

HEARING DARIUS: A BAKHTINIAN STUDY OF THE VOICE OF DARIUS  
IN THE BEHISTUN INSCRIPTION, HERODOTUS' *THE HISTORIES*, AND  
EZRA-NEHEMIAH

by

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## ABSTRACT

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The theories of Bakhtin are becoming more influential in studies. The concepts of chronotope and polyphony have proved particularly useful in exploring narrative works. This thesis applies these concepts to the Behistun inscription, Herodotus' *The Histories*, and Ezra-Nehemiah to bring a more nuanced understanding to the character of Darius revealed in each work. The speeches of Darius, within their respective chronotopes and double-voiced by the narrator, reveal subtle undertones of characterization. In the Behistun inscription, the chronotope and the use of the monologic voice of Darius reveal a character lifted above the historical world to epic levels. In Herodotus, double voicing along with chronotope reveals Darius, who is otherwise presented as a powerful and mighty king, as vulnerable and human. In Ezra-Nehemiah, chronotope is used to raise Darius above the other Persian kings, except Cyrus, while double-voicing exposes his claim to be the true king of Israel through the support of the temple.

To my wife, Joan, whose support made this project possible.

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## CHAPTER 1

### Rationale and Methodology

For the Jewish people in both Yehud and the Diaspora, the period of Persian domination was formative. These years saw the Persian Empire rise to the height of its power and, in the reign of Darius, the temple in Jerusalem rebuilt and Yehud established in a way that would shape its response to the Greeks in the Hellenistic era. This period was the crucible from which Second Temple Jewish theology emerged. Cyrus and his decree wrote a promissory note which was finally paid under Darius.

The history of this period was recorded predominantly, but not exclusively, by the Greeks, for whom the Persians were rivals in power and enemies at war. Through their histories, plays and other literature, the Greeks defined their relationships to the Persians and to the Persian kings. Similarly, surviving Hebrew/Aramaic and Old Persian texts seek to define the relationship of the people to the Persians and the Persian kings. A comparative study of the Old Persian, Greek, and Hebrew/Aramaic literature of the time will help clarify how those peoples saw themselves and their relationships to the Persian kings.

Two problems confront such a study: the choice of texts and the diversity of the backgrounds of these texts. I will compare the Behistun inscription, which is predominantly in the voice of Darius, Herodotus' *The Histories*, especially using the Oroetes speech in 3.127–128, in which Darius speaks to a large group of Persian supporters, and the letter of Darius in Ezra 6. The rationale for these choices will be discussed below. In order to find a point of comparison for this diverse body of texts I will read each text as narrative, focusing on the voice of Darius. To bridge the diversity



of cultures with their own languages and literary techniques, I will borrow from the literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin, especially using his concept of dialogism as it relates to utterances and discourse. A summary of some of his most relevant theories and how they will be applied follows below.

### 1. Choice of Texts

The choice of texts for this study is quite constrained as there is a very limited surviving body of literature. There remain fewer than 60 Old Persian texts, most of which are epigraphic, without sufficient length for narrative study. One text, the Behistun inscription, contains enough text for narrational analysis. The text of the Behistun inscription provides the only surviving extended narrative for Darius, or any other king for that matter, in the Old Persian language. The entire text of Behistun, except for a very minimal third person narrative frame, is written in the voice of Darius.

The Greek corpus is considerably larger. In his book *The Histories*, Herodotus deals extensively with the Greek–Persian conflict and includes extended discussion of Darius. Herodotus' *The Histories* is very influential in subsequent literature. It is not practical, nor would it be balanced, to compare the entirety of Herodotus' work on Darius with the two much shorter Old Persian and Hebrew / Aramaic texts, but a surprisingly small amount of material is actually in the voice of Darius. A particularly apt comparison may be made to Herodotus 3.127–128, which is a public speech made to Persians.

In the Hebrew Bible only the book of Ezra contains narrative accounts involving Darius the Great. The book of Daniel contains a character identified as “Darius the Mede,” however the relationship between this character and Darius the Great is at best problematic. Ezra includes a letter written in the voice of Darius.

## 2. Mikhail Bakhtin

One key challenge for the present project is that each body of literature is written in its own language, using its own literary conventions from within its own ideological background. It is necessary, then, to find a theoretical approach that is universal and can be applied to any narrative text from any culture. One such theoretical approach can be found in the writings of the Russian literary theorist, Mikhail Bakhtin. The study of Bakhtin presents many significant challenges to the English speaking scholar. For one thing, it is not yet clear which writings are actually his and which are not as it is at least possible that he published a few works under the names of friends. His style is dense, his illustrations many and obscure, and he often goes over the same terrain multiple times. His Russian is difficult, and includes many words that he himself makes up for the occasion. As Barbara Green notes, to master Bakhtin requires years of patient study in both primary and secondary sources.<sup>1</sup>

Dialogism, Bakhtin's system of thought, is first of all, an epistemological system.<sup>2</sup> Our knowledge of existence, and any meaning there is, is formed not in isolation by observation, but in dialogue with the myriad of others that surround us. It is in the interaction between the self and the others that reality begins to emerge and take shape. The understanding the self has is added to the understanding of the other. A simplistic illustration is two people sitting in a room. The first can see the second and what is

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<sup>1</sup> Green, *Bakhtin*, 7.

<sup>2</sup> Material on Bakhtin's thought synthesized from Bakhtin, *Speech Genres*; Bakhtin, *Poetics*; Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*; Clark and Holquist, *Bakhtin*; Gardiner, *Dialogics of Critique*; Green, *Bakhtin*; Holquist, *Dialogism*; Mandolfo, "Dialogic Form Criticism"; Mihailovic, *Corporeal Worlds*; Patterson, *Literature and Spirit*; Reed, *Dialogues of the Word*; and Valeta, "Polyglossy and Parody." I was also influenced in my understanding by the biblical scholars who used Bakhtin who are mentioned below.

behind that person, while the second can see the first and parts of the room the first cannot see. Neither can see behind themselves, nor can they see themselves; each has a surplus of knowledge, a body of information the other lacks. Knowledge of the room is formed as they dialogue and each adds the surplus of knowledge of the other to his or her own knowledge.

Bakhtin's epistemology is, of course, more complex than two people learning about a room. Reality is not seen to have an independent existence apart from understanding as does the room in the illustration. Rather, reality is constructed from the understanding created in dialogue. Further, Bakhtin does not conceive of knowledge arising from the dialogue of two individuals, but rather from the dialogue with the myriad of other selves. Quite apart from the Romantic notion in which the self is primary, the source and determiner of meaning, for Bakhtin, the self has meaning only through its interaction with others. Alone, the self is a locus of perception, lacking any means of structuring or understanding its limits. And not only is our perception of reality shaped by the dialogue, but so also our perception of ourselves, even as we contribute to shaping the perception of others:

There are strong ethical implications to this theory. One cannot passively ignore the world, as the very process of dialogue means that each person shapes the world and its values through the values that person demonstrates. One can choose to reflect upon and challenge the values of one's environment or one can passively adapt the values of the culture in which one is found. But the choice to adapt is itself an active choice which contributes to shaping the world and does not abrogate the responsibility of that self.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Clark and Holquist, *Bakhtin*, 76.

Not surprisingly, there are significant implications for dialogism in our understanding of the nature of communication. Bakhtin notes,

Dialogic relationships are reducible neither to logical relationships nor to relationships in and of themselves devoid of any dialogic element. They must clothe themselves in discourse, become utterances, become the positions of various subjects expressed in discourse, in order that dialogic relationships might arise among them.<sup>4</sup>

Dialogism, then, is at the heart of all human communication and communication manifests itself in the utterance. For Bakhtin, the utterance is the most fundamental building block of language as it is the only unit of communication with clear, absolute, unambiguous borders. The utterance begins and ends with a change of speakers. All human communications are utterances, from the single word to the multi-volume commentary. But no utterance is isolated. Every utterance is a response to another utterance and an anticipation of a response. There can be no first or last utterances. Utterances are thus dialogic with their meaning found in this relationship between the response the utterance is making and the anticipated response it expects.

One advantage of this concept of the utterance as a linguistic category is its ability to analyze linguistic phenomena not easily handled by traditional linguistics. If, for instance, two people are sitting in a room and one says to the other the one word, "cold," Bakhtin's theory of utterance gives a model for understanding the meaning. By considering the utterance as a response and an anticipation, one can determine whether the referent is the temperature of food or drink, whether this referent is positive or negative, or whether the referent is a person, an act, or the temperature of the room.

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<sup>4</sup> Bakhtin, *Poetics*, 183.

Utterances, while unique, follow patterns that allow prediction to be made about their length, style and other factors, determined by the speech genre.<sup>5</sup> Bakhtin writes, “Each separate utterance is individual, of course, but each sphere in which language is used develops its own relatively stable types of these utterances. These we may call speech genres.”<sup>6</sup>

The concept of speech genres explains variations within what Bakhtin calls ‘national languages’ (French, German and so on), not only distinguishing regional and socio-political variances, but even situational variances, such as the difference between the language two coworkers use when talking in the office and the language those same coworkers use over lunch. In fact, Bakhtin notes that sometimes people can feel awkward because they have not mastered the appropriate speech genre, perhaps casual conversation, even when they are masters of another, such as presenting academic papers.<sup>7</sup> Speech genres, though, are not merely a matter of forms and structures, but are also modes of perception. The speech genre shapes not only how the speaker forms the utterance, but also how the reader understands it.

It follows, then, that the reader must be able very early in the utterance to perceive the speech genre to which it belongs. The hearers “...embrace, understand and sense the speaker’s speech plan or speech will, which determines the entire utterance, its length and boundaries.”<sup>8</sup> These speech genres, for the most part, are not formed consciously by the

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<sup>5</sup> Bakhtin’s most concentrated discussion of speech genres is in his essay “The Problem of Speech Genres” (*Speech Genres*, 60–102). Further discussions of speech genres can be found in Gardiner, *Dialogics*, 36; Mandolfo, “Form Criticism,” 70; Mitchell, “Genres,” 31–34; Newsom, “Spying,” 21–28.

<sup>6</sup> Bakhtin, *Speech Genres*, 60.

<sup>7</sup> Bakhtin, *Speech Genres*, 80.

<sup>8</sup> Bakhtin, *Speech Genres*, 77.

speaker, and style is not planned, but rather arises as a by-product. Artistic and literary compositions would, of course, be an exception to that rule.

Some longer compositions are in fact secondary or complex speech genres, taking up into themselves excerpts from many other utterances, and as such contain pieces of many speech genres. Bakhtin sees virtually all literary compositions, from the letter and diary through the commentary and novel, as being secondary or complex speech genres.

Speech genres, while allowing some flexibility, do constrain what we say. Without these constraints, this ability to structure and predict, communication would be impossible. However, the possible variations are limitless. In fact, the relationship of the utterance to the speech genre cannot be reduced to mere classification as the variation is too large. Rather, it is better to think of an utterance as participating in a speech genre, both being shaped by it, and also in turn contributing to the shaping of the genre. The relationship between the utterance and the speech genre is dialogic. While speech genres tend to be conservative, changing slowly, nonetheless, every utterance participates in reshaping its speech genre. Our understanding of each speech genre is shaped by every other experience we have had with that genre and in turn this new encounter shapes our future understanding of the speech genre.

This sense in which our understanding is shaped by all past encounters is not unique to speech genres, but in fact is also true of words, phrases and all aspects of language. Bakhtin calls this “intertextuality.” Bakhtin writes,

When a member of a speaking collective comes upon a word, it is not as a neutral word of language, not as a word free from the aspirations and evaluations of others, uninhabited by other’s voices. No, he receives the word from another’s voice and filled with that other voice. The word

enters his context from another context, permeated with interpretations of others. His own thought finds the word already inhabited.<sup>9</sup>

The word bears in its use the echo of every other context in which it has been used. Centripetal forces hold the word together with all other uses forcing meaning to attach from them. Centrifugal forces that demand the unique, force this word to mean something very specific in this context, distinct from all other contexts. “The tree” is forced centripetally through intertextuality to evoke all those properties of “tree” from other uses, from all the other trees we have seen in our lives. Centrifugal forces distinguish this tree in this garden at this time relative to this social context from every other tree in existence. Intertextuality lives in the dialogue between these centripetal and centrifugal forces.

Beyond intertextuality there is also in discourse the inclusion or suggestion of one utterance within another. This, of course, occurs in the case of the direct quotation, but also indirect discourse, in which the other’s discourse is referred to in one of many ways but not reproduced.<sup>10</sup> In direct discourse, the utterance being cited is referred to as the object of discussion and is raised either to support the main voice of the discourse or to be refuted. This style of discourse, typical of academic writing as well as other genres, preserves the words and ideas of the speaker being referenced; however, by objectifying them, it brings them completely into the monologic intent of the surrounding discourse. The discourse being quoted may be manipulated such that the words being spoken take on a second voice. The words in the voice of the original speaker have one distinct meaning and context, but are so manipulated or contextualized by the speaker of the surrounding utterance that they take on a new meaning, such as in parody or other genres.

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<sup>9</sup> Bakhtin, *Poetics*, 202.

<sup>10</sup> Bakhtin, *Poetics*, 195.

These discourses are called by Bakhtin ‘double-voiced’ discourses because the words of the quotation express both the voice of the one giving the surrounding utterance and also the voice of the one being quoted, in the case of narrative the narrator and the character. Bakhtin writes, “It frequently happens that even one and the same word will belong simultaneously to two languages, two belief systems that intersect in a hybrid construction — and consequently the word has two contradictory meanings, two accents.”<sup>11</sup> Bakhtin describes and classifies a number of different ways double-voiced discourse can occur, but notes his classification “far from exhausts all the possible examples of double-voiced discourse, or all the possible means of orienting toward another’s discourse.”<sup>12</sup>

The dialogue of voices is, of course, a fundamental property of reality. A subject finds itself surrounded by a myriad of utterances, responses that he or she might make, any one of which must be selected and framed into a specific discourse. It is the unmediated cacophony that precedes novelistic discourse, and which is drawn up into and shaped by a novel. In doing so the novel picks up and preserves different voices, not only in terms of their language, but more importantly in terms of their ideology. Individual speech patterns, vocabulary and ideology are preserved in a heteroglossic work.

A heteroglossic work is necessarily polyphonic, but a polyphonic work is not necessarily heteroglossic, as polyphony conceives of the voices in terms of dialogism, ideology, personhood, not in terms of expression.<sup>13</sup> In polyphonic writing there is a

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<sup>11</sup> Bakhtin, *Imagination*, 305.

<sup>12</sup> Bakhtin, *Poetics*, 198–199.

<sup>13</sup> The descriptions of heteroglossy and polyphony given here will be used throughout this thesis, although Bakhtin’s usages are less consistent. ‘Heteroglossy’ was introduced later in his vocabulary, and polyphony was held early by Bakhtin to be only found in Dostoevsky, then later that Dostoevsky represented the purest expression of what had always been implicit in the genre. Clark and Holquist, *Bakhtin*, 242; Claassens, “Biblical Theology,” 129, note 11.



plurality of unmerged consciousnesses, and each character's voice is viewed equally with the author's. Bakhtin notes, "from the vantage points provided by pure linguistics, it is impossible to detect in belletristic literature any really essential differences between a monologic and a polyphonic use of discourse," and goes on to observe that Dostoevsky's characters "all speak one and the same language," even though, for Bakhtin, Dostoevsky represents the supreme example of polyphonic writing.<sup>14</sup>

Each concept discussed needs to be understood first and foremost as an aspect of dialogism. Each derives from and reflects the epistemological assumptions that we know ourselves and our world through dialogue and that truth resides not with one or the other, but in the dialogue itself. Discussions of discourse and utterance play conceptually with how that dialogue works dynamically in the real world, while concepts such as intertextuality, polyphony, heteroglossy and speech genre describe how dialogism manifests itself in speech and especially in writing.

