

## CHAPTER TWENTY THREE

## ELAMITE ROYAL INSCRIPTIONS



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## LITERARY GENRE

Royal inscriptions represent the literary genre through which the kings aimed at proclaiming and preserving eternal memory of their piety and achievements. Four main types can be distinguished.

*a. Standard inscriptions*, the simple signature of the king on an object offered to a deity; the royal name was sometimes followed by his titulary.<sup>1</sup>

*b. Votive inscriptions* (dedications), which, likewise, dedicate an object to a deity, but are more developed in content. They generally include the name of the deity, the name of the king who benefited from the gift, the donor's name (if not the king), the verb expressing the offering<sup>2</sup> and, for longer texts, the circumstances, the motive of the offering (in general "life", i.e. eternal life) and sometimes a curse against those who would attempt to damage it and/or an appeal for divine blessing.

*c. Foundation inscriptions*, which, unlike the two previous types, are not related to a votive offering but are repeated identically on multiple exemplars (usually bricks) to commemorate the (re)construction of a temple, a palace, and so on. Included in the masonry of the building, they are not necessarily visible: they are primarily intended to be read by the gods or subsequent kings. The basic pattern includes the name of the king with titles and filiation, the object of the construction and the verb relating to it,<sup>3</sup> sometimes supplemented by the circumstances, the motivation of the builder and, more rarely, by a curse. When it is related to a temple, the inscription opens mostly with the name of the deity to whom the building is dedicated.

*d. Triumphal inscriptions*, far less numerous, are devoted to the religious or military deeds achieved by the sovereign under the protection of his god.

## PHYSICAL SUPPORTS

The physical supports of the inscriptions are in relation to their different typologies and vary according to their setting and historical period. Apart from the Neo-Elamite (such as that of Hanni at Izeh) and Achaemenid (at Bisotun, Mount Elvend, Naqsh-e Rostam, Van) rock reliefs, royal inscriptions are mainly on statues, vases and vessels,

and ceremonial weapons for standard and votive inscriptions, while bricks are the support par excellence of foundation inscriptions. However, in the Achaemenid period, they are also found on palace walls, column bases, gold or silver plaques, stone or marble tables and more rarely on bricks.

The bricks<sup>4</sup> show significant variations, both in the material and in the way they were inscribed. First simply dried, then usually baked, they were made of clay soil mixed with a usually vegetal temper, kneaded with water and then pressed and shaped in a wooden mold. Before drying or baking, the text was inscribed by hand or impressed with a stamp. During the 2nd millennium BC the quality of the clay became more refined and formats became more regular; under the Shutrukids, siliceous bricks appeared, some of which were covered, at least on one of the sides, with a blue, green, yellow or brown glaze. In the Neo-Elamite period, two different types coexisted: the siliceous bricks as in the preceding period and large bricks in coarse reddish and heavy clay.

There were at first large square (33–35 × 33–35 cm) or rectangular half-square bricks with quite variable size (especially in thickness). One can assume a certain specificity according to their employ: thus, for example, bricks commemorating the restoration of a wall are all significantly larger than those of the same period dedicated to the rebuilding of the temple *Ekikuan*. In the Middle Elamite period, quarter bricks were added to these modules, and then, under the Shutrukids, bricks “in parts of a circle” which belonged to columns. Other bricks, integrated in a bas-relief, show a bulge corresponding to the bodies of a figure and, like the shaped bricks (“*briques à ressaut*”), attest the integration of inscribed bricks in the architecture of the building.

The position of the inscription on the support is also varied: in ancient times, the bricks in the name of Shulgi show the peculiarity of being framed on the upper or lower surface (“bed face”) of the brick; the inscriptions of the other kings lie on the side face, usually in vertical lines. This type developed under the SUKKAL.MAH and became standard until Shilhak-Inshushinak; innovatively, some bricks in the name of Untash-Napirisha bear an inscription that continues line by line on two consecutive side faces. Shilhak-Inshushinak returned to the old way of writing vertically on one or even more side faces in the so-called *takkime* (“(for) the Life”) inscriptions. There are also square bricks stamped on five or six faces. On the bricks of Neo-Elamite sovereigns, the inscription, often stamped, is mostly on a side face.

In the Achaemenid period, bricks, attested in a much lower number, are squared, glazed or unglazed, and join each other to form inscriptions mostly of standard type.

## CHARACTERISTICS

In Elam, the literary genre of royal inscriptions occupies a very special place due to several factors.

### Incomplete knowledge

While the late Elamite royal inscriptions, originally employed for the decipherment of cuneiform writings, come from various regions of Persia, our knowledge and understanding of this literary genre in earlier periods are distorted by the predominance

of findings from the excavations conducted in Susiana, while the rest of the country remains largely unexplored. It was not before the years 1960–1970 that archaeological research was conducted in Fars, Kerman and Sistan, gradually expanding our knowledge of the history of ancient Iran (see especially Boucharlat 1998 and McCall 2013). At present, the vast majority of royal inscriptions from pre-Achaemenid Elam comes ~~thus far~~ from Susiana, a region particularly open to Mesopotamian influences.

### The character of royal power and the political history of Elam

Two characteristics of royal power in Elam were retained in royal inscriptions. The first is the profound duality of the state, formed by the “lowlands” of Susiana and the “highlands” of the Zagros mountains. During periods of political weakness, Susiana was often attached to its Mesopotamian neighbor, but whenever the Elamite kings managed to unify the country, the mountainous component would impose indigenous traits. Here the principles of royal legitimacy differed. Father-son lineage was not the only mechanism of power transmission: the children of the brothers and also of the sisters of the reigning king had rights. This multiplicity of heirs able to claim the throne, which sometimes favored the breakup of the kingship, is the second characteristic reflected in the royal inscriptions.

The earliest royal inscriptions of Elam are those of the kings of Akkad and Sumer, who conquered Susiana at the end of the 3rd millennium. The Elamite power that arose then in the Zagros and eventually became a powerful empire did not yet express itself through this literary genre. It was only in the Middle Elamite period that the kings who unified lowland and highland for nearly four centuries celebrated their deeds as great builders with inscriptions, mainly in Susiana. At the end of the 2nd millennium, when Elamite unity and power disappeared, a troubled period lacking epigraphic evidence began. The political power was broken and the reigns, often short, provided very few inscriptions. It was only with the Achaemenid dynasty that this device of proclaiming ~~the~~ royal grandeur was revived.

