god (is) Ahuramazda, who set in place this earth, who set in place yonder sky, who set man in place, who set in place happiness for man, who made Darius king, one king of many, one lord of many.
§ 2 [15-18] I am Darius, the great king, king of kings, king of lands... (Ibid, 98)

Stone Piece Size: ? × ? × ? – Material: Stone – Language: Old Persian
§ 1
   1. d-a-r-y-v-u-š
   2. : XŠ : v-z-r-k :
   3. XŠ : XŠ-y-n-a-
   4. m : n¹ : d-h-y-u-
   5. v-n-a-m : vi-i-
   6. š-t-a-s!-p-h-
   7. y-a : p-u-d¹ :
   8. h- ¹x-a-m-n-[i-š-i-y :]

Transcription

§ 1 [1]Dārayava.uš [2]xšāyaθiya vazṛka [3]xšāyaθiya xšāyaθiyānā[4]m n¹dahyū[5]nām Vi[6]štās¹pah[7]yā puda¹ [8]Ha¹xāmanišiya.

Translation

§ 1 1-8 Darius the great king, king of kings, king of lands, son of Hystaspes, an Achaemenid (Ibid, 124-5).

This Stone piece is another incomplete, poor and unfaithful copy of DPh or DHa. The characters are engraved quite unprofessionally and unbeautifully. In line 4 the forger has used an *n* 𐎴 instead of *XŠ* 𐎧 which seems to be because of similarity between the two graphemes. In line 6 the forger has used an ambiguous character ˃ instead of *s* 𐎿. In line 7 the word must be *p-u-ç* (*puça*) which the grapheme *d* 𐎭 has wrongly been used for *ç* 𐏂 which again may be because of similarity and profound ignorance. In line 8 the forger has inserted an extra and ambiguous character ǀ between h 𐏃 and x 𐎧 which may be because of being incognizant of Old Persian graphemes and phoneme inventory and in addition to that, the scribe has left the line broken.

Notes
   1. Personal correspondence with R. Schmitt.
   2. Sharp, R. N. (1973). *The inscriptions in Old Persian cuneiform of the Achaemenian emperors*. Central Council of the Celebration of the 25th Century of the Foundation of the Iranian Empire.

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   SKJÆRVØ, P. O. (2008). Pseudo-altpersische Inschriften: Inschriftenfälschungen und moderne Nachbildungen in altpersischer Keilschrift. *Indo-Iranian Journal*, 51(2), 217-218.

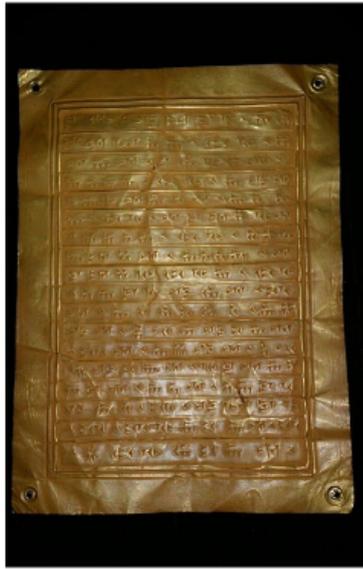Figure 1: The fake Old Persian Gold Tablet 1
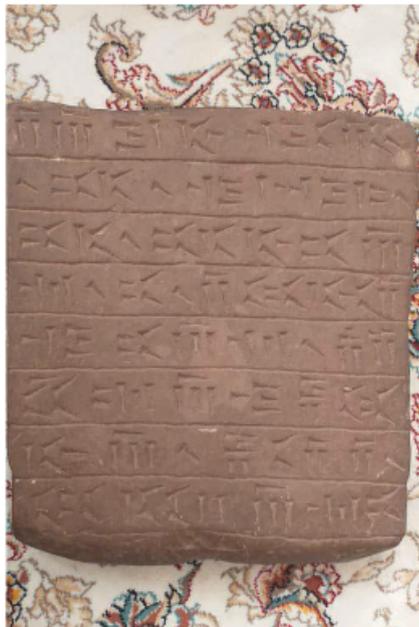

Figure 2: The fake Old Persian Stone Piece 2

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