Similarly, dialogism describes how we come to know our universe, and thus ourselves, forming our identity in the real world, and also describes how a character is formed in a text. In a monologic work, the character exists only within the tight confines of the author, and cannot arise out of that, or be aware of himself or herself beyond those bounds.<sup>15</sup> However, in a polyphonic work, "The author constructs the hero not out of words foreign to the hero, not out of neutral definitions; he constructs not a character, not a type, nor a temperament, in fact he constructs no objectified image of the hero at all, but rather the hero's *discourse* about himself and his world."<sup>16</sup> The character, through his or her discourse about his or her self and world, emerges dialogically apart from, even at

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<sup>14</sup> Bakhtin, *Poetics*, 180–181.

<sup>15</sup> Bakhtin, *Poetics*, 52.

<sup>16</sup> Bakhtin, *Poetics*, 53. Italics are original with the translation.

odds with, the agenda of the author. Everything else known about the character is secondary and needs to be understood through the frame of the character's own voice. Thus, inconsistencies between what a character says and what the author reports that he does, reveal the character as shaped by the author, but in a polyphonic work they also reveal a tension between the voice of the character and the voice of the author. It is in listening for this tension that one determines if a text is monologic or polyphonic.

It is not surprising that Bakhtin applied the idea of dialogue to all areas. One of the most interesting was his application of dialogue to the relationships of time and space in literature, from which arose the concept of the chronotope. To understand Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope, one must distinguish between three aspects of time in narrative, what I will call historical time, chronological time and narrative time.<sup>17</sup> By historical time I mean events as they actually occurred in the real world, apart from how they are represented in any historical or narrative work. By chronological time I mean the strict chronological order and duration of events within the narrative. By narrative time I mean the events as they unfold in the narrative, as they are encountered by the reader. In a straightforward factual retelling of an event these three ought to be very similar. In more complex narratives the differences can be quite marked. Narrative and chronological time, while both operating within the narrative world, need not correspond. The author of the narrative may break the sequence of events by introducing another narrative line, may bring the reader back to previous events, or forward to other events, or unfold alternate parallel lines at the same time despite their lack of chronological

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<sup>17</sup> These categories are my own, but synthesize the work of Holquist (*Dialogism*, 113) who distinguishes between *fabula* and *syuzhet*, which I call chronological time and narrative time, and the work of Holquist and Clark (*Bakhtin*, 279) who distinguish between the "actual world," which corresponds to my category of historical time, and the "world represented," which synthesizes my categories of chronological and narrative time.

relationship. The author may or may not include cues in the text to indicate that this is going on, enabling the reader to sort through the narrative time to understand the events as they relate to each other in chronological time. The plot arises as a dialogue between narrative time and chronological time, a dialogue which the author manipulates to his or her own ends. Historical time, the time in which the author and reader live, is in turn in dialogue with the chronological time and thus also the narrative time of the text.

Chronotope is the relationship of these three categories of time to each other and space. Space within the narrative, like the events themselves, may or may not correspond to the space of the world inhabited by the author and the reader and may or may not be significant within the narrative itself. The events may demand, may be driven by, the spatial relationships of the characters and the events. The story of two lovers separated by a wall or one lover crossing great distances to reach the other simply collapses if the topology is changed so the two characters are together. On the other hand, a narrative of a lover's quarrel may not only be feasible in any location but may be carried out over the phone making the distance between the two potentially irrelevant to the narrative. Similarly, the relationship between chronological time and historical time may be important or irrelevant. In some cases the narrative world may be transhistorical, set perhaps in a real place at a real time but with a narrative that is connected neither to that space or that time. The tale of the two lovers separated by the wall may be placed anywhere in the world at any time in the world, though the particular story developed by a particular author may choose a particular place and time. On the other hand, a narrative may only be significant, and in fact may only make sense, as it is connected to a particular space and time. Any story, for instance, which tells how "we" got "here" only

has significance and meaning and may only have sense as it is connected to the real world, the world of the author and reader.

The chronotope of a narrative includes all these: the narrative time, the chronological time, the historical time, and topology, both within the narrative and its corresponding topology in the real world. The concept of the chronotope also includes, however, the relationships between all these. It encapsulates the sometimes complex relationship among the narrative and chronological time of the plot and its topological setting, as well as bridging the gulf between the narrative world and the real world.

To understand how the character of Darius is developed in each of the three texts, relevant Bakhtinian concepts will be applied. One dominant concept that I will bring to bear is that of double-voicing. Does the speech of Darius, oral or written, allow the reader and the author to enter into a dialogic relationship with the character? Does Darius' voice emerge incarnating the ideology, passions and perspectives of Darius? If so, is it objectified and presented independently, or do those same words also incarnate the ideology, passions and perspectives of the narrator, double-voiced, speaking at once both with the voice of the character and with the narrator?

Another major concept that will be utilized is the dialogic relationship between utterances. As noted above, every utterance is both a response to something and anticipates a response. If an utterance is responding to an utterance, and expects and receives an utterance in response, a chain may be formed of utterances. Based on this aspect of Bakhtin's thought one may postulate utterance chains.<sup>18</sup> One example of an utterance chain is a conversation. But an utterance may be any speech, from a single word to a multi-volume commentary, so a chain may consist of utterances of various

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<sup>18</sup> To my knowledge, Bakhtin himself never spoke directly of utterance chains.

sizes and span over considerable lengths of time. An utterance chain may conceivably extend over centuries and involve multiple utterances in complex relationships (as, for instance, this thesis responds to works thousands of years old and a body of scholarship around them). Utterances may respond to something other than another utterance, and may not always receive a response, so an utterance chain is not infinite.

Within a narrative the utterance chain may contribute to and participate in double-voicing. As the words themselves may take on a different meaning from that intended by the speaker, so also an utterance within a narrative may be brought into dialogue with utterances or events within the chronotope that the character did not intend or of which the character is not even aware.

It is precisely in the dialogue between chronological time and narrative time that the utterance chain itself is double-voiced. The chronotopic dialogue incorporates more than the utterance chain, including also the chain of cause and effect and other aspects of the text. Double-voicing occurs in the tension between the relationship of the utterance to its surrounding chronotope, what it is in dialogue with within the text, and the relationship intended by the character of the utterance within the utterance chain. Thus, the concept of the chronotope is useful in understanding the emergence of the character of Darius from the texts.

### **3. Bakhtin in Biblical Studies**

In the last few decades a large body of literature has arisen that uses the concepts of Bakhtin for biblical studies, much, though not all, of it indebted to Barbara Green's

book, *Mikhail Bakhtin and Biblical Scholarship*.<sup>19</sup> Sykes uses Bakhtinian concepts of genre, and of chronotope to examine longstanding issues in Haggai–Zechariah 1–8, viewing it as chronistic literature that creates a chronotope of a utopian history contrasting the actual historical context from which the book arises.<sup>20</sup> Craig argues Esther is best read as subversive literature using Bakhtin’s notion of the carnivalesque, a reading undertaken by Lacoque.<sup>21</sup> Claassens uses the notion of carnivalesque to read the stories of Sarah and Hagar.<sup>22</sup> Christine Mitchell uses Bakhtin’s concepts of intertextuality to do comparative readings of Chronicles with *Cyropaedia* in her thesis, and later with 1 and 2 Kings.<sup>23</sup> Even the minutest detail of Bakhtin’s thought, such as the concept of *pseudo-objective motivation* has found a place in understanding the Bible in the work of Keith Bodner.<sup>24</sup> I will discuss in more detail several works that have used concepts more closely related to this project.

For Reed, Bakhtin’s dialogics provides a lens extremely well suited for understanding the Bible. A dialogic approach unites in the utterance the centripetal force asserting unity and central control with the centrifugal force dramatizing diversity, tying together, for instance, contrasting approaches to parallel passage.<sup>25</sup> One need not choose between approaches focusing on differences and approaches focusing on similarities. A dialogic approach encourages the perception of more than one layer of structure and more than one kind of arrangement, thus allowing for canonical and final form approaches to

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<sup>19</sup> Green, *Bakhtin and Biblical Scholarship*. See also Boer (“Introduction,” 6) for a brief overview of the use of Bakhtin in biblical scholarship.

<sup>20</sup> Sykes, *Times and Space*.

<sup>21</sup> Craig, *Reading Esther*; Lacoque, *Esther Regina*.

<sup>22</sup> Claassens, “Laughter and Tears.”

<sup>23</sup> Mitchell, “Dialogism of Chronicles”; “Ideal Ruler.”

<sup>24</sup> Bodner, *David Observed*, 38–66.

<sup>25</sup> Reed, *Dialogues of the Word*, 15.

work side-by-side with source-critical approaches.<sup>26</sup> And third, dialogism allows for a tight relationship between the various literary genres of the Bible and one of its primary themes: the relationship of God to specific groups of people.<sup>27</sup> Reed works out the implication of these benefits in a number of books of the Bible, including Genesis. Dialogism allows him to see three major kinds of divine human communication in Genesis, each occurring once in the prologue and again in the patriarchal narratives. In the first, the selection of a man and woman combined with promises and instructions, Reed sees dialogue between the stories of Adam and Eve and Abram and Sarai. The second, the apparently arbitrary election of one brother over another, brings the stories of Cain / Abel and Jacob / Esau into dialogue. The third dialogue is created between the stories of Noah and Joseph in which God selects a single “righteous” man to bring salvation to the earth.<sup>28</sup>

Claassens finds in Bakhtin’s concept of dialogue great potential for Biblical Theology. Following Newsom, Claassens argues that the Bible is not truly a polyphonic text because it is not a single text composed by a single author with multiple voices but that it does nonetheless bring many voices into dialogue.<sup>29</sup> But who is the designer of the dialogue? Claassens considers the possibility of a “diachronic argument that the creators of the biblical texts have responded to previously uttered words or discourses,” but rejects it.<sup>30</sup> Instead she argues for a synchronic dialogue created by the third party observer, the reader.<sup>31</sup> For Claassens, a synchronic dialogic approach to the scriptures allows for the

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<sup>26</sup> Reed, *Dialogues of the Word*, 15.

<sup>27</sup> Reed, *Dialogues of the Word*, 16.

<sup>28</sup> Reed, *Dialogues of the Word*, 18–19.

<sup>29</sup> Claassens, “Biblical Theology,” 134.

<sup>30</sup> Claassens, “Biblical Theology,” 134.

<sup>31</sup> Claassens, “Biblical Theology,” 135.

various voices in the text to be heard, including weak voices. Meaning is found “...not in any singular text but on the boundary of the intersecting texts. The meaning that is created out of the dialogue between the given texts is totally new.”<sup>32</sup> The texts in dialogue create a new meaning, which in turn shapes the meaning of the texts themselves. This approach holds a good deal of promise; however, Claassens goes on to assert “Bakhtin’s notion of ‘Great Time’ is especially significant for composing a model for biblical theology.”<sup>33</sup> Great time is the distant future, into which every great work will forever stay open, in dialogue with new listeners, with new perspectives.<sup>34</sup> She insists that Great Time does not lead to relativism, asserting that Bakhtin disliked relativism, but she fails to produce any real criteria by which a reading may be rejected.<sup>35</sup>

Tull uses Bakhtin’s discussion of the genre he refers to as “confessional self-accounting,” to discuss the Psalms of Lament, taking her lead from Bakhtin’s own citation of Ps 51 in this discussion.<sup>36</sup> For Bakhtin, confessional self-accounting is an inward self-analysis and regret that involves no other. The author is the hero and no other chronotope is engaged. As such, the work remains formless and void. The reader actualizes the work by objectifying the suffering. While the author can see nothing but the suffering, the reading can objectify it, understanding it through sympathy and history, both owning and entering it, and at the same time aestheticising it and seeing it in a broader context, a context to which the author is blind.

Alice Wells Hunt evokes Bakhtin’s concept of dialogism to address the impasse she sees in the pernicious problem of biblical historiography. As a result of very different

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<sup>32</sup> Claassens, “Biblical Theology,” 136.

<sup>33</sup> Claassens, “Biblical Theology,” 136.

<sup>34</sup> Claassens, “Biblical Theology,” 131.

<sup>35</sup> Claassens, “Biblical Theology,” 136, 141.

<sup>36</sup> Tull, “Confessional Self -Accounting,” 43, citing Bakhtin, “Author and Hero,” 138–50.



assumptions about historiography, scholars such as Dever and Lemche “rarely engage in conversation, more often talking past each other in an effort that seems aimed at gaining supremacy.”<sup>37</sup> Each position attempts to establish a monologic truth, whereas dialogism would allow us to recognize multiple voices and perspectives. While she is not sure that the requisite mutual respect is currently possible “[g]iven the polemics of the historiography of ancient Israel,”<sup>38</sup> she nonetheless sees in dialogism a moral call and a conceptual basis to come back to the table and bring dialogue from cacophony.

Hays uses the concept of monologism to describe the characterization of Ezra in Ezra 7–10 and will be discussed in the chapter on Ezra.<sup>39</sup> Newsom, in contrast, sees Job as extremely polyphonic, bringing together two different genres. The didactic tale is an aggressively monologic genre, which the author incorporates and brings into dialogue with the wisdom dialogue, which itself brings together voices in a polyphonic manner. The resumption of the didactic tale after the dialogue provides a counter voice to that of God, allowing for dialogic encounter even with the Divine.<sup>40</sup>

Specific work is done on characterization by McCracken, who finds in Bakhtin a theory of character which is ideally suited to understanding characters in the Bible. According to McCracken, we meet characters in the Bible in times of crisis, citing Bar-Efrat, and they are defined not as individuals, but as interviduals.<sup>41</sup> Biblical characters arise not as objects, as features of the texts, but rather through their interactions, their dialogic relationships with other characters, with the reader, and with the author, as

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<sup>37</sup> Hunt, “Bringing Dialogue from Cacophony,” 329.

<sup>38</sup> Hunt, “Bringing Dialogue from Cacophony,” 337.

<sup>39</sup> C. Hays, “Silence of the Wives,” 78–80.

<sup>40</sup> Newsom, “Job as Polyphony,” 87–108.

<sup>41</sup> McCracken, “Character in the Boundary,” 32; Bar-Efrat, *Narrative*, 78.

analogues of persons.<sup>42</sup> While careful to distinguish the Bible from a novel by Dostoevsky, McCracken does find true of the Bible five aspects of character that Bakhtin discusses in regards to Dostoevsky's works.<sup>43</sup> First, characters are relatively free, not being bounded by the objective view of the writer. Second, characters exist in dialogic relationship to others, as I-thou, not as I. Third, characters exist not as objects of the distant past but in dialogue with the reader, in a real present. Fourth, the character is something the author speaks with, not about. And fifth, the character exists in discourse, artistically merging not through authorial description, but in dialogue with other characters.