### The multilingualism of inscriptions

During the two millennia in which royal inscriptions were written in Elam, they were composed in several languages and in several writings.

The oldest inscriptions, in the name of Naram-Sin, Shulgi and Shu-Sin, are in Akkadian and Sumerian. Elamite (written in Linear Elamite script) was used at this time only by Puzur-Inshushinak, the last king of the dynasty of Awan. Akkadian remained the main language for the kings of Simashki, then for the “Grand Regents” (SUKKAL.MAH) and in the 15th century for the Kidinuids.

It was in the middle of the 2nd millennium that Elamite, the vernacular language (now written in cuneiform), was adopted by the Igi-halkids and afterwards by the Shutrukids. However, Untash-Napirisha, while writing a very large number of foundation inscriptions in Elamite, retained in few cases the practice of bilingual texts (but not bigraphic) with several lines in Elamite and the last ones in Akkadian; few rare bricks bear a text entirely in Akkadian. In the 1st millennium, the few extant brick inscriptions are in Elamite with a couple of exceptions in Akkadian (IRS 55–56). Finally, the Achaemenid kings generally practiced both trilingualism and trigraphism,

the same text being written in Babylonian, Elamite and Old Persian, ~~and~~ each language ~~being written with~~ a different cuneiform script, to which a version in hieroglyphic Egyptian was sometimes added.

### The role of writing in Elamite culture

The role of writing, like that of building, was not the same in Elam ~~and~~ as it was in Mesopotamia, where the practice of royal inscriptions is a constant feature of the manifestation of royal power. The king is the builder par excellence and his piety is asserted by the construction of temples. In Elam the nature of royal power, exerted both over (semi-)nomadic and sedentary peoples whose religion ~~is~~ often practiced in outdoor natural spaces, modifies the importance of royal inscriptions, which appear as a “westernizing” expression of royal ideology, and one could think that it was largely due to the impact of their prestigious neighbors that they practiced this device of communication to proclaim their devotion and power.

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### The Paleo-Elamite period (ca. 2400–1450 BC)

Three groups of royal inscriptions can be chronologically singled out: first, at the end of the 3rd millennium, the inscriptions of the rulers of Akkad and Sumer, then those of Puzur-Inshushinak, king of Awan and finally, in the first half of the 2nd millennium, those of the rulers of Simashki, Atta-hushu “shepherd of the people of Susa” and the “Grand Regents” (SUKKAL.MAH).

#### *The inscriptions of the kings of Akkad and Sumer*

Apart from the impression of a seal (IRSA IIG1a) in the name of Epir-mupi, “viceroys of Elam”, the oldest royal inscriptions found in Susa are those of the conqueror kings of the dynasty of Akkad (Manishtusu, Naram-Sin) and afterwards Ur III (Shulgi, Shu-Sin), rulers of Susiana at that time.<sup>5</sup> The inscriptions, in Akkadian for the first dynasty, in Sumerian for the second, are few and usually short and of standard type. The inscription of Naram-Sin (IRS 1) is mutilated and bears only his name and titular like the (complete) one of Shu-Sin: “the beloved one of Enlil, the mighty king, king of Ur and king of the four regions” (IRSA IIIA4a; IRS 3). Only those of Shulgi make specific reference to Elam: one, classical in wording, attests construction activities in Susa, reporting that Shulgi “built a temple to Ninshushinak and restored it to its (original) place” (IRS 2). Another inscription mentions a military campaign and a civil construction: “Shulgi, the god of his country, the strong, the king of Ur, the king of the four regions, when he ravaged the country of Kimash and Hurtum, he established a moat and built (its) rampart” (IRSA IIIA2p).

Recent researches have brought to the attention of scholars the testimony of the activities of another king, Amar-Sin, at the ancient site of Huhnur: an inscribed modeled stone recounting how he captured that city, bringing back a statue of the god Ruhurater (Henkelman 2008: 304) and rebuilding his temple there (Mofidi-Nasrabadi 2005).

*The inscriptions of Puzur-Inshushinak<sup>6</sup>*

In this ancient period, the case of Puzur-Inshushinak, last king of the dynasty of Awan (ca. 2100), is unique in the history of Elamite royal inscriptions. On one hand, while he dedicated many monuments to his gods on the Acropolis of Susa, no foundation bricks in his name were found. On the other hand, in a program that was probably nationalist, he promoted, alongside cuneiform script for inscriptions in Akkadian, a properly Elamite writing, probably derived from the Proto-Elamite script (which, from this point of view, could be called “Proto-Linear”; see Desset, Chapter 20 in this volume) used for accounting documents of the 3rd millennium.

We know approximately 20 inscriptions in Linear Elamite, including 19 excavated at Susa (inscriptions A-P, R, and T-U), one at Shahdad in Kerman (inscription S) and another in the region of Anshan (inscription Q on a silver beaker). This writing is not completely deciphered, and we do not know the exact meaning of these texts. They are mostly bilingual and bigraphic: an Akkadian cuneiform text appears next to the Elamite text in linear script. The supports are varied: statues (inscriptions C, I = CRS 55), foundation stones (B = CRS 54, D), a table (A), a basin for ablutions (E), steps of a staircase (F-H, U) and so on. Most objects were dedicated to Inshushinak and must have come from his temple, but two door sockets and some foundation nails (J, K, L) belonged to the temple of the god Shugu (IRSA IIG2a).

