

## **Old Iranian correlative negation and its reflection in Achaemenid Elamite.**

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The Achaemenid Empire was the perfect setting for both language contact and bilingualism. Across the whole Persian Empire the interaction of multiple languages took place. By the beginning of the first millennium, with the arrival of the first Iranian tribes to the Iranian plateau, language contact between Iranians and local Elamite population was underway.

The Achaemenid world represents the paramount outcome of exogenesis of two ethnic groups whose interaction -of more than five centuries- might have resulted into language contact. Nevertheless, what we evidence in the trilingual texts dating from the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE is the bilingualism of the scribes. Most of scribes were Iranophones, some of them were Elamite speakers, while others were of Semitic origin- either Akkadian or Aramaic speakers. The administrative language of choice was Achaemenid Elamite, a late variety of this non-Indo-European language, which represents an adaptation by the Iranophone population. Stolper (2005: 20) states the importance of this language by asserting Elamite was how Iranians communicated in writing. It was not until 521 BCE that an Old Iranian language, concretely Old Persian, was committed to writing.

In this paper, I will study the concrete case of correlative negation (“neither...nor”) in both Achaemenid Elamite (*in-ni...a-ak in-ni*) and Old Persian (*naiy...naiy*) in the Bisotūn Inscription. It seems plausible to suggest for the Elamite version the existence of syntactic patterns that reflect Old Iranian, possibly Avestan, sentence structure when correlative negation is being used. The main objective of this paper is the comparison of both versions in the Royal Inscriptions in order to highlight their linguistic peculiarities and how these features relate to a second-language acquisition of Elamite among the Iranophone scribes. Thus, I will propose that textual linguistic interferences might be the aftermath of bilingualism among scribes and, in this way, a byproduct of language contact: morphosyntactic structures being transferred by imposition from Old Iranian into Achaemenid Elamite.

References:

Stolper, M.W. (2005), *Achaemenid Languages and Inscriptions*, in. J. Curtis & N. Tallis (Hg.), *Forgotten Empire. The World of Ancient Persia*, London.

(further references can be provided, if so requested)

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