This thesis, then, is part of a growing body of literature in biblical scholarship that seeks to take the ideas of Bakhtin and determine what light they can shed on the Bible. Like the other studies, only a few concepts will be applied as dominant themes in the study. The breadth of Bakhtin's work means that there still remains a relatively small body of literature applying any single concept. More specifically, I am not aware of any scholar applying the concepts of double-voicing in connection with the dialogic interaction of utterances in chronotope to analyze character development.

#### **4. Hearing Darius through Bakhtin**

Bakhtin's concepts of chronotope and voice provide a lens through which it is possible to examine the three diverse works and how they characterize Darius. In each text it is possible to find the words of Darius framed in a broader literary context, which is situated in a chronotope that brings it into dialogue with other voices. Within the

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<sup>42</sup> McCracken, "Character in the Boundary," 34.

<sup>43</sup> McCracken, "Character in the Boundary," 36–37.

Behistun inscription, elements of chronotope are carefully manipulated in several ways to heighten the kingship of Darius and lift him above the common things of this world. The repeated phrase in the Behistun document “proclaims Darius” creates a literary framing of the narrative that is in Darius’ voice. This framing breaks the narrative into a number of separate utterances, potentially turning Darius’ words into double-voiced discourse, but is itself subverted by the voice of Darius. *The Histories* of Herodotus contain several speeches of Darius, most of them quite short, personal and revealing of character.

However, in Darius’ one public speech to his Persian supporters, Herodotus both manipulates the chronotope in which the speech is set, and double-voices the quotation, so that Darius is made more vulnerable and human. The manipulation of chronotope within the broader narrative frame of Ezra-Nehemiah makes Darius’ letter a double-voiced utterance, in which the voice of the author of Ezra-Nehemiah speaks with and through the voice of Darius, subverting the intent of Darius. On the other hand, the placement of Darius’ letter within the chronotope also sets him above the other Persian kings, except Cyrus.

To determine the voice of Darius, I will look carefully at the utterances of Darius, considering them in their chronotopic context. Not only the content of the speech will be considered, but the broader context of the speech within the life history of the character of Darius, and the social context in which the speech is made. The voice of the narrator will be determined by considering how the utterance is framed within the narrative, looking at how the narrative fits within the plot, how the effect was realized, what techniques are used in the framing, and whether the utterance is supported or contradicted by the preceding and subsequent narrative. As well, the utterance will be framed within the broader context of the characterization of Darius within the greater work.

## 5. Project Overview

Using Bakhtin's concepts, I will look at the way in which the utterances of Darius are used to shape his character in *The Histories*, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, and *Behistun*, and what this in turn reveals about the relationships the communities that produce these texts have with the Persian kings, especially Darius. Characterization in literature is the art of developing characters within a narrative, usually fictional. Characterization may be done directly through statements about the character by the narrator or by another character, physical descriptions of the character, the style of speeches the character makes, as well as many other methods.<sup>44</sup> Bakhtin's theories of double-voicing and chronotope were developed in studying novels and as such they are quite well suited to work with narrative criticism. Concepts of narrative criticism will underlie this thesis, as the events and characters described will be considered a part of the narrative world. All references, for instance, to Darius, including those that attribute to him beliefs, assumptions and volition, are to the character of Darius in the work under consideration.<sup>45</sup> This thesis will engage the concept of chronotope to understand the context in which the speeches of Darius can be read, and will focus then on the concepts of double-voicing and utterance chains to examine how the speeches are used to develop Darius' character, in *Behistun*, *The Histories*, and *Ezra-Nehemiah*. I will then consider how these texts respond to the situation of the community that produced them, and are intended to shape the perception of Darius in that community. It will be shown that in each case the writer makes careful

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<sup>44</sup> Methods of characterization are found in Alter, *Art*, 114–130; Bar-Efrat, *Narrative*, 47–92; Gunn and Fewell, *Narrative*, 46–81.

<sup>45</sup> References to the historical person of Darius will be noted as such. As a matter of convenience, references to Herodotus are to the historical person who wrote *The Histories* and references to the character of the historian that shows up from time to time in *The Histories* will be noted as such.

use of specific chronotope structures and the voice of Darius in dialogue with other voices to nuance the overt characterization of Darius, subtly undermining his authority in the non-Persian texts and enhancing it in the Persian text.

Each chapter will begin with an orientation to the text under consideration, providing necessary background discussion of critical issues such as authorship, date and background. The variety in the documents in terms of type, language and culture, will mean that the orientation section will need to deal with different issues in each chapter.

Each chapter will examine briefly the genre and characteristics of the work so that the analysis which follows in the chapter can be properly nuanced to the individual work while applying the common Bakhtinian analysis to each. It is easy at a glance to dismiss the Behistun inscription as a monument inscription without literary merit. It has been more traditional over the years to view both Herodotus' *The Histories* and Ezra-Nehemiah dominantly as historiography, in which the agenda of presenting facts, for whatever purpose, takes precedence over literary creativity. Recently, as shall be noted, work in all three has recognized carefully composed literary elements.

Each chapter will then consider how the work under consideration as a whole views the Persians. Again, an extensive discussion of a complex issue such as this will not be feasible, however, some discussion will place the examination of the specific utterances of Darius in an ideological context. Similarly, a discussion of the view of the Persian kings and of Darius himself throughout the work will enable the study to proceed to the specific speeches with an awareness of the broader context into which they are fit.

Once a sufficient background and context has been established it will be possible to study the speeches of Darius themselves. The examination of the speeches will leverage dominantly two Bakhtinian concepts. First, each speech will be examined within

its chronotope, including how the speech fits within utterance chains. How does the narrative context bring the utterance into dialogue with surrounding material and how does this relate to Darius the character's own apparent understanding of what he is responding to and what he expects by way of a response? Second, I will ask whether each speech is polyphonic, allowing the character of Darius to emerge and shape himself, or monologic, absolutely under the control of the narrator. If a speech is polyphonic, we can then ask if it is also double-voiced. How does the narrative context shape and change the meaning of the words to suit the author's agenda? This analysis, working within the parameters discussed above, will determine how this speech is developing the characterization of Darius within the work.

The chapter will then reconsider, briefly, how this characterization affects the overall characterization of Darius, of the Persian kings in general, and of the Persians as a whole within the work under consideration.

Finally, the chapter will pull out of the narrative world and examine, in the light of previous discussions, how this work is in dialogue with its own intended audience. What is the author of the work, through this speech and the work as a whole, trying to communicate to his or her audience concerning the Persian monarchy?<sup>46</sup> I believe that this study will provide insights not only into the characteristics of the texts studied, but into the communities from which the books arose and how they related to the Persian monarchy.

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<sup>46</sup> While Green is right that we do not have access to the social context that would allow a full Bakhtinian analysis ("Experiential Learning," 46) some observations at a broad level can be made using what we do know.

## CHAPTER 2

### Hearing Darius at Behistun

Perhaps no other source in the ancient world proclaims the voice of Darius louder than the great trilingual inscription at Behistun. The Behistun monument is engraved into the side of a cliff in Iran, dominating a small complex of monuments, and features a 3 x 5.5 metre relief of Darius and accompanying text in Babylonian, Old Persian, and Elamite.<sup>1</sup> Darius is shown standing with his left hand holding a bow and his right hand raised toward a winged disk figure of Ahuramazda.<sup>2</sup> Before Darius are nine rebel kings, each with their hands tied behind their backs, joined by a rope around their necks, each distinctively carved in typical ethnic dress of their people. Beneath Darius' left foot is the liar-king Gaumata. The winged figure of Ahuramazda, hovering above the captives, faces Darius with his right hand raised in a way similar to Darius, handing Darius a ring with his left. Behind Darius are two Persians, one with a spear, the other with a bow. All the characters are identified with inscriptions, except for Ahuramazda and the two Persians. The Old Persian text is directly beneath the relief, while the Babylonian is to the left and the original Elamite to the right of the relief. A second copy of the Elamite was carved beneath the Babylonian, to the left of the Old Persian. When the original Elamite

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<sup>1</sup> An Aramiac translation on papyrus was also found in Egypt. See Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri*; Sims-Williams, "Final Paragraph," 1–7; Tavernier, "Royal Inscription," 161–176. Debevoise ("Rock Reliefs," 92–93) documents the other monuments, noting that they are later than the famed Behistun monument.

<sup>2</sup> The close connection between Darius and Ahuramazda in the inscription suggests strongly that the winged figure is Ahuramazda. Some scholars, however, hold that the winged figure may be the daemon of the king or one of his ancestors, citing Zoroastrian doctrine and Herodotus. These arguments assume that current Zoroastrian doctrine remains unchanged since the Achaemenid period and also that Herodotus is right, rather than emphasizing the apparent implications of the inscriptions on the monument itself. See Root, *King and Kingship*, 169–171; Garrison and Root, *Seals*, 69.

inscription was almost complete to the right of the monument, the figure of Skunka, the ruler of the Scythians, was added. To make room it was necessary to obliterate the Elamite text, which was then reinscribed beneath the Babylonian version.<sup>3</sup>

The inscription, mirrored three times in three languages, is a royal inscription, boasting of the successes of Darius' first three years, and written predominantly in the first person, the voice of Darius.<sup>4</sup> However, the first person is introduced and broken by a third person narrative frame which begins the inscription, and then introduces each separate section as the words of Darius. While much work has been done analyzing the texts of Behistun, especially in conjunction with the Greek texts, to determine the sequence of events around Darius' ascent to the throne, the literary features of the text, treated by scholars such as Jack Balcer and Gernot Windfur twenty years ago, remain largely unexplored.<sup>5</sup> This chapter follows in the wake of Balcer, Windfur and others in applying literary critical theory to the Behistun inscription.

This chapter will apply the Bakhtinian concepts of double-voicing and chronotope to the Old Persian text of the Behistun inscription, listening carefully for how the character of Darius is developed through his voice. This chapter will first provide an orientation to the Behistun inscription, and then discuss some of its literary features, with a view to understanding its genre. I will then make some observations about how Darius is generally characterized in the text in order to lay the foundation for a more nuanced

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<sup>3</sup> Cameron, "The Elamite Version," 60–61; Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 124, 127.

<sup>4</sup> From here on, 'inscription' shall be understood as referring to the text of the Old Persian inscription unless otherwise noted.

<sup>5</sup> Balcer, "Epic Conventions," 257–264; Windfuhr, "Saith Darius." On the veracity of the Behistun account, see, for instance, Olmstead, "Darius and His Behistun Inscription"; Poebel, "Chronology," 142–165; "Chronology (Concluded)," 285–314; Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire*, 107–118; more recently, Bickerman and Tadmor, "Darius I, pseudo-Smerdis and the Magi," 239–261; Lang, "Prexaspes and Usurper Smerdis," 201–207.



Bakhtinian reading examining the chronotope and features of polyphony. The chronotope of the Behistun inscription is very carefully structured and manipulated, controlling elements of narrative time, space and pacing to highlight the greatness of Darius and minimize his opponents. The chronotope is in fact transhistorical and lifts the events described out of the realm of history into the realm of epic. Whereas the voice of Darius is embedded in a larger utterance that is a complex speech genre, incorporating in itself many smaller utterances, the Behistun inscription is a single utterance, made up of a third person narrative frame introducing the speech of Darius in every section but the first. Each section, beginning with the words “Proclaims Darius, the King,” creates from the voice of Darius a separate utterance, marked by change of speaker, consisting of the words of Darius that follow.<sup>6</sup> While the third person narrative frame is a single utterance, incorporating virtually the whole of the inscription, it repeatedly interrupts the voice of Darius, forcing Darius’ words into a myriad of smaller utterances.<sup>7</sup> In the case of the Behistun inscription, in which these two voices constitute the entirety of the text, it is possible to ask whether the inscription is polyphonic or monologic, whether one voice dominates the discourse or whether the two are in tension.<sup>8</sup>

Having looked at the utterances of Darius using the Bakhtinian frames of chronotope and double-voicing, it will be possible to consider how they are used to nuance the overt characterization of Darius, and what is revealed about the author’s ideas of the Persian monarchy. I will consider how the inscription as a whole is intended to affect its community, and what response it expects. While no effort will be made to

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<sup>6</sup> For Bakhtin, the change of speaker marks the boundary of an utterance (“Speech Genres,” 71).

<sup>7</sup> The question of whether the appendix constitutes a separate utterance will be considered below.

<sup>8</sup> Within the speeches of Darius others are quoted, so Darius and the narrator are not the only voices in the text; these other voices are subsumed, being objectified within the voice of Darius.

determine the truth value of any claims of the Behistun text, it is worth asking how the intended audience would likely have responded to them.

### 1. Orientation

While the Elamite is more likely the original text, the Old Persian is significant.<sup>9</sup> The content of the Old Persian text generally follows the earlier versions, but the characters are much more skillfully and deeply incised.<sup>10</sup> It contains material that the other texts lack, and is explicitly mentioned within the text itself. Behistun §70 reads, in part, “By the favor of Ahuramazdā this (is) the form of writing which I made, besides, in Aryan, and on clay tablets. Both on clay tablets and on parchment it has been placed.”<sup>11</sup> In the same place, in Elamite, it reads, “I made a script (or inscription) of another kind in Aryan which previously had not existed....”<sup>12</sup> Many believe it was in order to record the Old Persian version that the Old Persian language was put into writing. Darius, it is argued, had the cuneiform script for the Old Persian language developed specifically for this monument.<sup>13</sup> For these reasons this study will focus on the literary features specifically of the text as found in the Old Persian version.

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<sup>9</sup> The text of the Old Persian is not the first text inscribed, however, the image of the monument itself, copied elsewhere, is primary, and Darius’s original verbal instructions concerning what to write were quite probably in Old Persian. Tuplin, “Darius’ Accession,” 217; Vogelsang, *Rise and Organization*, 177. But contra Sancisi-Weerdenburg (“Persian Kings,” 107–108) who suggests that the text of the inscription may in turn be based on an Aramaic letter written earlier for mass distribution.

<sup>10</sup> Cameron, “The Elamite Version,” 60–61.

<sup>11</sup> All translations of Behistun text are from Schmitt, *Bisitun Inscription*, unless otherwise noted. See also British Museum, *Sculptures and Inscriptions*; Sukuma, *Old Persian Inscriptions*; Kent, *Old Persian*. On the text of Behistun see also Gray, “Notes,” 56–64; Jackson, “Great Behistun Rock,” 77–95; Kent, “Textual Criticism of Inscriptions,” 289–299; Debevoise, “The Rock Reliefs of Ancient Iran,” 76–105; Kent, “Old Persian Texts,” 105–114; Eilers, “End of the Behistan Inscription,” 106–110; Cameron, “The Old Persian Text,” 47–54; Kent, “Cameron’s Old Persian Readings,” 55–57; Benedict and Voigtlander, “Babylonian Version,” 1–10.

<sup>12</sup> Dandamaev and Lukonin, *Ancient Iran*, 278–279.