These inscriptions are spread throughout his reign since they bear either the simple title “governor (ENSI) of Susa” or that of “governor of Susa, viceroy (GĪR. NĪTA) of Elam”, while on some of the above-mentioned steps he is “the mighty king of Awan”. One of them, in Akkadian, following the Old Akkadian titulary, refers to the domination of the “Four Regions”: “To (his) lord, Puzur-Inshushinak, mighty king of Awan, son of Shimbi-ishuk, the year in which the god Inshushinak looked at him (and) gave (him) the four regions to rule, he built a (stone) staircase”; it ends with a curse like several other inscriptions in Akkadian. It is in a very unusual long dedication (IRSA IIG2f) that he states the regulation of religious endowments: “To [Inshushi]nak, his [lord, Puzur-Inshu]shinak, [the son of Shim]pi-[ish]uk, [the gover]nor [of Susa, vicer]oy [of the coun]try [of Elam, . . . when he opened the canal Sidari, he erected his statue in front of him; and at his gate he placed a (foundation) nail of copper and cedar. He established a ram for every day in the morning (and) a ram in the evening, and he made the singers sing morning (and) evening at the gate of Inshushinak, and he offered twenty (units) of pure oil to embellish his gate. He offered. . . (various objects) . . . He conveyed a judgement of justice in his city. Whoever will fail to comply to his judgment and whoever will remove his gift, Inshushinak and Sin and Nin-hursaga and Narundi<sup>7</sup> (and) all the gods may up[oot his] roots and take away his offspring! may he not be[get] a he[ir]! [. . .]”.

Another unusual dedication (IRSA IIG2e) resembles a triumphal inscription and evokes a series of victories and the submission of the king of Simashki: “[Puzur-Inshushinak, (. . . titulary), when Kimash and the country of Hurtum rebelled against him, he went to capture his enemies, and defeated Hubsana . . . (Seventy place names follow). Then, he subjugated (these cities) and when the king of Simashki came, he seized the feet of Puzur-Inshushinak; Inshushinak heard his prayers and [. . .]”.

*The inscriptions of the first half of the 2nd millennium*

Puzur-Inshushinak's innovations had no future, and linear writing disappeared completely. The literary genre of royal inscriptions entered into a less productive period in Elam.

In Elamite, only one inscription (EKI 3A+B) is attested for this period: it is written on behalf of the prince Siwe-Palar-hupak (mid-18th century) on two fragmentary tablets found in Susa; its structure is similar to that of Temti-Agun (see below) in titulary (*ligawe riša[kki]* “Great One<sup>7</sup> of the kingdom”, *menik Hatamtik* “prince of Elam”), filiation (*ruhu-šak* “son-of-the-sister of Sirukduh”) and motivation (“for my life, for that of Amma-hashtuk, for her family and her descendants”). Then he reports the sacrifices by which he implores Inshushinak to grant him everlasting prosperity. Finally he proclaims to have established his cult for the peoples of Anshan and Susa and ends by vowing fire for his enemies and impalement for their allies.

The kings of the highland belonging to the dynasty of Simashki,<sup>8</sup> who preceded Siwe-palar-hupak, practiced, as far as we know, only very sporadically this device of celebrating their religious and political power: the few inscriptions that have reached us, brief and not very original, are written in Akkadian (but often in a largely ideographic writing).<sup>9</sup> On construction bricks, Tan-Ruhuratir and Idadu, given as 9th and 10th kings in the dynastic list, bear only the title of “governor of Susa”. The only known inscription of the first (IRS 4) is related to the construction of the temple of Inanna.<sup>10</sup> In contrast, the inscribed bricks of Idadu are more copious and varied: one of them is brief and commemorates the establishment of the Acropolis rampart and another the renovation of the temple of Inshushinak; even if based on an old structure, it is not without a certain originality because it is attested in two versions with the same content, one in Sumerian, the other in Akkadian.<sup>11</sup> Finally, on two bricks too mutilated to understand the context, he was styled as “king of Simashki and Elam” (IRS 9).

At the end of the 20th century, Atta-hushu's seizure of power marked the end of the Simashkian dynasty and a political emancipation of Susiana.<sup>12</sup> This king adopted the title of “shepherd of the god Inshushinak” (SIPA <sup>d</sup>MÜŠ.EREN) or “shepherd of the people of Susa” (SIPA ÉREN MÜŠ.EREN), stating his devotion to this god, who was properly Susian, and proclaiming to be his “beloved servant” (İR KI.AG). The diversity of his dedications reflects an intense activity, both civil and religious: they celebrate the construction of a causeway (*titūram*) (IRS 10), of a temple “beloved residence (of the god)” (É.KI.ÁG.A.NI) (IRS 13), the restoration of “the ancient shrine” (*kizzum labiram*) “for his life” (IRS 11) and, exceptionally, the erection of a stele of justice (ALAM *kittum*) in the market (IRS 12).

As regards filiation, while the rulers of Awan and Simashki made reference to a direct descent (DUMU PN “son of PN”), another type of family relationship appeared with Atta-hushu and was reused by Siwe-palar-hupak (in Elamite: *ruhu-šak*) and by the SUKKAL.MAH, then occasionally in the Middle Elamite period: “son/heir-(by/of)-the-sister” (DUMU NIN<sub>9</sub>). The interpretation of this term is disputed: “nephew” (legitimacy would be inherited by the sister of the preceding king or of an ancestor considered the founder of the dynastic line) or “son-of-the-sister (wife)” (legitimacy would be doubly assured by a father and a mother of the same blood).



Atta-hushu represented a transition<sup>13</sup> before the empire of the “Grand Regents” (SUKKAL.MAH). Only four of them, in the present state of our knowledge, produced brick inscriptions.<sup>14</sup> Temti-agun differs from his successors by his strictly local title (“regent of Susa”)<sup>15</sup> and his filiation: he refers not to Silhaha but to Sirukduh (DUMU NIN<sub>9</sub>-šu ša Sirukduh<sup>16</sup>). His inscription for the construction of the temple of the goddess Ishmekarab (IRSA IVO8a = IRS 14) provides a hitherto unprecedented development regarding the motivation “for the life”.

Much more traditional in composition, most building inscriptions of Temti-halki, Kuk-Nashur and Kuk-Kirwash begin with an invocation to the god Inshushinak. Then, after the titulary and the filiation, the building activity dedicated to Inshushinak by the king “for his life” follows: a temple in baked bricks (*siyanam ša epirtim*) for Temti-halki (IRSA IV09b = IRS 16), the Upper Temple of the Acropolis in baked bricks (*kukunnam ša SIG AL.LU.RA ša URU.AN.NA*) for Kuk-Nashur (IRS 17), the *Ekikuanna* renovated<sup>4</sup> with a new wall in baked bricks for Kuk-Kirwash (IRSA IVO11a = IRS 18).