<sup>13</sup> Balcer, *Herodotus*; Dandamaev and Lukonin, *Culture and Social Institutions*, 281; Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 127, but contra Hallock (“Old Persian Signs,” 52–55) who argues based on the number of wedges in the different characters that the base text for developing OP cuneiform was CMA, which reads

The text consists of 76 sections, each one (except the first) introduced with the words “Proclaims Darius, the King”. These 76 fit into the following outline: Introduction and Lineage (§1–9), Darius Defeats Gaumata (§§10–14), Rebellions Put Down (§§15–54), Conclusion (§§55–70), Epilogue: Year 2 and 3 (§§71–76). In the first section (§§1–9) the narrator, speaking as Darius, asserts Darius’ membership in the royal family, lists the nations that came to him, and describes his rule as just. The second section (§§10–14) narrates the events that led to Darius’ rise. Cyrus had a son, Cambyses, who had a brother, named Smerdis. Before his death, Cambyses slew Smerdis. A magus named Gaumata seized power claiming to be Smerdis, the brother of Cambyses. The people followed him, fearing that anyone who denounced him would be slain. Finally Darius and a few men rose up and slew Gaumata, the false Smerdis, restoring the throne to the royal family and making Darius king. However, all is not well, as the third section (§§15–54) reveals. A number of rebellions break out throughout the land and Darius and his generals have to put them down. The conclusion (§§55–70) records Darius’ insistence that what has been said is true and gives advice on kingship to those who would follow, including an injunction to protect the Behistun monument itself. The epilogue (§§71–76) describes rebellions during the second and third year which are also suppressed. By narrating Darius’ lineage, ascent to the throne, and many victories in the first year, the Behistun text seeks both to establish Darius’ right to the throne and to discourage future rebellions.

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“I am Cyrus the King, an Achaemenian” (Kent, *Old Persian*, 116). There is reason to believe that this text was also from the time of Darius.

## 2. Genre

Before considering the literary features of the text, it is important to define the literary genre of the Behistun narratives. The text, accompanied as it is by the relief and boasting of the works of the king predominantly in the first person, is reminiscent of other royal inscriptions. This literary analysis assumes that the text is in fact a careful literary composition, with characteristics of one or more genres. The genre has been examined by both Balcer and Windfuhr, although they take different approaches and arrive at different conclusions on the nature of the text. Their examinations make important observations, demonstrate that the text was carefully composed, and point the way to further study.

Balcer sees the Behistun narrative as reflecting ancient Indo-European conventions, as described by Dumézil and others.<sup>14</sup> Dumézil, drawing on linguistic studies that describe the histories and development of languages, including languages no longer extant or even attested, developed a comparative approach to myths and the social structures they reveal, and also proposed theories of interrelationship and genealogy.<sup>15</sup> Dumézil compared ancient Indian myths with those of Italic, Germanic, and Celtic peoples to search for common themes and structures that shed light on the myths and social structures of the original Indo-Europeans.<sup>16</sup> In Behistun, Balcer finds the Indo-

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<sup>14</sup> Balcer (“Ancient Epic Conventions,” 257) cites a number of sources. He also acknowledges here a long recognized Assyro-Babylonian influence. Olmstead (“Lawgiver,” 248), for instance, sees in Behistun a dependency on the Hammurabi code.

<sup>15</sup> Dumézil, *L'idéologie tripartite*; Lincoln, *Myth*; Lincoln, *Priests*; S. Littleton, *Mythology*; Vereno, “Dumezillian Comparative Indo-European Mythology,” 180–190; Oosten, *War of the Gods*; Larson, “Mythology,” 1–16.

<sup>16</sup> See Littleton (*Mythology*, 7–19) for a helpful overview of Dumézil’s theories.

European tripartite divisions of sovereignty, force, and nourishment manifest in the divisions of priests, warriors, and herder-cultivators.<sup>17</sup> As well, the specific story of Darius told by Behistun has themes from the Indo-European epics. Gaumata is a trickster, but is also the seriously flawed king and the opponent of Darius, the intruding hero.<sup>18</sup> As the epic, intruding hero, Darius must first prove himself by conquering his enemy, and then undertake some act on behalf of a small band of supporters, whom Balcer sees as Darius' six colleagues who, along with Darius, were the seven conspirators that overthrew Gaumata. After this, the intruding hero must act on behalf of the entire people.<sup>19</sup>

The Behistun narrative differs from the epic conventions, as noted by Balcer, in that the epic hero usually meets a tragic fate, either perishing or losing much. Balcer, however, notes that in *The Odyssey* and *Cid* the hero's society is revitalized and the end of the story ushers in a stable society.<sup>20</sup> Further, Balcer's assertion, "Darius' emphasis upon his colleagues, the six fellow conspirators against Bardiya, is strong..." is overstated.<sup>21</sup> It is not until §68 that they are mentioned at all. There they are named and it is noted that "at the time [they] were there, whilst I slew Gaumāta the magus who called himself Smerdis. At that time these men strove as my followers..." (§68). While this may be significant recognition for the individuals, it is hardly a strong emphasis within the text. Further, while it is possible that the two unnamed Persians behind Darius are co-conspirators, they are not named and this identification is speculative.<sup>22</sup> Other than this

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<sup>17</sup> Balcer, "Epic Conventions," 258, 263.

<sup>18</sup> Balcer, "Epic Conventions," 261.

<sup>19</sup> Balcer, "Epic Conventions," 261–262.

<sup>20</sup> Balcer, "Epic Conventions," 262–263.

<sup>21</sup> Balcer, "Epic Conventions," 261.

<sup>22</sup> Schmidt (*Persepolis III*, 86) suggests that the first one was Gobryas, mentioned as one of the six (§68), however, there the identity of the other is not known. That only two are shown, without being

speculative possibility, the six are nowhere depicted on the monument. Balcer's conclusion, however, that the Behistun narrative is shaped by the ancient social structures and myths of the Persian people is a reminder not to read Behistun only as a Mesopotamian monument and adds another important socio-political and mythological context for the inscription.

While Balcer sees the Behistun inscription as an epic tale, Windfuhr sees it as a spell, whereby the lie is dispelled and truth "spelled."<sup>23</sup> Windfuhr argues that the inscription is a speech act that creates a syllogism in which the acts and words of Darius are subsumed in the will of Ahuramazda and, as such, are, by definition, truth.<sup>24</sup> He finds the repeated references to the will of Ahuramazda and certain unusual numeric features, especially the repetition of the number nine, to be typical of spells.<sup>25</sup> In 76 paragraphs, Darius is mentioned 76 times and Ahuramazda is also mentioned exactly 76 times.<sup>26</sup> Windfuhr also notes that, given the importance the text places on all the events recorded in it occurring in one year, one would also expect to find reference to the year in the structure of the text. By assuming the original text ends with §67, he finds references in the length of the text at exactly 365¼ lines, and the first mention of the one year in the beginning of the conclusion in the 52<sup>nd</sup> paragraph.<sup>27</sup> To this he adds the observation that

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identified, but all six are named in the text suggests that seeing these two as representing somehow the six is at best speculative.

<sup>23</sup> Windfuhr, "Saith Darius," 265.

<sup>24</sup> Windfuhr, "Saith Darius," 267.

<sup>25</sup> Windfuhr, "Saith Darius," 265.

<sup>26</sup> Windfuhr, "Saith Darius," 269. These and other figures mentioned by Windfuhr are based on the Old Persian text, and the patterns do not generally follow for the Elamite or Babylonian versions, though some do.

<sup>27</sup> Windfuhr, "Saith Darius," 266. In §67 a warning against destroying the text does have a sound of finality and the following material, crediting and invoking protection on the six followers and discussing the making and dissemination of the inscription do read as an appendix. Whether they were afterthoughts and later additions, as Windfuhr suggests, is an open question, but there is nonetheless a major structural division between §67 and §68.

the major victories of Darius and his father occur in months with equinoxes or solstices, while his allies' victories occur in months without such astronomical events.<sup>28</sup>

Perhaps most striking, however, are the occurrences of the number nine throughout the text. Windfuhr notes that Darius is the ninth king in the family to reign, nine provinces rebel, there are nine rebel kings,<sup>29</sup> and nine leaders oppose the rebels. Less convincing are Windfuhr's division of the 19 battles putting down the revolts into nine sets, and his creation of nine sets of provinces out of the 23 that revolt.<sup>30</sup> The rhetorical significance of the repetition of nines and other numeric features is not fully understood and warrants further study.

While, on one level, the inscription at Behistun is a royal inscription, proclaiming the works of a king, primarily in narrative form, Balcer and Windfuhr both show that this is only a superficial observation. Though some of Windfuhr's observations might be coincidental or contrived by him, he has made a number of important observations about the text that at the very least demonstrate that it is not a haphazard or plodding inscription of a boasting king, but, in fact, a carefully crafted piece of literature. Balcer's demonstration of epic features shows the narrative has layers beyond the strictly literal. A reading will necessarily begin with an acknowledgment of the text as a royal inscription;

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<sup>28</sup> Windfuhr, "Saith Darius," 274–275.

<sup>29</sup> The Scythian with the pointed hat was added later, however, it does not disrupt the count. Prior to it being added there were nine rebels in total including the prostrate Gaumata. Afterward, there were nine kings standing. Significantly the rebel Ataimata is omitted from the last carving (§71).

<sup>30</sup> Windfuhr, "Saith Darius," 270–272. The challenge of the kind of mathematical analysis Windfuhr does is determining at what point the calculations cease to be descriptive of the text and begin to be creations of their own, given that almost any set can generate a pattern given sufficient ingenuity. In some cases Windfuhr appears to have crossed that line. Dividing 19 battles and 23 provinces into sets of nine requires a division between decisive and lesser battles and leaves sets of only one, two and three provinces per set. The more calculations and qualifications Windfuhr makes, the less credible that observation becomes. The number three and its square the number nine seem to have significance going back to the roots of the Indo-Aryan language family and can be specifically traced through Iranian branches. Keith "Numbers (Aryan)," 407–413.

however, the text invites us to look for other literary features without restricting our reading based on assumptions of genre.

### 3. Characterization of Darius

How Darius wants to be seen is clear from the very first line of the inscription. The first section reads “I (am) Darius, the great king, the king of kings, king in Persia, king of the countries, the son of Hystaspes, the grandson of Arsames, an Achaemenid.”<sup>31</sup> Two fundamental facts, then, are asserted. First, Darius is a great king over much territory. Second, he is of the royal family, and as such is a legitimate king.<sup>32</sup> As a character, Darius is complex, but he is far from fully developed. His descriptions of himself point merely to his virtue, as noted above, without any indication of personal limits or faults. His punishment of the rebels is intended as proof of his virtue, despite our modern perception of barbarity. He boasts that “the man who was loyal, him I treated well, who was disloyal, him I punished severely” (§8) and “the man who strove for my (royal) house, him I treated well, who did harm, him I punished severely” (§63). These two statements are a part of summaries of his actions that form an inclusio around the narrative and Darius repeats the idea in his charge to future kings: “You, whosoever shall be king hereafter — the man who shall be a follower of Falsehood, or (the man) who shall be an evil-doer, to those may you not be friendly, (but) punish them severely” (§64).

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<sup>31</sup> The first section consists of the first two lines and all but the last word of the third. The first line itself ends just before the suffix on “kings,” and thus would read “I (am)...king of kings.”

<sup>32</sup> Griffiths (“Basileus,” 150) suggests that the phrase “king of kings” may have had its source in Egypt and shows that Darius considered himself divine. However, there is no proof that this is in fact the source of the phrase in the Behistun inscription, or that if it is, it kept those connotations. It clearly does not in the Hebrew Bible (see Ezek 26:7; Dan 2:37).



The narrator, by associating Darius with Ahuramazda, and opposing the lie, implies that all he says and does is truth, so his self-descriptive statements reflect this. The character Darius says, “because I was not disloyal, I was no follower of Falsehood, I was no evil-doer, neither I nor my family, (but) I acted according to righteousness.” The goodness of Darius is a tautology, being true not by an external measure, but by definition. Darius cannot be measured as good, but rather what Darius is defines good. To oppose Darius is itself a moral wrong and to cooperate a moral good.

Darius is portrayed as recognizing that the events he describes are incredible, as is clearly indicated in §§56—58, which is sometimes seen as an implicit acknowledgment that not everyone believed Darius’ claims to the throne.<sup>33</sup> This leads the modern reader who has otherwise not questioned the inscription to think that Darius “doth protest too much.”<sup>34</sup> However, it seems unlikely that Darius, or the scribes who composed the text of Behistun, would believe that the incredulity of a skeptic could be swayed merely by asserting that what was written was truth. Rather, Darius’ recognition of the incredulity of the hearer is best seen in his recognition of the incredible nature of the story itself. The character of Darius is presented as incredulous at this amazing story. The narrator suggests that Darius himself wonders at what Ahuramazda has done through him. This is further reinforced by his frequent uses of the passive voice, allowing the character or Darius to distance himself from the action. He says, for example, “This (is) what has been done by me in...” (§§34, 37, 39, 44, 48, 51), and “the country became mine” (§§37, 39, 48, 71, 74). Darius did not come into his kingdom by great might or brilliant strategy, but by the will of Ahuramazda because he was a virtuous person who did not follow the lie

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<sup>33</sup> Wiesehöfer, *Ancient Persia*, 14.

<sup>34</sup> Olmstead, “Darius and His Behistun Inscription,” 397.

(§63). The narrator builds Darius up by portraying him as pious, chosen by Ahuramazda and aided by Ahuramazda in a way that leaves even Darius in humble awe.

While Darius is portrayed as achieving many feats of which only a king was capable, these and all he achieves are portrayed as supernatural events in which Darius is used to restore the right order of the universe. The only claim of the text is that Darius sought to correct the wrong done to his house by Gaumata, a wrong which no one else was willing or able to right. This model fits well with Balcer's description of the Indo-European epic hero: "Above all, it is the god(s) who represent the force of ultimate moral order and, therefore, causes the hero intruder as the victorious new king to rise from his personal interests to the final more important duty to his state."<sup>35</sup> Consequently, one of the major purposes of the Behistun monument is to show his ascension to the throne as a supernatural event, not the result of the will or personal prowess of Darius.

#### **4. The Behistun Inscription and Chronotope**

The chronotope of the Behistun inscription is carefully managed to enhance the impression of Darius' authority and to minimize the significance and power of his opponents. Use of repetition makes narrative time seem to repeat itself, creating the impression that none of the rebellions, including that of Gaumata, are unique or significant, but rather that all are typical and dealt with as a routine matter. The use of *pasāva* ("afterwards") creates pacing in narrative time that is at odds with chronological time, emphasizing some actions and downplaying others. Spatial and temporal elements are manipulated similarly to emphasize the significance of some events over others. The

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<sup>35</sup> Balcer, "Ancient Epic Conventions," 262.

chronotope, further, may be viewed as transhistoric, being connected firmly to historical time and real geography, but not dependent on it.

The narrative concerning the rebellions (§§15—54) uses formulas in narrating the individual rebellions, as well as arranging them in a geographical sequence that further serves to reinforce the kingship of Darius. The third person frame itself divides the inscription into sections in a manner that functions rhetorically to support Darius' claims. This is strengthened further by the use of *pasāva* as a means of slowing or speeding up the narrative to control the impact of the chronology of the events. The next few paragraphs will develop how these various features work and lay a foundation for a specific study of the characterization of Darius in the Behistun text.

The inscription uses chronotope to highlight the illegitimacy of Gaumata and thus validates Darius' claim to the throne. According to the inscription, Gaumata the Magian had declared, "I am Smerdis, the son of Cyrus, the brother of Cambyses" (§11).<sup>36</sup> The Behistun text identifies this as a lie and reports that Cambyses had murdered his brother. Darius drives this point home by repeating the clause twice almost word for word:

*Pasāva : Kabūjiya : avam : Bardiyam : avāja :*

*yaθa : Kabūjiya : Bardiyam : avāja (§10; col. 1, ll. 30–31)*<sup>37</sup>

Kent's translation, "Afterwards, Cambyses slew that Smerdis. When Cambyses slew Smerdis..." preserves much of the effect. *Pasāva*, translated 'afterwards,' is effectively paralleled with *yaθa*, which is a subordinating conjunction introducing a temporal clause modifying the action of the following sentence, thus creating a syntactical separation,

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<sup>36</sup> The Old Persian name is Bardiya, however, as a result of Greek influences the name is usually translated "Smerdis."

<sup>37</sup> I have arranged the phrases to highlight the parallels.

while at the same time functioning rhetorically in parallel with *pasāva*. The same structure is then repeated in lines 32 and 33 with reference to Cambyses' departure to Egypt. The placement of the second clause at the front of the sentence and the parallel wording is likely deliberate in order to emphasize the inaccuracy of Gaumata's claim and the absence of Cambyses, who could have prevented the corruption of the land and whose absence is essential for Gaumata's deception.<sup>38</sup>

Gaumata's claim to the throne is further refuted through the use of formulae and repetition within the narrative of the subsequent revolts. Behistun §11, which tells the story of Gaumata's rise, lays out a narrative formula that serves as a template for the accounts of subsequent rebellions in §§15—54. The repetition of the formula creates the sense that Gaumata, far from being unique, was one of a number of rebels posing as someone they are not. The formula, as found in this section, takes the form: "Afterwards, there was one man, [proper name] by name...he rose up. He lied to the people thus: 'I am [proper name].' Afterwards all the people became rebellious...and went over to him." The adaptation and creative use of this formula causes narrative time to reiterate itself, one effect of which is to deemphasize and marginalize Gaumata's story.

Behistun §16 uses this formula to introduce two rebellions before either of them are resolved. In describing the first rebellion, that of Açina, the narrator varies the formula by substituting for "lied" the word "said" and does not mention a name, Açina's being assumed; however, the second rebellion, that of Nidintu-Bel, follows the formula

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<sup>38</sup> The clause can only appear here and at the end of the sentence it modifies (see Kent, *Old Persian*, 96). It is found before the clause it modifies in 11 out of the 14 times that *yaθa* is used with reference to time in the Behistun inscription (before lines 1.31, 33, 73, 91; 2.22, 32, 52, 65; 3.3, 34; 4.5 and after in lines 1.27, 72 and 5.3). These are the only two occurrences, however, in which the parallel structure seen here is thereby created.

fairly closely. The Old Persian relates §16 to the formula laid out in §11 more closely than Kent's translation suggests. Both "lied" in §11 and "deceived" in §16 in Kent translate the same Old Persian word *adurujiya*.<sup>39</sup> The rebellion of Martiya in Elam described in §23 follows the formula fairly closely, including the use of a false name. The most significant variation concerns the response of the people: "...afterwards (it was) me [Darius] (that) the Elamites feared; they captured that Martiya who was their chief, and slew him." Still, even though the rebellion itself is quite different from a number of the others, the formula is present. The rebellion of Ciçantakhma, introduced in §33, abbreviates the formula and does not claim a new name. An interesting exception to the formula is the rebellion of Frada, introduced in §38. The province rises up and, once in rebellion, appoints Frada as their ruler. Yet even here the formula is not abandoned but rather adapted by rearranging the elements: "(There is) a country, Margiana by name, that became rebellious to me. (There was) one single man, Frāda by name, a Margian,—him they made (their) chief." In §24 the rebellion of Phaortes follows the formula with the omission of the explicit reference to lying; so also the rebellion of Vahyazdata, introduced in §40. That of Arkha, introduced in §49, restores the word "lied." The use of the formula with the narratives, even with variation, creates an ongoing repetition that tends to homogenize the narrative of the rebellions, making each sound like the others, merging them into a single narrative of a number of similar revolts, rather than acknowledging each as a significant event worthy of notice on its own. This becomes especially pronounced with the rebellion of Arkha, who takes the name of

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<sup>39</sup> Sukumar translates the first "thus deceived" and the second "thus lied." However, a much older translation translates both "lied." Sukumar, *Old Persian Inscriptions*; British Museum, *Sculptures and Inscriptions*.

Nebuchadnezzar as did Nabintu-Bel, and Vahyazdata who takes the name Smerdis. If the story of the rebellion of Gaumata seems incredible when the reader begins reading the Behistun inscription, by the time the reader has finished, it seems just one of a number of such rebellions, following the usual pattern.<sup>40</sup> Darius, in contrast, rises up as truly unique, standing above his enemies and conquering his opposition with machine-like efficiency. For Darius, putting down rebellions is routine business.

In the Behistun inscription, the chronotope, the “temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature,” are shaped to characterize Darius as a victorious conqueror who faces no serious challenges.<sup>41</sup> The arrangement of the rebellions is based for the most part on geography, but, as Windfuhr notes, this arrangement involves several geographic skips, which effectively break the provinces into groups by discussing revolts in one region then discussing revolts in another region, some distance away.<sup>42</sup> The list of rebellious provinces in §6 gives the impression that the entire empire from one end to the other rose up in rebellion, yet the narrative of rebellions focuses on those that are nearer, in Persia and Media, the Iranian Plateau and Central Asia, and Elam and Babylonia, rather than those in more distant locales, in Egypt, Arabia, and Cappadocia.<sup>43</sup> Windfuhr also observes further schematization of the provinces, noting that there are eleven provinces to the west of Persia and eleven

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<sup>40</sup> There is the possibility that the repetition indicates that Gaumata set the whole mass of rebellions in motion, the former being connected to the latter through the mention of Gaumata in §16. However, §14 gives a clear sense of closure to the Gaumata affair. Furthermore, the use of *yaθa* with *pasāva* reinforces the temporal and causal separation; the Lie was actually in the land before Gaumata acted (§10).

<sup>41</sup> Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 84.

<sup>42</sup> Windfuhr, “Saith Darius,” 271. Geographic order was noted by Poebel, “Chronology,” 149, 150 n. 13, 154; Hallock, “The ‘One Year’ of Darius I,” 36; Depuydt, “Evidence for the Accession Dating,” 196.

<sup>43</sup> Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 115.

provinces to the east of Persia.<sup>44</sup> Additionally, the first two rebellions, those of Nabintu-Bel in Babylon, and Açina in Elam (§§16—20), are both close to Persia, in lands more historically connected to Persia, as are the last two, those of Vahyazdata in Persia and Arkha in Babylon (§§40—51), while the rebellions between them are further away, significantly to the north. This creates a sense of imminent danger and immediacy that contrasts with but also reinforces, even heightens, the literary effect of the summary of revolts in §6.

Darius' achievements in putting down these geographically scattered rebellions is further highlighted through pacing and temporal arrangement to highlight Darius' achievements. It is very important to the narrator that all these events happened in one year, implicitly revealed by dating events only by the month and day and not by the year, and also explicitly by stating it five times (§§52, 56, 57, 59, 62). In every case where it is explicitly stated, the narrator attributes the year's events to the favour of Ahuramazda.

Windfuhr observes that the dating of key events is geometrically significant if the year is viewed as a circle. Gaumata's revolt, assumption of kingship, and death occur just before the spring equinox, at the summer solstice, and just after the fall equinox respectively.<sup>45</sup> In contrast, Darius' main feats, seen by Windfuhr as the slaying of Gaumata, the defeat of Nidintu-Bel in Babylon, and the defeat of Phraortes in Media, occur just after the fall equinox, just after the winter solstice, and just after the spring equinox.<sup>46</sup> While the key events of Gaumata are in the summer months, the key events of Darius, forming a similar pattern, are in the winter months. The key events of his allies

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<sup>44</sup> Windfuhr, "Saith Darius," 271.

<sup>45</sup> Windfuhr, "Saith Darius," 272–273.

<sup>46</sup> Windfuhr, "Saith Darius," 274.

do not occur in months that have a solstice or an equinox. Thus, the key events in Darius' reign form a triangle that is a mirror of the triangle created by charting the key events of Gaumata.<sup>47</sup>

The minimalizing of the rebellions and the aggrandizement of Darius' victories are further developed by careful control of narrative time, primarily through the use of the Old Persian word *pasāva*. This word is an adverb, defined by Kent "after that, afterwards."<sup>48</sup> In the introduction and conclusion of Behistun (§§1–9, 55–70) there is only one occurrence of the word. The opening narrative portions contain the word *pasāva*, the Gaumata episode (§§10–14) having ten occurrences in five sections, one in 37 words, most frequently in the first two sections with eight occurrences, or one occurrence per 18 words. The first two rebellions, in Babylon and Elam, (§§15–20) have 11 occurrences in six sections, one in 19 words. The epilogue (§§71–74) contains seven occurrences in four sections, one in 24. These sections average 1.8 occurrences per section, or one occurrence of *pasāva* in 24 words, in contrast to the rest of the narrative (§21–54), which averages less than 1.3 occurrences per sections, one in every 39 words (43 in 34 sections). The narrative of the rebellion of Gaumata is very carefully paced. The first section (§10), which narrates the rise of the lie in the land, has five occurrences of *pasāva* in 70 words, a frequency of 1 in 14, begins with Cambyses on the throne, then removes him to Egypt, sees his brother Smerdis slain, the people corrupt and the lie covering the land. It is the catastrophic setting for the next section (§11), which narrates

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<sup>47</sup> Windfuhr, "Saith Darius," 275–276. Windfuhr pushes the data much further, but his elaboration on these events beyond what is mentioned here appears to be forced, in my opinion, as it involves a suspiciously high number of calculations to create, among other things, a cross that has only three points represented. The sequence of the months was first elaborated by Poebel, "Old Persian and Elamite Months," 130–141.

<sup>48</sup> Kent, *Old Persian*, 197. Kent lists here all occurrences of the word.



the rise of Gaumata and the death of Cambyses, which has three occurrences of *pasāva*, a frequency of 1 in 35 words. The rise of Darius, by contrast, is discussed in some detail, bringing it to great prominence. There are only two occurrences of the word *pasāva* in the remaining three sections (230 words) of the opening narrative.

The frequent occurrences of the adverb *pasāva* drive the action forward while its absence tends to slow the pace of the action. The repetitive use of the adverb is effectively used to create a sense of heightened drama in the events surrounding Darius' confrontation with Gaumata and the first rebellions in Elam and Babylon. It is also used to give the impression of fast action in the Epilogue (§§71—76), which has the highest density of the word *pasāva* in the inscription and describes the suppression of two revolts in a two year period as opposed to nine revolts suppressed in the previous year. The narrator is apparently seeking to create a sense of fast action, even when the facts are contrary.

Conversely, in the period between the first two rebellions, in Babylon and Elam (§§15–20), and the final rebellions in the main body, in Persia and Babylon (§§21–54), there is a much lower frequency. It may have been important to the narrator to lengthen this sequence of events in order to put distance between the two Babylonian rebellions, as two rebellions in close succession in the same place would raise embarrassing questions about how successfully it was in fact put down. The use of *pasāva* to control narrative time, combined with the spatial and geographical features, creates a sense that Darius deals quickly with Gaumata and, even though he is immediately surrounded on all sides by rebellion, he quickly and decisively deals with the first rebellions in Babylon and Elam. Between the first and the second set of rebellions in Babylon, Elam and Persia, the scribe narrates the rebellions in other parts of the Empire, avoiding the term *pasāva* in

order to slow the action and to create the rhetorical separation. When Darius returns, he deals with the rebellions in Babylon and Persia at his leisure and, as reflected by the frequent use of *pasāva* again, quickly and decisively deals with rebellions in Elam and Scythia. In this way, the scribe expands and collapses narrative time, even in tension with the preserved chronology, for ideological purposes.

The chronotope of the Behistun text can also be read as transhistoric. While the time and place of the events is of paramount importance in the Behistun inscription, it is the structure, not actual time and place, that is important.<sup>49</sup> It is the relationship of the battle locations to the centre that is significant, not the locations themselves. It is the relationship of the events to the first year of the reign and to the months and seasons that is important, not their place in the broader chronology of history. The entire matrix of the chronotope of the Behistun inscription could be lifted and superimposed on any time or any place in human history without doing the narrative any fundamental violation. There are only two significant points of connection to real history in the narrative, and that is the place of Babylon in that culture and the place of Darius in relationship to Cyrus, and even these could be replaced with another founder and another dominant culture. The Behistun narrative, then, while presenting itself as connected to a specific time and place, can also be read as a timeless tale.<sup>50</sup> This timeless quality is noticed by Sancisi-Weerdenburg especially in column V (§§71—76) where there is a complete absence of topographical references, and temporal references more precise than “the second and the

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<sup>49</sup> Holquist, *Dialogism*, 111–113.

<sup>50</sup> One could, for instance, imagine a sequel to *The Lord of the Rings* in which Rohan rises as Persia did, Gondor plays the role of Babylon and Theodin, the king of Rohan from the *Lord of the Rings*, takes the place of Cyrus. The Behistun inscription could be reproduced in that context with nothing but the names of peoples and places changed.

third year” at the beginning of §71.<sup>51</sup> She notes further that this timeless quality is consistent with the iconography throughout Persepolis, where no events, beyond ritual activities, are portrayed, and it is even questionable whether individual kings are intended.<sup>52</sup> The sole exception to this is the Behistun inscription, in which the chronotope may be read as transhistorical.

### 5. Double-Voicing in the Behistun Inscription

Unlike the speeches in Ezra and Herodotus, it is possible to conceive of the entirety of the Behistun inscription as a single utterance of Darius. All of it is first person, with the speaker repeatedly identified as Darius. Every section after the first is introduced by the words, *θāti : Dārayavauš : xšâyaθiya* (“Proclaims Darius, the King”), creating an embedded third person narrative frame.<sup>53</sup> This frame rhetorically reinforces the view that the entire text of Behistun should be understood by the reader to be authored by Darius himself. For Bakhtin, the boundary mark of an utterance is a change in person, and so the third person frame transforms each section into a separate utterance, which itself contains the third person introduction as well as the subsequent first person material as a quotation.<sup>54</sup> The Behistun text, then, becomes a dialogue between the anonymous narrator, and the king. On this view, each section becomes a double-voiced discourse, serving the agenda of a quoted character, Darius, and also the agenda of the third person narrator. In the Behistun inscription the dialogue between the voice of the narrator and

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<sup>51</sup> Sancisi-Weerdenburg, “Persian Kings,” 94.

<sup>52</sup> Sancisi-Weerdenburg, “Persian Kings,” 110.

<sup>53</sup> Sancisi-Weerdenburg’s fascinating proposal (“Persian Kings,” 107) that this literary feature was probably borrowed from Urartian inscriptions is worth attention, but does not affect this discussion which focuses on the effect of this technique on this text.

<sup>54</sup> Bakhtin, “Speech Genres,” 71.

the voice of Darius can be seen as a tension in which each tries to take control of the story. But, in an inversion of what one might assume from double-voiced narrative, it is not the narrator, but the character who emerges triumphant from the struggle. The first section is not double-voiced. It is the voice of Darius, who in every subsequent section will be quoted. By speaking first, Darius controls the narrative and the narrator becomes subservient, a voice lost, whose agenda and will is entirely subsumed in the voice of the character quoted. As the character's voice clearly rises independent and above the voice of narrator, the work cannot be said to be monologic. But at the same time, only one voice is heard, here the voice of the character. The Behistun inscription defies characterization as either monologic or polyphonic, and invites another classification, which Bakhtin elsewhere provides.