### The Middle Elamite period (ca. 1450–1050 BC)

This quite homogeneous tradition of royal inscriptions experienced a revolution with the seizure of power by new dynasties, the Kidinuids, Igi-halkids and Shutrukids, of which at least the last two exercised strong control in Elam.

#### *The dynasty of the Kidinuids*

In the middle of the 2nd millennium, in a period of turmoil, the Kidinuids took power temporarily at Susa and Kabnak (Haft Tappeh). Continuing to write in Akkadian, two descendants of Kidinu,<sup>17</sup> without indicating their filiation, call themselves “king of Susa”. Inshushinak-shar-ili<sup>18</sup> mentions in a classical way the reconstruction of the temple of Inshushinak, introducing the address to his successors to ensure the eternity of his work (IRS 19<sup>19</sup>). The inscription of Tepti-ahar (IRS 20) is unparalleled: it mentions the manufacture of “his statue and (those) of his maid-servants whom he loves and of favorable deities who intercede for him and his maid-servants whom he loves” as well as a nocturnal ceremony that remains very mysterious: “At nightfall, four women of the temple guards . . . must lie at the feet of the protective and intercessory deities; they must light torches<sup>2</sup> and keep watch. The *hāšša*, the *kiparu*, the *pāšišu* high priest, the guards of the temple, and the temple priest must seal the temple after them. At daybreak, after they have checked (the statues) of the king, the protective and intercessory deities, they can exit and go (away)”.

Probably at about the same time another sovereign, Igi-hatet, produced a building inscription (Daneshmand and Abdoli 2015) in Akkadian found at Dehno for the glory of the goddess Manzat, who gave him the kingship over Susa and Anshan and for whom he restored the ancient *kukunnû*.

After this period when the power of the SUKKAL.MAH was probably fragmented into many small temporary rival kingdoms, the powerful dynasty of the Igi-halkids would impose itself over a unified Elam, giving a new dynamism to the royal inscriptions, for which they imposed the use, with a few exceptions, of their vernacular language, Elamite.

*The dynasty of the Igihalkids (14th century)*

The brick inscription of Humbanumena “king of Anshan and Susa” (IRS 21), written in Elamite, has a very new structure and formulation, probably due to the origin of his power in Fars and the novelty of his kingship at Susa.<sup>20</sup> It is composed of an invocation to the gods of Liyan, a specific titulature which is properly Elamite, the mention of the establishment of his kingship, the refoundation of a temple for “the life” of members of the dynasty and the prosperity of his kingship: “O Napirisha, Kiririsha and the (gods) Protectors of the Earth, (gods) of Liyan, I, Humbanumena, son of Attar-kitah, I (am) the Great One of the kingdom, the Elamite (i.e. of the Elamite country) master, the holder of the Elamite throne, the Elamite sovereign, the king of Anshan and Susa; because of the continuity with (my) mother, Napirisha chose me and loved me: (once) prosperity (was) established<sup>2</sup>, the crown restored<sup>2</sup>, Inshushinak gave me the kingship. For my life, for the life of Mishimruh and the life of Rishap-La, for this (reason), the temple being once in ruins<sup>2</sup>, I re-established the *kukunnum* in its place and dedicated it to Napirisha, Kiririsha, and the (gods) Protectors of the Earth. May Napirisha, Kiririsha, and the (gods) Protectors of the Earth give me a long life, may they grant me a continually prosperous kingship”.

Untash-Napirisha, his son and successor, multiplied the dedications linked to his intense religious activities and the establishment of the “holy city” of Dur-Untash, the shrine (*siyan-kuk*) where he intended to proclaim his ecumenical will, dedicating temples or chapels to all the gods of the lowland and highland. In contrast, no inscription recounts his military exploits in the war against Babylon. Most of his foundation inscriptions are in Elamite,<sup>21</sup> and their structure remains traditional: name, filiation and titulature, designation of the temple<sup>22</sup> and verb of construction.<sup>23</sup> Further actions are sometimes added to the verb “to build”: “I have placed my name”, “I have installed (a) DN in gold”, or, at Chogha Zanbil, “I carved a DN in gold, I installed him as (god) of a temple of the shrine”, “(I built) a basement<sup>2</sup> of 10 cubits”, “I raised a ziggurat”. The reason behind the construction, which is usually the king’s happiness and the prosperity of his kingdom,<sup>24</sup> its purpose or its consequences<sup>25</sup> are often mentioned. Many inscriptions explicitly include a dedication to the god (“... I dedicated to DN”) and/or a final plea for divine blessing.<sup>26</sup>

Some bricks of the *kukunnû*, the Upper Temple at the summit of the ziggurat, bear a bilingual inscription (MDP 41 32): the main body of the text is in Elamite, but the final curse is in Akkadian.<sup>27</sup> This inscription recapitulates all the work undertaken at Dur-Untash: the choice of the site, the foundation of the city, the surrounding walls and the sanctuaries, and the building of the gates. The final curse invokes the anger of the gods against possible defilers: “Whoever would throw projectiles against the surrounding walls of this sanctuary, whoever would open a breach, whoever would carry away bricks, whoever would burn the door, and the enemy who would show up (here) and launch an attack against the surrounding walls, may the anger of the gods Napirisha, Inshushinak, and Kiririsha of the shrine be upon him (and) may his offspring not flourish under the sun!”.