The Behistun text, written in stone not merely as a convenience of medium, claims by virtue of its message and presentation, to be an authoritative discourse.<sup>55</sup> Authoritative discourse is “*simultaneously* authoritative and internally persuasive,” relying on no authority, independently authoritative, defying any need for internal persuasion.<sup>56</sup> The Behistun monument with its text presents itself as a single utterance, beyond analysis, that speaks monologically and monolithically, a single idea. Darius is king. It stands above ordinary discourse, incapable of being engaged, incapable of being double-voiced, and incapable of being transformed. It may be transmitted or profaned. It may be — it must be — wholly accepted or wholly rejected. It is the word of Darius. In its own time, to its intended audience, it is not normal discourse, but functions with a canonical authority. All sense of double-voicing, all distinction between the third person

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<sup>55</sup> Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 342–344

<sup>56</sup> Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 342. Italics are original with the translators.

frame and the voice of Darius are lost as Darius the great brings even his own narrative frame to his service.

This reading of the narrative is supported by the monument itself. As Root notes, “the impact of the Behistun monument upon the traveler along the road to Ecbatana was conveyed solely by the sculpture”<sup>57</sup> and, as such, invites a reading of the text in light of the monument.<sup>58</sup> While Ahuramazda is the smallest image on the monument, the squareness and detailing on the wings and tail feathers provides it with a heaviness that offsets the smallness and draws attention to that image.<sup>59</sup> Darius himself, while off-centre, is the largest object and so also a key focal point.<sup>60</sup> He appears more interested in the divine than in the things of this world.<sup>61</sup> The image of Ahuramazda is positioned above the rest of the figures, which are all on a horizontal line, suggesting that the god is above this world. Yet, the representation of Ahuramazda is not entirely above Darius; rather Darius’ eyes are level with the bottom of the god’s disk.<sup>62</sup> Nimchuk argues that Darius’ posture is not one of worship, but beckoning, a summoning forward while Ahuramazda provides Darius not only with kingship, but with the rebels.<sup>63</sup> The relationship between Darius and Ahuramazda is a unique reciprocal relationship.<sup>64</sup> Darius stands not in dialogue with any of the other characters, but above them, in dialogue only with Ahuramazda.

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<sup>57</sup> Root, *King and Kingship*, 193.

<sup>58</sup> That the text was copied and distributed, as demonstrated by the existence of the Aramaic version, does not negate this.

<sup>59</sup> Nimchuk, “Darius and Formation,” 16, 17.

<sup>60</sup> Nimchuk, “Darius and Formation,” 11.

<sup>61</sup> Farkas, “Behistun Relief,” 828.

<sup>62</sup> Nimchuk, “Darius and Formation,” 17.

<sup>63</sup> Nimchuk, “Darius and Formation,” 15. See also Root, *King and Kingship*, 188–190.

<sup>64</sup> Nimchuk, “Darius and Formation,” 17.

It is possible, if not to hear the voice of the narrator apart from that of Darius, to ask to what service the narrative frame is put by the character it is quoting. It functions by providing discourse markers, breaking the text into 76 sections. These sections consist of headings, lists, commands, blocks of narrative and other material, and range from eight words (§§34, 44, 51) to 184 words in length (§52). The use of the third person narrative frame as a discourse marker means that each of these sections, while subsumed in the great utterance that is Behistun, are each themselves independent utterances. The sections, then, can be analyzed as an utterance chain using Bakhtin's concepts of utterance in dialogue.

Sections tend generally to end with a completed thought. Each section except those functioning as headers, could either stand alone, or stand as the last section on a separate inscription. While sections are often dependent on previous sections because of pronouns which refer back to previous sections (for instance, §§3, 8, 9, and others) and often because of the inclusion of the word *pasāva* ("after that"), they are generally not dependent on sections that follow. In a typical utterance chain within a narrative a response is expected from other characters within the narrative. Interrogative statements clearly expect a response within the narrative, but so do many others, and an interrupted or unfinished conversation is noticeably so. In contrast, the utterances of the Behistun inscription do not expect a response within the narrative world, rather the response expected is the response of the reader. Each utterance transcends the narrative world and speaks directly to the reader, even those that do not stand independently, such as header sections (e.g. §15).

The narrative frame breaks the narrative into sections at deliberate places. Excluding headers and summaries (§§15, 34, 39, 44, 48, 51, 54) the average section

length in the narrative portion is roughly 65 words and there is a great deal of variety in length, ranging typically from 20 to 100 words.<sup>65</sup> This uneven length is the result of effective use of the section breaks for rhetorical effect, either resolving the narrative or deliberately leaving the reader in tension. As with non-narrative sections, every section brings the action to a state of completion and is not logically dependent on the following section. Usually the narrative is brought to a stasis, a state which, whether desirable or not, could remain in perpetuity. Several sections end with someone becoming king (Darius in §13, rebel kings in §§12, 16, 24, 40 and 49). Several more sections end with the death of the rebel prince, stated in a formulaic manner (§§17, 20, 23, 32, 47) or in elaborate and gruesome detail (§§33, 43, 50). However, some sections, while being logically complete, end in tension rather than stasis. Most striking are a number of sections where the last sentence reads “the battle was fought by them” or some close variant (§§18, 19, 26, 27, 29, 31, 35, 36, 38, 41, 45, and 46). The utterance ends without the reader knowing who won the battle.

Of particular note are three sections that end with the armies waiting for Darius to arrive in Media (§§25, 28, 30). The rebellion of Media constitutes the largest extended narrative of a single complex situation. This rebellion, lead by Phraortes, began in Media, near Persia, and spread northwest, as far as Armenia, encompassing a significant portion of the empire as a whole. Behistun is careful to tell this story as a great victory for Darius. It is introduced in §21 with a list of nine provinces that became rebellious “whilst I was in Babylon.” Presumably, the narrative implies, had Darius not been distracted by events elsewhere, the rebellions would not have occurred. The first event listed in this extended

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<sup>65</sup> The average narrative section is 66.7 words in length, however, when one excludes §52, which is atypically long, the average drops to 62.2 words in length.

narrative is the rebellion of Martiya in Elam which was put down by the Elamites themselves out of fear just because Darius was near (§§22—23). Elam is nowhere near the Median-Armenian corridor; however, by including this rebellion first, the reader is reminded of the might of Darius. The narrative of the rebellion of Phraortes (§§24—32) has the largest single cluster of utterances that leave action in suspense. Repeatedly, sections end with a battle being fought, and, while Darius' generals inflict heavy damage on the rebels, they do not reach a final victory. The phrase used is a form of the verb *jan* with the adverb *vasiy*. The verb *jan*, translated in this section by Schmitt as “defeated,” and by Kent as “smite” does not mean to destroy completely.<sup>66</sup> The adverb *vasiy*, translated “utterly” by Schmitt and “exceedingly” by Kent, is from the root *vas* ‘to will’, and can be translated “at will, greatly, utterly.”<sup>67</sup> While the immediate context would favor understanding *vasiy* to mean greatly, given the apparent failure of the armies to achieve a decisive victory, the semantic connection to the verb *vas* was likely brought to mind by the proximity of the phrase to the phrase *vašnā Auramazdāha* “by the favour of Ahuramazda.” The choice of wording leads one to believe that Behistun is suggesting, if not outright stating, that the failure of Darius' armies to achieve complete victory was not because of a limit on their strength, but rather was a choice on their part so that Darius himself could have the final victory. Each utterance that ends in tension anticipates the response from Darius himself and points forward to his final victory.

The long narrative of the rebellion of Phraortes ends with a summary: “This (is) what has been done by me in Media” (§34). However, between the death of Phraortes and this summary, Behistun includes one more rebellion, that of Sagartia. The Sagartians

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<sup>66</sup> Kent, *Old Persian*, 184.

<sup>67</sup> Kent, *Old Persian*, 207.



were a small nomadic tribe, mentioned in Herodotus *The Histories* (1.110,125), who may have dwelt in Media and were likely related to the Persians.<sup>68</sup> Paired with the rebellion of Martiya at the beginning of this narrative, it serves to minimize the significance of Phraorte's rebellions.

### 6. Darius' Character as Response

The context, to which Behistun responds as an utterance, is not stated in the narrative, though it is suggested. Darius admits that Gaumata was widely followed (§11), and that Gaumata removed anyone who could reveal his identity (§13), suggesting that he was widely believed to be Smerdis, son of Cambyses. Further, in §58 Darius alludes to the possibility that his claims may be doubted, saying that much was left out, lest "what has been done by me should seem (too) much, (and) this should not convince him...". The Behistun monument appears to be responding to doubts about the validity of Darius' claim to the throne. But Darius makes explicit how he expects people to respond to his utterance: "whosoever hereafter shall look at this inscription...do not destroy (them); as long as you shall be vigorous, thus care for them!" (§65, and again with similar wording in §66). This truth was to be preserved and accepted, and Darius' example as a just king was to be followed (§§63—64).

The use of the third person narrative frame creates a dialogue between the anonymous narrator and the king. As noted, potentially each first person paragraph becomes a double-voiced discourse, serving the agenda of Darius and also the agenda of the third person narrator. And here the truth of Bakhtin's "every meaning has its

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<sup>68</sup> Helm, "Median History," 90, n. 34.

homecoming” becomes apparent, as the text takes on an irony that was certainly never intended in the original. By the very act of repeating, over and over again, the words “Proclaims Darius the king,” the modern reader is led to skepticism, as he or she is reminded at the beginning of every paragraph, that what he or she is reading is not objective history but the words of Darius. The narrative frame, by repeating so frequently the assertion “Proclaims Darius, the king,” undercuts the credibility of the words of the king and makes the inscription double-voiced. The character’s authoritative proclamation becomes opinion, one version of the story which the third person narrator invites us to treat with skepticism.

Standing outside the milieu of the text, such skepticism can arise from the double-voicing. While comfortable on the other side of the world, and over two thousand years after the death of the king and the fall of his dynasty’s empire, this skepticism would have been impossible to the first readers. There were other versions of the story of Darius’ ascension out there, as Herodotus shows, but the voice of Behistun was nonetheless an authoritative discourse to be wholly accepted or rejected. The existence of these other versions shows that Darius’ concern that the story would be wholly rejected by some was not unfounded. The rebellions are themselves rejections of this narrative. But the rebellions were put down, sometimes brutally, and in the end the voice of Darius emerged triumphant. Skepticism, dialogue with the text, and hearing a voice other than Darius immediately subverted and rejected the message as a monologic, monolithic whole. To question it was implicitly an act of rebellion against the Great King, and so to question it was to reject it, to hear another voice, to shatter it.

## 7. Conclusion

The text of the Behistun inscription echoes the message of the images on the monument through a number of narrative techniques. Darius emerges from the text as a king from epic tradition. Through repetition and the use of formulas, the narrator establishes that the acts of Gaumata in pretending to be Smerdis were unexceptional and copied by other pretenders. The material is arranged and developed to highlight Darius' speed in putting down the rebellions and deemphasize problems such as the temporal proximity of the Babylonian rebellions and how long it took him to put down two rebellions in years two and three. In the text, Darius is the only character with any significant depth, yet even then he is flatter than our curiosity might like. It is difficult to separate his character from Ahuramazda as all his acts are aided by Ahuramazda who, in turn, only acts through Darius. In the text, as in the monument, Darius and Ahuramazda are in a uniquely reciprocal relationship that makes the speech of Darius the truth of Ahuramazda. And the speech of Darius is monologic, allowing no other voices, oppressing even the third person narrative frame and bringing it into the service of the character.

The entirety of the Behistun inscription, then, is designed to remove Darius from the common world and place him above it. He is the epic king. His story transcends space and time. His voice stands alone. The monolithic message of the Behistun inscription, shaped consistently from the complex flow of narrative time, down to the very medium on which the text is written is that Darius is *xšāyaθiya : vazraka : xšāyaθiya : xšāyaθiyānām*, “the great king, king of kings.”

## CHAPTER 3

### Hearing Darius Through Herodotus

Never before in the history of their civilization had the Greeks confronted as great a threat as that rising out of the East from the plains of Persia. Never before had a major war been fought with an enemy so profoundly different from themselves. And the man who first brought that threat, who first led that enemy onto Greek soil, was Darius the Great. It is hardly surprising, then, that Darius is a key figure in Herodotus' *The Histories*. The reader hears of Darius in the first book (1.130) and his final mention is in the last book (9.111). Darius enters the stage in the third book (3.70) and remains a major character until his death (7.4).<sup>1</sup> The voice of Darius is used by Herodotus to help develop Darius' character, the character of a man who forever changed Greece.

This chapter will examine how the voice of Darius is used by Herodotus to develop the character of Darius, using the Bakhtinian concepts of chronotope and double-voicing. After an orientation to *The Histories*, this chapter will examine how the Persians in general and the Persian kings in particular are portrayed in *The Histories*, to provide a frame against which we can understand the characterization of Darius. A brief survey of all the speeches Darius makes in *The Histories*, paying special attention to how they incorporate chronotope and double-voicing, will set the stage for a closer examination of the Oroetes speech. I will show that in this speech, following a more general pattern, Darius' authority is subverted through the use of chronotope and double-voicing. This is an important point ideologically, as Herodotus' subversion of Darius' authority is key to

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<sup>1</sup> These chapters do contain many digressions. Waters (*Tyrants and Despots*, 57) suggests Herodotus had a special interest in Darius.

understanding *The Histories* as an utterance responding to a particular situation and anticipating a real response.

### Orientation

Herodotus' *The Histories* was researched and written somewhere between the 450s and 420s B.C.E. and was completed and published against the backdrop of the Peloponnesian war, 431–404 B.C.E.<sup>2</sup> Fornara, looking for allusions to Herodotus in other, dateable, Greek literature, concludes that *The Histories* was published, or at least reached Athens, as late as 414 B.C.E. in the midst of the Peloponnesian War when the Persians, on their Eastern border, controlled all of Asia.<sup>3</sup>

Herodotus himself was born in Halicarnassus, an Ionian city on the Western coast of Asia Minor, the western extent of the Persian Empire. According to *The Histories*, Herodotus traveled to Egypt, Italy, the Black Sea and Palestine, and had wide ranging interests. However, one needs to distinguish between the author who wrote *The Histories*, and the implied author, a character who emerges from the first and second person narration and not only narrates the events but discusses his writing and research. This character was developed to assist the reader in a number of ways, some yet unexplored, and has notably different experiences and expertise from the human author.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See the Introductions to *The Histories* in the translations by Rawlinson and Sélincourt-Marincola for a very brief overview of Herodotus' life.

<sup>3</sup> Fornara, "Date," 25.

<sup>4</sup> Nielson (*Tragedy*, 44) traces the distinction between the implied author and the actual historian to S. Mandell and D. N. Freedman. While Chamberlain holds that Herodotus uses the first person plural to "establish an interpretive distance between himself as a knower and what he knows" ("We," 21), Brock focuses on the effect of the persona on the reader, providing entertainment and helping the reader cope with the huge volume of data ("Authorial Voice," 15). Munson notes, for instance, the transparent gap between the implied author's knowledge of languages and Herodotus' actual knowledge of these languages and understanding of their relationships (*Black Dove*, 29).

*The Histories* is a long, complex work divided into nine books that discusses Greek history from its formation through to the reign of Xerxes I, though mention is made of Artaxerxes. Further, *The Histories* covers a wide range of subject matter including not only history and politics, but also architecture, anthropology, geology and more.<sup>5</sup> Herodotus states that he wrote *The Histories* “that human achievements may not become forgotten in time, and ... to show why the two peoples fought with each other” (1.1.1).<sup>6</sup> For Drews, the various elements, including the extensive discussions of geology and sociology, are added to shed light on the power of the story.<sup>7</sup> For the Greeks, Lydia, Babylon and Egypt were the great empires, and their fall was extremely significant. Herodotus’ digressions serve to illuminate that significance. Against that is held the reality that the Greeks, a small people divided into city states, stood against the Persians and defeated them while the Lydians, Babylonians and Egyptians had failed. Drews argues that for the Greeks, this stood out “as an event not paralleled since the Trojan Wars.”<sup>8</sup> It is perhaps best to read *The Histories* as a retelling of the Great Event, the defeat of the mighty Persians by a handful of Greek city-states, inferring a polemic connection and implied imperative between the story of the Great Event and the situation confronting the Greeks in the midst of the Peloponnesian War.

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<sup>5</sup> Grant documents a range of interests, and notes that Herodotus deals with different fields differently, some more analytically, some more descriptively (“Thoughts,” 283–289).

<sup>6</sup> *The Histories*. All translations from Herodotus will be taken from Sélincourt-Marincola unless otherwise noted.

<sup>7</sup> Drews, *Greek Accounts*, 66–67.

<sup>8</sup> Drews, *Greek Accounts*, 67.

## Genre

Despite what the title ‘*The Histories*’ suggests to a modern reader, the book differs in many ways from modern historiography, most notably in its breadth of interest uncharacteristic of modern historiography. Much of *The Histories* is chronological narrative, broken up by extended static descriptions of lands, customs and people. Herodotus, often considered the father of history, has been frequently read over the last few centuries because he remains our best source for some periods of Greek, as well as ancient Persian history. Recently, Herodotus’ sophisticated literary techniques have also been noted and he is recognized as pioneering a literary form which “...later bore fruit in the works not only of Thucydides and Churchill, but of Petronius, Hemingway, Lardner.”<sup>9</sup>

However, even elements not generally considered history can relate to the exploration of causation typical of historiography.<sup>10</sup> The elements of *The Histories* that are not typically historiographic are understood in a few different ways. For Flory, the range of material in Herodotus suggests a work following only a general outline, driven by free association, memory, and the influence of the need to present the material orally.<sup>11</sup> Herodotus shows signs of being deeply influenced by Attic tragedy and has major themes in common with Aeschylus, including the dichotomous struggle, the war seen as Persian *nomos*, the theme of liberty and Persian *hubris*.<sup>12</sup>

Herodotus’ use of his sources has also often been discussed. In addition to Herodotus’ personal experiences and claimed sources, he also appears to make use of oral

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<sup>9</sup> Flory, “Personality,” 109.

<sup>10</sup> Marincola, “Greco-Roman Historiography,” 302.

<sup>11</sup> Flory, “Personality,” 101–109.

<sup>12</sup> Chiasson, “Tragic Diction,” 156; Nielson, *Tragedy*, 49.

traditions that he does not cite. Oral societies tend to preserve memories from their foundations and from the previous generations much better than the intervening periods. This creates an ‘hourglass effect’ of past knowledge, an effect which does dissipate when the society becomes literate or begins to write history.<sup>13</sup> Herodotus shows such a knowledge of ancient tradition, reflecting a broader information base about the previous two hundred years and the foundation periods than the intervening periods. Herodotus does not, in Murray’s opinion, make a sharp conceptual distinction between myth and history, or evince any access to Mesopotamian and Egyptian oral or written traditions, relying instead on the verbal traditions of his own people as history.<sup>14</sup> Nielson argues that there is no linguistic reason to see in Herodotus’ mind a distinction between myth and history, as both are *logoi*.<sup>15</sup> While Herodotus is critical of the *logoi* he receives, he does not make the modern distinction between myth and history as fundamentally different genres. Armayor closely examines the catalogues of *The Histories*, the great Satrapy list of 3.89–97, and the Army-list (7.59–99), which modern scholarship has traditionally held to have been based on official Persian sources.<sup>16</sup> Armayor, comparing the lists with known Persian sources, notes significant differences in details as well as omissions and additions that, even when allowance is made for ambiguity, distortion and royal propaganda, leave Herodotus’ great catalogues “hopelessly irreconcilable with those of the Persians themselves on stone.”<sup>17</sup> He concludes that Herodotus’ sources cannot be Persian, but rather reflect older Greek traditions.<sup>18</sup> Murray, however, suggests that the

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<sup>13</sup> Thomas, “Floating Gap,” 198–199.

<sup>14</sup> Murray, “Oral History,” 16–44.

<sup>15</sup> Nielson, *Tragedy*, 33.

<sup>16</sup> Armayor, “Catalogues,” 1–2.

<sup>17</sup> Armayor, “Catalogues,” 2.

<sup>18</sup> Contra the more recent work by Murray who says there is “no doubt” that there is a Persian source (“Oral History,” 36), but Murray does not seem aware of Armayor’s work.



tradition of Darius' ascendancy to the throne and the overthrow of the Magi has its source in an oral tradition from one of the noble families of Persia.<sup>19</sup>

*The Histories*, then, is a rich tapestry of both oral and literary traditions.

Herodotus' reputation as the father of history, earned for his use of comparison and criticism in handling his sources, even if not always sufficiently critical, is deserved.

However, he is also a skilled writer, using his sources, combined with material from other fields, to create a powerful epic of the Great Event. It behooves the reader to listen for the complexity of literary devices arrayed in the narrative.

### **The Persians in Herodotus**

In order to contextualize the speeches of Darius in 3.127 and elsewhere, it will be necessary to first review how the Persians in general and Darius specifically are characterized in *The Histories*. The Persians are one of the major themes of the entire book and the range of material on Darius has already been noted. Herodotus' own description of the Persians (1.131–140) is, on the whole, quite short of explicit evaluation. The Greek stereotype of the Persian is well illustrated by Aeschylus, who portrays the Persians as effeminate and cowardly, whose dress, gait and mannerisms are outward visible signs of a lack of manliness in their spirit.<sup>20</sup> For Immerwahr, this description reflects a strong sense of unity. Immerwahr sees this in the greeting system based on rank, the custom of always praying for the nation as a whole, not for themselves, and even the consistent 's' ending at the end of their names.<sup>21</sup> He notes further the Persian openness to foreign customers, connected to their love for foreign

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<sup>19</sup> Murray, "Oral History," 39.

<sup>20</sup> Cartledge, "Greeks," 309.

<sup>21</sup> Immerwahr, *Form*, 184–188.

luxury, their desire for religious purity, and deep loyalty. These characteristics are borne out throughout the rest of *The Histories* in the actions of the Persians whenever they are at their best, but are contradicted from time to time by individuals, or even isolated acts of the kings. It is not the character of the Persians themselves that are problematic for Herodotus, nor the isolated inconsistencies, but, according to Immerwahr, the fact that these fundamental strengths, such as their national unity, are taken to excess. The Persians, whose home is in Asia, are not content to be a single united nation among others, but rather need to extend that unity to the entire world.<sup>22</sup>

Another major theme used by Herodotus to characterize the Persians is articulated well by Lateiner: “Limits ought not to be transgressed, but they are, and their transgression functions as a cause, necessary and sometimes sufficient, of historically significant events.”<sup>23</sup> For the Greeks, every realm, whether natural law, the length of human life, even the limit of human success, has boundaries. In Herodotus, boundaries of political geography are particularly important.<sup>24</sup> It is in crossing these boundaries that Cyrus and Cambyses meet their deaths. It is in his campaign against the Massagetae, undertaken because of “his belief in his superhuman origin and the success of all his previous campaigns” (1.204), launched by crossing the Araxes (1.205), that Cyrus meets his death. It was on the very spot in Egypt where he had transgressed religious boundaries by slaying the sacred Apis bull that Cambyses is fatally wounded (3.64). For Herodotus, the Persians belong naturally to Asia and their culture and customs reflect that. It is a violation of the boundaries of geography for them to expand beyond that. This leads to

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<sup>22</sup> Immerwahr, *Form*, 188.

<sup>23</sup> Lateiner, “Limits,” 91.

<sup>24</sup> Lateiner, “Limits,” 89.

other lawlessness on their part, including the slaying of the Apis bull (3.16).<sup>25</sup> For Flory, this, along with the transitory nature of human happiness, is one of the pretenses on which Herodotus understands life: “national customs and boundaries are sacred, ignore them at your peril.”<sup>26</sup>

Herodotus, on a number of occasions, emphasizes that the Greeks were opposed by armies made up of slaves. While it is almost certain that the Greeks also use slaves in their armies sometimes, this fact is not mentioned by Herodotus.<sup>27</sup> Slaves, in the view of Herodotus, were so by nature, and are not suited to war.<sup>28</sup> By emphasizing that the Greeks were fighting armies of slaves, Herodotus suggests that the Persians, even the generals, were in some ways all slaves.<sup>29</sup> There are within *The Histories* some accounts of barbaric acts on the part of the Persians, such as the brutal tale of crucifixion and mutilation in 4.202–203. However these are less frequent than might be expected in historiography about war and they are balanced by *logoi* in which the humanity of the Persians is displayed. While Herodotus is critical of the Persians, his rhetoric is not without limits.

While the tendency is to understand Herodotus as seeing the Persians as weak, effeminate, and softened by their own wealth and success, Flower argues for a more nuanced understanding. He concedes that Herodotus was “not entirely independent of the biases of his own culture” but argues that such prejudice arises in Herodotus partly from the very demands of the plot. Herodotus, like Homer in *The Iliad*, seeks to portray both sides of the battle as equally human, but is not able to erase the differences between the

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<sup>25</sup> Dozeman, *Geography*, 453.

<sup>26</sup> Flory, “Personality,” 99.

<sup>27</sup> Hunt, *Ideology*, 47–49.

<sup>28</sup> Hunt (*Ideology*, 3) draws a compelling illustration of the slave nature from 4.3–4.

<sup>29</sup> Hunt, *Ideology*, 47–49.

sides as easily as Homer. In writing *The Iliad*, Homer was describing the Trojans and Achaeans who share a common culture, whereas the Greeks and the Persians in Herodotus' day had markedly different cultures, placing constraints on Herodotus that were not on Homer.<sup>30</sup> However, if Herodotus views the Persians as weak and soft, several questions are left unanswered. Why is the fall of Lydia, Babylon and Egypt significant? Why does the story need to be told, both by Herodotus and by others? Perhaps most importantly, at a time when the Greeks were divided, and the Persians remained a threat to the East, how could they be understood in such a way? After Alexander the Great conquered Persia and they were no longer a threat, such a view could be held, but at the time of Herodotus there was no certainty that the Greeks would not yet end up under Persian domination. Flower rejects the tendency to read Herodotus as arguing that the Persians failed to conquer the Greeks because they were soft, suggesting that the work is much more complex than this implies. This explanation is not given by Herodotus himself who depicts the Persians fighting to the death at Marathon (6.113), Plataea (9.62–3), and Mycale (9.102), in contrast to their allies.<sup>31</sup> In fact, shortly before the publication of *The Histories*, a major Athenian armada had been lost to the Persians.<sup>32</sup> It is quite significant that at both ends of the book, in 1.4.4 and 9.116.3, *The Histories* pointedly reminds the reader to “consider that the whole of Asia belongs to them.”<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Flower, “Herodotus and Persia,” 276.

<sup>31</sup> Flower, “Herodotus and Persia,” 284–285.

<sup>32</sup> Between 40 and 200 ships in 454 B.C.E., as noted by Flower (“Herodotus and Persia,” 287).

<sup>33</sup> Quotation from 9.116.3.

### Characterization of Darius

As noted above, Darius is in either the foreground or the background of most of *The Histories*, and most of the third, fourth, fifth and sixth books concern events during his reign. As it is not possible in the space available to survey everything Herodotus says about Darius or reports that he does, it will be necessary here only to make a few general observations about how Herodotus characterizes Darius outside the *logoi* in which he speaks. It is a fact that cannot be overlooked that the Darius of *The Histories* reigns successfully for 36 years, puts down rebellions, deals with many crises, and, in the end, dies having declared an heir to whom the kingdom went without difficulty. The manner of his death is not noted, which would suggest it was not noteworthy, except that it meant Darius did not fulfill his wish to take vengeance on the Athenians.<sup>34</sup> He is introduced to the narrative in a passing statement that he put down a Median rebellion (1.130) and shortly afterward Herodotus reports the dream of Cyrus in which he sees Darius with a pair of wings, one shadowing Asia and the other Europe (1.209), foreshadowing his future might. A study of the characterization of Darius, focusing on individual passages, incidents and details, must not lose sight of this single most important aspect of the character.

Herodotus provides etymologies for the names of three Persian kings. Δαρεΐος ἑρξίης, Ξέρξης ἀρήιος, Ἀρτοξέρξης μέγας ἀρήιος, “Darius is equivalent to ‘Worker in Greek; Xerxes means ‘Warrior’, and Artaxerxes means ‘Great Warrior’” (6.98.3).

Munson discusses a reconstruction of the text first proposed by A.B. Cook that would

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<sup>34</sup> *The Histories* includes stories for no apparent reason than their entertainment value. Waters believes this is the only reason for talking about some of the tyrants and was important when the work was recited (*Tyrants and Despots*, 4–5). It seems highly unlikely that Herodotus would have failed to report a *logos* about how Darius died unless it were neither interesting nor significant.

read, “*Darius Areios, Xerxes Erxies, Artaxerxes Megas Erxies* (or rather *Karta Erxies*).”<sup>35</sup> Thus Darius is understood to mean ‘Warrior’ and Xerxes and Artaxerxes ‘Worker’ and ‘Great Worker’ respectively. Munson rejects this reconstruction, arguing the text as we have it is the more difficult reading and it is difficult to explain how the reconstructed reading could give rise to the received text.<sup>36</sup> The word ἐρξίης is a *hapax legomenon* in Herodotus, possibly related to ἐρξίαις, meaning ‘builder’ or to εἶργω, meaning “restrainer.”<sup>37</sup> It is possible that, by attributing the definitions as they appear in the text we have, Herodotus is attributing both the qualities of the ‘warrior’ and the ‘builder’ to the family as a whole. This phrase completes a paragraph concerning an earthquake in Delos, which had never had one before, or since. The paragraph notes that during the reigns of these three kings, “Greece suffered more evils than in the twenty generations before Darius was born – partly from the Persian wars, partly from her own internal struggles...” (6.98.2). Herodotus connects the very names of the three kings with the powerful effect they had on Greece. As Immerwahr notes of the characters of the kings as a whole, the kings are “individual creations that are at the same time typical manifestations of royal power as such.”<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Munson, *Black Dove*, 49. Munson notes that these are unusual and poetic forms of the word and concludes that Herodotus “is not simply translating...but is also making an effort to maintain intact the connotative qualities” of the Persian. Kent (*Old Persian*, 189) thinks *Dārayavaus* means “He who holds firm the good,” but one would not expect Herodotus to know Old Persian (Tucker, “Greek and Iranian,” 774). It was common for the Greeks to engage in wordplay with names (Thompson, “Personal Names,” 686–687).