Two types of building bricks bear an entirely Akkadian text (IRS 32).<sup>28</sup> One, pertaining to the building that stood atop the ziggurat, is unusual in composition: the name of Untash-Napirisha is followed neither by his filiation nor his titulature; it is the refinement and color of the masonry that are celebrated here; a particular



development is assigned to the final curse: “. . . whoever will tear down, whoever will destroy its brickwork, whoever will take or carry away to another county its gold, its silver, its obsidian, its alabaster, and its masonry, may the anger of Napirisha, Inshushinak, and Kiririsha of the sanctuary be upon him and may his offspring not flourish under the sun!”. The second type commemorates “technical” achievements: two texts (MDP 41 IV-V) differ only by the object of the construction, in one case a canal, in the other the decantation basin to which the canal led. This inscription is unique in placing the wishes of happiness for the prince and of prosperity for the kingdom immediately after his titulary: “I, ( . . . titulary), for my life and my well-being lasting many days, long years, (so that) I may exercise a happy kingship, I built a canal ‘Glory of My Name’. I dedicated it to Napirisha and Inshushinak of the shrine. The work that I have carried on, (o) Napirisha and Inshushinak of the shrine, may you accept it”.

No building inscriptions of the two successors of Untash-Napirisha are known to us, probably suggesting a weakening of the Igihalkids. Then the coming of a new man, Shutruk-Nahhunte, marks the takeover of a new dynasty.

### *The dynasty of the Shutrukids*

Most of the brick inscriptions of the Shutrukids perpetuate the previous structure, but with a renewal in expression.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, the difficulty of defining the royal legitimacy at the heart of this complex family gave rise to a new type of text which assigned a prominent role to wishes for the life of the members of the royal family.

These kings generally used the title “king of Anshan and Susa”, but sometimes also “Great One of the kingdom” (e.g. Shilhak-Inshushinak IRS 47 and 49; Hutelutush-Inshushinak IRS 51) or “(king) whose kingdom the god Inshushinak loves” (IRS 48). As for Kutir-Nahhunte, in two of his inscriptions he adopts only a religious title: “beloved servant of Inshushinak” (IRS 35–36).

New temple designations appear in these building bricks: pillared hall (*hiyan*), exterior chapel (*kumpum kiduya*, probably dedicated to the cult of the royal family; IRS 35 and 40), temple of the grove (*siyan husame*), dynastic chapel (or altar) (*suhter*) and so on.

Certain texts are related to inscriptions of triumphal type, for example, when Shutruk-Nahhunte proclaims to have brought to Elam the glorious stela of Naram-Sin (EKI 22) or when Shilhak-Inshushinak lists a large number of cities over which Inshushinak allowed him to extend his power (EKI 54).

Among these inscriptions, some are atypical: Shutruk-Nahhunte commemorates the reconstruction of the temple of Manzat at Dehno (MDP 53 9) without mentioning either his titulary or his filiation but noting the fact that he is adhering to an old tradition<sup>30</sup>: he mentions the name of his predecessors and shows concern for the safeguarding of his work in the future. Shilhak-Inshushinak, in his turn, recalls the particular circumstances in which he built the dynastic chapel (IRS 41): his brother Kutir-Nahhunte died before manufacturing the representations in baked bricks; Shilhak-Inshushinak, once enthroned, made them and used them to build the dynastic chapel.

The most innovative inscriptions are the *takkime* ones. They do not involve dedications to the god or wishes that the offering will be appreciated. The essential element

is the motivation for which the work was done: the life of the royal family. Thus the royal line is defined,<sup>31</sup> both by the evocation of his predecessors (his “ascendants” in kingship, whom he asks for intercession in the netherworld)<sup>32</sup> and the definition of his descendants. The manner in which the members of the ruling family are reported is not fixed and would change as Shilhak-Inshushinak established his legitimacy within the dynasty after his marriage with Nahhunte-Utu, who already had children, previously the only legitimate heirs of royal power. He tried to anchor his royal power by attaching himself to more or less distant predecessors and, when he had children himself, inflecting the definition of dynastic lineage. In the wishes for “life”, sometimes he refers to the descendants through a globalizing expression that evolved over time: “her descent” (of Nahhunte-Utu), “the children that I begot and (those) of Nahhunte-Utu, they (who are) the posterity to whom we have passed (it)” (IRS 48A), “our posterity” (IRS 49) or “my descent and the life of my posterity, those to whom I have passed (it)” (IRS 44). When the names are enumerated, the list comprises either seven or nine names; they are listed in chronological order or by naming first the sons and then the daughters. In the longest list, the youngest daughter is qualified as “beloved daughter”, which can express a special predilection: “Bar-Uli, my beloved daughter, who represents my salvation” (IRS 47 and 48B).<sup>33</sup>

It is without doubt the complexity of this dynastic succession which explains the curious filiation provided by his successor Hutelutush-Inshushinak: “beloved son of Kutir-Nahhunte and Shilhak-Inshushinak” (IRS 51) or “beloved son of Shutruk-Nahhunte, Kutir-Nahhunte, and Shilhak-Inshushinak, beloved brother of Ishnikarabuhun<sup>34</sup>” (IRS 52). As regards “the life”, he refers to that of his brothers and sisters, nephews and nieces, and of his House (IRS 51), or only to that of his brothers and sisters (IRS 52) while elsewhere (IRS 53) he says only to have laboured “for my life” and concludes with a curse that attaches his name to that of the founder of the ancient dynasty of the SUKKAL.MAH: “the destroyer who would steal them, the looter who would hammer the protocol that is placed (here) instead of preserving it, may Inshushinak *trample with his feet*, may the curse of Hutelutush-Inshushinak and Shilhaha be inflicted upon him”.

Even if some inscriptions attest his activities also outside of Susa, at Shalukki (EKI 64) and Anshan (Lambert 1972), his reign was disturbed by the campaigns of Nebuchadnezzar, which forced him to take refuge in the highland at least temporarily. Elam then entered a dark period, which is not documented by any royal inscription.

### The Neo-Elamite period (ca. 1050–539 BC)

The Neo-Elamite II period (ca. 750–653) saw a revival of the “kings of Anshan and Susa”, but the royal inscriptions perpetuate only the names of Shutruk-Nahhunte II, his brother and successor Hallutush-Inshushinak, and in the Neo-Elamite III period (ca. 653–539), Tepti-Huban-Inshushinak.<sup>35</sup> It seems that in this period, royal power flourished in the eastern parts of the kingdom where the Elamite princes preserved their cult, as attested by the rock reliefs of Kul-e Farah, Kurangun and Naqsh-e Rostam.

The inscriptions of Shutruk-Nahhunte II are of four types: two in Akkadian<sup>36</sup> and two in Elamite. One (IRS 57) is inscribed in a frame on the upper or lower surface and celebrates the establishment of a *kukunnum* of Inshushinak in the recently conquered

Karintash (“O Inshushinak, my god, you have made me strong, here I have made your name prosper”), while referring to the kings Hutelutush-Inshushinak, Shilhahamru-Lagamar and Hubanimmeh; the inscription ends with a curse: “Whoever would neglect<sup>7</sup> what belongs to me, may he lose the blessing of Inshushinak and be excluded from the light of Inshushinak!”. The sole inscription of his successor Hallutush-Inshushinak (IRS 58) proclaims that he has “expanded the kingdom of Anshan and Susa” and, after a brief mention of the restoration of the temple of Inshushinak, it is closed by a dedication to the god and wishes that the god would bestow upon him a fair lot in accordance with his piety and not the painful fate of the impious.

Three inscriptions of Tepti-Huban-Inshushinak, in Elamite, are of standard type (IRS 59–61), with the name and filiation of the king, the building activity (IRS 60) and the dedication to Inshushinak (IRS 61). Another inscription (IRS 62) is atypical, being related to triumphal inscriptions and alluding to a successful campaign: “. . . I have broken off the country of the Wicked Ones and have enlarged Elam; I have broken off the country of the Enemies and I have received their tribute . . .”.

### The Achaemenid period (539–331 BC)

The Achaemenid period saw a revival of royal inscriptions.<sup>37</sup> They are generally characterized by multilingualism: most are in the three “official” languages of the empire, even if some are only in Old Persian (DPd, DPe),<sup>38</sup> Elamite (DPf, DSu), or Babylonian (CB, DPg, DSaa, XSb, XSe, A<sup>1</sup>Pb, D<sup>2</sup>Sb); others couple two of these languages: Old Persian and Elamite (DSd, DSi, XPi, XPk), Old Persian and Babylonian (DSg, DSo, DSw, XPf, A<sup>1</sup>Pa). The inscriptions made in Egypt (DZ, DSab) add a fourth language (in hieroglyphic).<sup>39</sup>

Thus the inscriptions of the Achaemenids favor the languages written in cuneiform without resorting to Aramaic, the language of administration and diplomatic correspondence: the inscription of Bisotun, through which Darius proclaimed his legitimacy, was engraved on the rock in Elamite, Old Persian and Babylonian several meters above the ground. It was not readable by a passer-by from below but was released in Aramaic so as to be proclaimed throughout the empire (Lecoq 1997: 56).

Multilingual inscriptions generally repeat the same text, but the Babylonian versions may present significant variants in accordance with the tradition of the Mesopotamian scribes, for example, assessing accurately the number of casualties, wounded and prisoners taken in the fighting, dating the events, or using a Median form for Iranian proper names (Lecoq 1997: 54–55). In Persepolis, four inscriptions (DPd, DPe, DPf, DPg) were engraved side by side to commemorate, each one in its own way, the construction of the monumental complex. Two are in Old Persian, one imploring the protection of Ahuramazda for the Persian people, the other asserting their superiority over the various subject peoples and exhorting the reader to protect the Persian army. The Elamite text relates the construction of the terrace, and the Babylonian one reported the multiple peoples who worked there.

The structure of the inscriptions of the Achaemenid kings differ from those of their predecessors in Elam. Titulary and filiation resort to new formulae; the title can be simple (“the king”) or more developed: “the great king, the king of kings, the Persian king”, “the great king, the king of kings, (the Persian king/the king in Persia,) the king

of peoples”, “the great king, the king of kings, the king of peoples/countries, the king on this (great) earth”, “the great king, the king of kings, the king of peoples having many origins, the king on this great earth even far away”. The filiation is limited to the father’s name and the belonging to the Achaemenid family, or recalls the membership to the Persian people and the Aryan world: for example, “Darius. . . , the son of Hystaspes, the Achaemenid, Persian, son of Persian, Aryan, of Aryan descent”. A cosmology can precede the titulary-filiation: “Ahuramazda is the great god, who created this earth here, who created the heaven up there, who created man, who created happiness for man, who made Darius king. . . .”, “Ahuramazda is the great god, who created the beauty that one sees, who created happiness for man, who bestowed wisdom and bravery upon king Darius” (DNb).

In reference to kingship, its extent and its excellence, the formula also knows variants: it mentions only the Persian people (e.g. “this Persian people that I possess, having good horses, good men – the great god Ahuramazda granted it to me, thanks to Ahuramazda I am king of this people” (AmH), or more generally: “here is the kingdom which I hold, from the Scythians who are beyond Sogdiana to Ethiopia, from India to Lydia, the one that Ahuramazda, the greatest of the gods, bestowed upon me” (DH), sometimes listing the peoples “who brought a tribute, who obeyed him, and whom his law upheld” (DNa, DPe, DSm).

The inscriptions often include a praise of the deeds and virtues of the sovereign: “The king Darius says: “thanks to Ahuramazda, I am such that I am friend of right, I am not friend of injustice; my desire is not that the weak suffer injustice because of the strong; my desire is not that the strong suffer injustice because of the weak”” (DNb and XPl), “I am a good rider, I am a good archer both on foot and horseback, I am a good spearman both on foot and horseback” (DNb). These are the qualities that Ahuramazda bestowed upon him (see XPl).

Another frequent element of the royal proclamation concerns the construction<sup>40</sup> on which it is written: “And Darius the king says: “on this terrace, where this palace was built, no palace had been built; thanks to Ahuramazda, I built this palace and Ahuramazda wanted so, with all the gods, that this palace was built; and I built it; thus it was built solid and excellent and exactly as I had ordered” (DPf). It could also be related to a technical achievement like the digging of a canal “from a river named Nile, that flows in Egypt, towards the sea that comes from Persia; so, this canal was dug as I had ordered, and the ships went from Egypt through this canal to Persia, according to my good pleasure” (DZc).

The antiquity of the restored building is mentioned with regards to Susa: “the king Darius says: “thanks to Ahuramazda, there were many buildings that previously were not in good shape; at Susa, I saw that the surrounding wall was in ruins; therefore, I built there another wall””. Some texts (DSf and DSz) are peculiar because they provide construction details: “this palace that I made in Susa – its materials were brought from far away; downward, the earth was dug until I reached the stone in the earth; when it was dug, gravel was thrown on one side to 40 cubits in depth, on the other to 20 cubits in depth; on this gravel, the palace was laid. . . .”, then the cedar wood brought from Lebanon, the gold from Lydia and Bactria, the stone columns from Elam as well as the ethnicities of those who worked them are mentioned.

At the end of the inscriptions, a more or less developed plea for divine blessing appears: “May Ahuramazda protect me as well as my house” (DH), “may

Ahuramazda protect me as well as my house and this people from evil, this is what I ask Ahuramazda; may Ahuramazda give me this” (DNa), “May Ahuramazda bring me his help, together with all the gods, and may Ahuramazda protect this people from the (enemy) army, famine, and falsehood; may not the (enemy) army, famine, and falsehood reach this people; this is what I ask as a favor to Ahuramazda, together with all the gods; may Ahuramazda together with all the gods give me this as a favor” (DPd). A general plea for good conduct can also be inserted in the text: “O man! may not the command of Ahuramazda seem bad to you! Do not turn away from the right path! Do not revolt!” (DNa, DNb).

Among the Achaemenid royal inscriptions, some occupy a special place in their own right. Darius made a trilingual inscription to be engraved on a rock relief dominated by the representation of Ahuramazda. This is primarily a political and controversial manifesto intended to proclaim his legitimacy. At the beginning, after his genealogy, he stated his double legitimacy: by descent and by divine election; then he lists the 23 subject peoples ~~on~~ which he exercises his just kingship, blessed by Ahuramazda. The narrative of each of the nine successive revolts that broke out in various parts of the empire in the first year of his reign is the core of the inscription. It is closed, after a brief summary, by the address to every just king to carefully avoid falsehood and by the injunction to spread this proclamation.

The assertion of royal legitimacy is also the subject of the so-called “Harem” inscription (XPf), where Xerxes proclaims the choice made by his father to appoint him as successor, likely at the expense of his brothers, and praises the way he has excellently continued his father’s work. In the so-called “Daiva” inscription (XPh), he exalts his pious conduct and the need to worship Ahuramazda: after an ordinary introduction (cosmogony and list of peoples of the Persian empire), the inscription reports the repression of a people which is not named specifically, but which worshiped evil demonic gods (the *daiva*), and ends mentioning the happiness, in his lifetime and after his death, of the one who worships Ahuramazda “at the prescribed time and according to the rite”.

Finally the cylinder of Babylon celebrates the decision of Cyrus II to restore the local cults and proclaims his legitimacy in Babylonia; written in Babylonian, it is in fact the work of the clergy of Marduk in reaction to the religious policy established by Nabonidus. The first section describes the impiety of the king of Babylon who neglected the worship of Marduk and abused the population, causing the angry god to choose a prince having “pious deeds and right heart” in order to give him kingship over the entire world. In the second section, Cyrus, after providing his titular and filiation, relates how the kings of all the parts of the world brought him tribute, how he restored the cults in their right place, and rebuilt the great surrounding wall of Babylon.

Thus, for nearly two millennia, Elamite royal inscriptions, despite the often traditional structure of this literary genre, reflected through their ruptures, their innovations and their erratic elements, the crises and the embodiments of kingship in Elam, both in its political and religious aspects.

## ABBREVIATIONS

|     |                                                       |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------|
| CRS | Items in the exhibition catalogue Harper et al. 1994. |
| EKI | Royal inscriptions in Elamite in König 1965.          |

- IRS Brick inscriptions in Elamite and Akkadian from Susa (and Chogha Zanbil) in Malbran-Labat 1995.  
 IRSA Royal inscriptions in Sollberger and Kupper 1971.  
 MDP 41 Inscriptions from Chogha Zanbil in Steve 1967.  
 MDP 53 Royal inscriptions from Susa and Susiana in Steve 1987.

## NOTES

- 1 One can include in this type also inscriptions on seals.
- 2 For example, “Maništusu, king of Kiš: Ešpum, his servant, dedicated (this statue) to the goddess Narundi” (IRSA IIA3d).
- 3 For example, “Indattu, the governor of Susa, the beloved one of the god Nin-Shušinak, the son of Tan-Ruhuratir, built the rampart of the Acropolis” (IRSA IV03b).
- 4 They are designated using words couched in terminology that is Mesopotamian (*libittul* SIG “brick”, *epirtu*/SIG<sub>4</sub>.AL.LU.RA, *erimtu* “baked brick”) or Elamite (*halat* “brick of unbaked clay”, *upat* “baked brick”, sometimes qualified as *upat hussip* “colored brick?”, *upat aktiya* “glazed sandstone brick” [“brique de grès émaillé” in French], *upat mušiya* “glazed brick” [“brique vernissée”], sometimes also *lansitimma* “gold-plated” or *lanini* “silver-plated”).
- 5 These inscriptions may also be those made by notables on behalf of their king (see e.g. IRSA IIA3d, IRSA IIIA3i). Some objects bear dedications, for example, a cast bronze hammer with shaft-hole (CRS 56) on behalf of Shulgi.
- 6 André and Salvini 1989.
- 7 See Anthonioz and Malbran-Labat 2013. The usual translation is “enlarger” (“agrandisseur” in French).
- 8 Not properly a dynasty, but princes of an “interregional” state, grouping several geopolitical entities.
- 9 Standard inscriptions on seals (IRSA IV03c, IV04a and b, IV06j) and small vases (IRSA IV06f), etc., in Akkadian or Sumerian are also known.
- 10 This is also the goddess whom Mekubi, his wife, invoked in a fragmentary inscription (IRS 5).
- 11 “To Inšušinak, his lord, for (his) life, Idadu, the governor of Susa, the beloved servant of Inšušinak, the son of Tan-Ruhuratir, did not refurbish the ancient wall in bitumen (but) built a new wall in baked bricks at the back of the *Ekikuanna*; he had (it) built for his life” (IRSA IV03a = IRS 6–7).
- 12 His name appears also on bronze objects from Luristan but with a slightly different title (“the one who holds the reins of the Susian people”).
- 13 An inscription without comparisons in its typology (IRSA IV06a), on a clay cylinder (which is a rare support), is variously interpreted but clearly refers to a tripartite power between Ebarti, Silhaha and Atta-hušu “regent and scribe (*tepir*) of the people of Susa”.
- 14 Furthermore, the name of Simut-wartaš, son of Sirukduh, appeared in a brief inscription on an alabaster base found at Liyan (Potts 2016: 168, Pl. 6.4, and 169, Figure 6.1).
- 15 Even if on a brick fragment (MDP 53 1) from Chogha Pahn West he is SUKKAL.MAH SUK[KAL . . . šu]šim.
- 16 Sirukduh was himself DUMU NIN<sub>9</sub> of Silhaha.
- 17 A seal bears the name of its founder, Kidinu “king of Susa and Anshan”.
- 18 This name appears also on a cylinder seal from Haft Tappeh (HT 567).
- 19 Appearance of the logogram EŠŠANA for “king”.
- 20 Two dedications on statues are in Akkadian (MDP 53 3–4).
- 21 The inscription on the statue of his wife Napir-asu (CRS 83) is also in Elamite (EKI 16).



- 22 The designation of the temple is varied, whether it specifies its innovative character (“... (the temple of Upurkubak) that the kings, my predecessors, had not built in Susa ...”), the material (cf. IRS pp. 152–154), the place (“on the Acropolis”). The name is sometimes provided (*aštam* dedicated to Pinigir, *ain kuten* “House of Justice”, *kukunnum* “Upper Temple”, *nūr kibrat* “(tower-temple) Light of the World”, *sir halte, ipillati*). In Dur-Untaš other terms are attested: *siyan hunin*, *siyan kinin*, *siyan silin*, *siyan limin*, *siyan likrin*.
- 23 For example, IRS 23: “I, Untaš-Napiriša, son of Humbanumena, the king of Anshan and Susa, I built the temple of DN”.
- 24 “... so that, (prince) always satisfied throughout the years, I may have a continually prosperous kingship” (IRS 27), “... eager (that) my life (may be) continually prosperous, so that the extinction of my lineage, (when it will be) judged<sup>2</sup>, may not be inflicted to me” (IRS 28) or, with another combination of the elements: “... eager (that) my life (may be) continually prosperous, (prince) always satisfied throughout the years” (IRS 29).
- 25 “... (I built a temple) to the god DN who answers my prayer for me when I pray and fulfills (it) when I utter a word ...” (IRS 30), “the sanctuary having been provided<sup>2</sup> with ritual offerings<sup>3</sup>, (the god) blessed the shrine” (IRS 26).
- 26 “... may the work that I did be accepted by DN as an offering from me” (IRS 25), “... may I perform the divine service in the temple that I built” (IRS 29), “... may I, for (my) devotion, equally obtain happiness throughout nights and days” (IRS 31).
- 27 A version in the same tenor exists also in Elamite (MDP 41 2).
- 28 Dedications on stone or bronze objects are known also in Akkadian (MDP 41 VI – VIII), as well as the one added on a statue taken as booty by Untaš-Napiriša, who curses whoever would carry it away, but allows a future king of Elam to place it where he wishes (MDP 10: 85 and Pl. 10). In another inscription (EKI 9IIIb) he specifies that the successor who would renovate his work had to replace his name.
- 29 Inscriptions, usually short, are also attested on statues carved in Elam (e.g. MDP 53 11–12) or brought to Susa as booty and sometimes reinscribed (e.g. EKI 20–27, CRS 111–112), as well as on other objects (MDP 53 8 and 11–12); see also Henkelman 2010: 494b – 495a, §1.4.
- 30 In the same spirit, he placed at the beginning of one of his texts the copy of an inscription in the name of a SUKKAL.MAH who preceded him in the royal function some centuries earlier (IRS 49).
- 31 In IRS 48 the emphasis is on this aspect: “... to Kiririša, lady of the one of the *kizzum*, lady-creator of the origins, to Inšušinak, lord of the *kizzum*, creator of the origins for the princes of my line, protector who *determines* the/my name”.
- 32 IRS 49: “... O Kuk-Kirwaš, deceased prince, may you wait for Inšušinak as intercessor”.
- 33 Furthermore, an inscription (MDP 53 15) on bricks found at Susa and Chogha Pahn West (Stolper 1978: 89–91) omits Temti-tur-kataš, one of his sons. To add to the complexity of this family puzzle, in some variants of another inscription (IRS 50) the name of Hutelutuš-Inšušinak is absent.
- 34 Išnikarab-huhun, his sister, follows immediately in the chronological list.
- 35 Objects with dedication: for example, CRS 140, MDP 53 25.
- 36 A standard inscription (IRS 55) and a simple dedication to Išnikarab (IRS 56).
- 37 The translations of the Achaemenid inscriptions follow Lecoq 1997. In their sigla, the first letter refers to the name of the king (A<sup>1</sup>: Artaxerxes I; A<sup>2</sup>: Artaxerxes II; A<sup>3</sup>: Artaxerxes III; Am: Ariaramnes; As: Arsames; C: Cyrus; D: Darius I; D<sup>2</sup>: Darius II; X: Xerxes); the second letter represents the place of discovery (B: Bisotun or Babylon; E: Elvend; H: Hamadan; M: Pasargades; N: Naqsh-e Rostam; P: Persepolis; S: Susa; V: Van; Z: Suez).
- 38 AmH, AsH, DPd, DPc, DSa, DSb, DSL, DSp, DSs, DSt, DSz, XH, XPl, XSc, D<sup>2</sup>Ha, D<sup>2</sup>Sa, A<sup>2</sup>Hb, A<sup>2</sup>Hc, A<sup>2</sup>Sb, A<sup>2</sup>Sc, A<sup>3</sup>Pa, A<sup>3</sup>Sc.
- 39 Some vases bear short labels in Egyptian.

- 40 Even if, contrarily to the earlier periods, these are not temples, which were absent from Persian cult.

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