<sup>36</sup> Munson, *Black Bird*, 49.

<sup>37</sup> Perseus Greek Word Study Tool. Accessed September 6, 2009. Online: [http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?1=e%259rci%252Fhs&la=greek&prior=\\*darei=os&d=Perseus:text:1999.01.0125:book=6:chapter=98:secton=3&i=1#lexicon](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?1=e%259rci%252Fhs&la=greek&prior=*darei=os&d=Perseus:text:1999.01.0125:book=6:chapter=98:secton=3&i=1#lexicon)

<sup>38</sup> Immerwahr, *Form*, 184.

Nevertheless, Darius is not always portrayed with nobility and bravery. Even before Herodotus narrates his ascension to the throne, he reports incidentally a *logos* in which Darius breaks open the tomb of a Babylonian king (1.187).

Herodotus gives several instances in which Darius shows marked generosity. The Babylonians, in preparing for a rebellion against Darius, slew all their women, but allowed each man to save “his mother and one other woman...to bake his bread for him” (3.130–131). In order to preserve the Babylonians as a people, Darius imports for them up to 50,000 women (3.159). During the reign of Darius, and possibly other Persian kings as well, tyrants flourished. Austin argues, citing extensive material from Herodotus, that this is not the result of any Persian policy, but rather the natural consequence of the formations of relationships between the elite, with reciprocal obligations and benefits.<sup>39</sup> Darius, Austin notes, was particularly good at building and using these relationships and his reputation for generosity spread quickly.<sup>40</sup>

There is a *logos* (3.117) which tells of a plain, surrounded by hills and watered by a river that flows in through five gorges. The five tribes of the plain were all comfortably watered by the rivers until an unnamed Persian king blocked the rivers and charged the people exorbitant fees for the water. The following *logos* tells of the death of Intraphernes, one of the seven conspirators, at the hands of Darius for being presumptuous enough to barge into the palace and assault the servants. The dynamic between Darius and the six conspirators changes significantly as the loss of the one establishes a new relationship with the other five. For Griffiths, this is the point of the

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<sup>39</sup> Austin, “Tyrants,” 290–291. Austin is probing the historical situation of Greece in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, however, his argument is based, if not exclusively certainly extensively, on Herodotus’ *The Histories*, so the situation he deduces for the real world is also largely descriptive of the narrative world of Herodotus.

<sup>40</sup> Austin, “Tyrants,” 298–299.

story of the five rivers.<sup>41</sup> While he is not convinced that Herodotus himself was aware of the significance of the five rivers, he believes that Herodotus preserved the *logos* of the five rivers right beside the *logos* of the death of Intrapernes because he was aware that there was some relationship between the two stories. For Griffiths, 3.117 tells the story in general terms using a metaphor, while 3.118 tells the same story directly.

Looking at these passages, then, Darius develops as a character, from a trickster and a coward early on, who breaks into tombs, becoming more clever as time passes, and finally developing into a ruler who makes excellent use of tyrants and allies, building support and reigning for 36 years. Certainly the development, through time or the book is not even. As noted, his success and power are foreshadowed very early in *The Histories* (1.209) and he is successfully deceived by Histiaeus late in the story (5.107).

### **The Words of Darius**

Having provided an orientation to Herodotus' *The Histories*, and Herodotus' view of the Persians, this chapter then surveyed what Herodotus said about Darius, both by direct description and by recording actions in general. Characterization also emerges from the dialogue between the character, other characters, and the author in a polyphonic text. To understand the character of Darius, this chapter will now examine Darius' own words, looking especially for where the chronotope is significant, and listening for instances of double-voicing.

Perhaps the most startling observation is how infrequently Darius, as king, actually speaks. In all of *The Histories*, Darius, despite how he dominates the book, only speaks 19 times, and of those, seven are before he becomes king, and two (3.128, 5.24.a)

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<sup>41</sup> Griffiths, "Kissing Cousins," 174–177. Griffiths uses this as one of three similar pairs of stories.



are letters, the first of which is composed by someone else in his name.<sup>42</sup> As a king Darius speaks only ten times with an average speech length of 66 words.

Prior to his becoming king, both within chronological time and narrative time, the only speeches of Darius are those that are part of the events immediately preceding the revolt against the Magi. The *logos* of his ascension, including the plot of the seven noblemen to overthrow the Magi who have taken power, the speeches made in the context of a debate about the post-magi form of government and the narrative of the overthrow and events around it, are rich in dialogue. The speeches occur in three scenes in this story. In 3.71–72 Darius arrives on the scene and is invited to join the conspirators, then six in number. His first speech, given “when it was Darius’ turn to express his views” begins in an indirect quotation and concludes in a direct quotation urging haste. Darius had hastened to Susa to get rid of the Magus and expresses concern that others are in on the secret and that delay is dangerous. Otanes responds that prudence is needed before they strike and that they must first add to their number. But Darius, in his second utterance in the chain, responds, concerned that Otanes’ apparently wise advice, if taken, “will be ruin for everyone.” Darius insists and it becomes clear that he is motivated not by bravery, but by concern for his own safety. He says, “There would be nothing but danger in delay,” and adds, “I promise you one thing: nobody will have time to betray *me* – for I will myself denounce you all to the Magus” (3.70–71). Otanes, “alarmed by the

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<sup>42</sup> Darius speeches are found in 3.71(x2), 72. 78, 82, 85 (x2), 127, 128, 134, 140 (x2), 4.98 (x2), 134, 5.24 (x2), 105. This study was first done, using slightly different parameters, from Rawlinson’s translation and then repeated from the translation of Sélincourt-Marincola, and it is from Sélincourt-Marincola that the results are reported. Doing this study in English creates a small margin for error as short indirect speeches could be translated as direct speech, and short direct speech reported as indirect speech, however it is doubtful that this could make more than a very small difference given the size of the book and the small number of speeches found. Further, longer direct speeches would certainly be translated as such. I am treating letters as speeches because they are utterances of Darius and the voice of Darius may potentially be heard in them as much as in a verbal speech. The letter, written by another with his authority, borrows, as it were, the voice of Darius, and is included in these numbers but will not be discussed.

passionate urgency of Darius,” demands to know how Darius imagines such a thing could be accomplished. Darius’ next speech, laying out the plan, begins with the words “...there are many occasions when words are useless, and only deeds which make a man’s meaning plain,” which he follows with another maxim, “it is easy to talk – and only to talk, for no brave act follows.” In the speech that follows, in which Darius lays out his plans for the coup, he speaks in favor of lying, saying that lying and telling the truth are “two roads to the same goal,” contrary to Herodotus’ description of Persian custom (3.72, compare 1.136). It is, however, not Darius’ own speech that clinches the argument for the plan he proposes, but the support of Gobryas, given in 3.73. Darius tries to present himself as a man who is brave and will do anything to get what he wants. He states outright that he will betray the others to save himself if need be and is prepared to rush in and take the risk. However, Darius’ bravery does not consider the possibility of failure, unlike Gobryas, who asks “will there ever be a better moment than now to save the throne – or, if we fail, to die in the attempt?”

Herodotus gives Darius neither the first word nor the last, and puts the words of defiant bravery in the mouth of Gobryas, not Darius. Nonetheless, Darius is the one who lays out the plan and sparks the group to action. Darius presents himself as the source of a necessary plan, and the one who, through both reason and force, makes the others follow through. Thus Darius’ words are double-voiced and the agendas of Herodotus and Darius are in tension. Herodotus challenges Darius’ assessment of himself, but does not completely subvert it, allowing the character to speak. The result is a more nuanced understanding of a man who, seeing himself as a leader and one who gets things done, nonetheless is forced to work with and through others.

But Herodotus cannot leave things there and undercuts Darius the next time he speaks. When Gobryas, who confronted the possibility of defeat in his speech, is wrestling with the Magus in a dark room, he notes Darius' hesitation and asks "What is your hand for — if you don't use it?" Darius responds, "I dare not strike...for fear of killing you" (3.78). Gobryas urges Darius to strike and he does, driving his dagger "by luck into the body of the Magus." Herodotus puts words in the character's mouth that are completely at odds with what Darius says earlier. There is no tension here – the voice of Darius is brought directly into the service of the author who uses it to undercut who the character elsewhere shows himself to be and wishes to be.

The next speech of Herodotus is in the context of a discussion amongst the conspirators on how the new Persia shall be run. The dialogue consists of four speeches. The first, given by Otanes, argues on behalf of popular government or democracy (3.80) and the second, by Megabyzus, argued for a form of oligarchy (3.81). The third speech, given by Darius, responds to the other two, and argues for monarchy (3.82). The group decides on monarchy and they discuss who shall be king, Otanes giving a speech in which he opts out with some conditions (3.83–84). Herodotus notes that in his own time there was skepticism as to whether these speeches were actually made (3.80) and modern scholars continue to hold that they are Greek ideas put in the mouths of Persians.<sup>43</sup> While it is often true, as Lateiner notes, that speeches, though fabricated, express how Herodotus understood a real person's feelings, here the speeches represent three distinct political ideas in a format that allows Herodotus to remain characteristically non-

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<sup>43</sup> Ehrenberg, "Democracy," 525; Briant, *Cyrus to Alexander*, 104. Johnson ("Storytelling Speeches," 1) notes that Herodotus frequently uses the speeches of characters to add to the drama and to express views which he does not wish associated with his own voice.

partisan.<sup>44</sup> As such, they have little value in understanding the character of Darius, as the voice is not only not truly Darius', but also is not truly the voice of the character of Darius in *The Histories*. It is a didactic speech and the character functions merely as a mouthpiece for an ideology.

The speeches Darius makes as king can be divided into two categories: public and private speeches. Public speeches are speeches given to a group of people which Darius could reasonably expect to be reported outside the immediate audience (only two: 3.127, 4.98). Private speeches are part of a conversation with an individual or a few individuals, in which the speaker could not reasonably have assumed that information given would be disseminated to anyone not in the conversation.<sup>45</sup>

Darius' first two private speeches are in an exchange between himself and his wife Attosa, the daughter of Cyrus. She had developed an embarrassing medical condition which was healed by a Greek physician, Democedes, who wanted nothing more than to return to Greece. Upon being healed, she agreed to do him a favor, and, while in bed with Darius, suggested that he seek to expand his empire. Darius responds, in his first speech, that this is exactly what he intends to do and that he plans to march against the Scythians. She responds, arguing on a pretext, that instead he ought to send Democedes as a spy to Greece, to which Darius agrees (3.133–135). The chronotope of this story is deeply significant as the story is profoundly linked to the plot of the war between the Greeks and the Persians, but it is also very personal and intimate both in terms of the setting, a private time between spouses in a marital bed, and by virtue of the situation that

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<sup>44</sup> Lateiner (*Historical Method*, 20–22) observes both the paradoxical reality that the fabricated speeches actually reflect an historical reality and that Herodotus uses them to remain detached.

<sup>45</sup> This differs from an expectation of privacy in which the speaker can assume that information will not be spread.

brought Attosa and Democedes together. It is difficult to separate here the voice of Darius and the voice of the author in these quotations as the two speeches serve very similar agendas. There is no reason to believe that Darius' ideology is anything but what is stated, given the privacy and intimacy of the setting, nor does Herodotus represent it as anything else. This is quite telling of Darius himself. It reveals a human side, an almost touching vulnerability to his wife, which is used to influence him, and in fact, changes the course of the narrative.

The second two speeches (3.140) involve the appearance at court in Susa of a Greek. Syloson had met Darius as a soldier in Cambyses' army years before.<sup>46</sup> When Darius had expressed an interest in purchasing a valuable cloak, Syloson gave it to him. Darius' first speech here is a response to the sentry announcing Syloson's arrival and expresses surprise that any Greek could yet be owed anything by him. As in the previous exchange, the chronotope here is very important. The story is significant precisely because it took place so early in Darius' reign and so far away from Greece. Darius allows Syloson to approach and, in his second speech, praises the generosity of Syloson and offers him great wealth. Syloson declines, preferring instead to ask for the island of Samos as a gift. Syloson was the brother of the tyrant Polycrates, whose murder was one of the factors leading to Darius' speech in 3.127, which will be discussed below. Darius' reaction is emotional and personal, expressing gratitude and joy, and these emotions drive his decision. This decision, again, becomes influential in subsequent history in the narrative world. And again, if the voices of Darius and Herodotus can be separated from

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<sup>46</sup> Lewis sees, further, this story demonstrating some Greek-Persian contact, as Darius had in his court people to translate for him ("Persians," 105).

each other, it is only in that Herodotus, especially with these two stories so close together, highlights Darius' personal side and his emotional responses.

Darius' next private speech and his only other public speech come just after Darius gives orders for the bridge into Scythia to be destroyed and for all the Ionians and the men from their ships to follow him (4.97). However, Coes, "after first satisfying himself that the king was willing to listen to other people's suggestions" (4.97.2), gives a speech of 187 words, arguing persuasively that Darius ought rather to leave the bridge up so that they have a route of escape. Darius makes a short speech thanking Coes "my Lesbian friend" (4.97.6) and promising him reward upon their first return. Both Rawlinson and Sélincourt-Marincola reflect a congeniality that is in the original, translating the vocative  $\xi\acute{\epsilon}\iota\nu\epsilon\ \Lambda\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\beta\iota\epsilon$  "Dear Lesbian" and "my Lesbian friend" respectively. The adjective  $\xi\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\varsigma$  can refer to a stranger or a foreigner, but it can also refer to a friend or ally.<sup>47</sup> Darius then makes a speech to the people of Ionia asking for their help in holding the bridge for sixty days (4.98). This advice in the end saved the expedition (4.141–142) as the Ionians preserved the bridge allowing Darius' escape. Darius makes a speech to his officers that marks the turning point of the event in 4.134, when the entire Scythian army is distracted from battle to chase a rabbit. At this point Darius realizes that the Scythians are not at all afraid of him and in fact are making sport with him. He states that he concurs with Gobryas' interpretation of a message sent by the Scythians, that the Persians would never leave, and concludes "it is time to think of the best way of getting out of this country in safety" (4.134.2). The private speeches to Coes

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<sup>47</sup>Perseus Word Study Tool,  $\xi\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\varsigma$ . Accessed September 27, 2009, Online: <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=cei%253Dne&la=greek&prior=toi=side&d=Perseus;text:1999.01.0125:book=4:chapter=97:section=6&i=1#lexicon>. Powel (*Lexicon*, s.v.  $\xi\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\varsigma$ ) notes this use 16 times of 85 occurrences.

and to his officers are personal and show that he is as a man moved by gratitude, but above all, a man capable of taking advice and changing his mind. Privately, Herodotus shows us a leader who is confident, but wise enough to take the advice of others. His public speech to the Scythians, however, is a direct command, and speaks about rewarding loyalty. It reverses a past command, but, as a regal proclamation, offers no reason for doing so and offers no promise of reward beyond the simple statement, “This will be the greatest service you can do me” (4.98).

In 5.23–24, Megabyzus notes and becomes quite concerned that Histiaeus is building a fortress in Thrace and that a clever Greek has been given a great deal more resources than is good for the Persians. Darius sends a letter, quoted in *The Histories*, asking Histiaeus to present himself before the king. There is no one more loyal, Darius states, and thus Histiaeus is needed for a special task. When he arrives, Darius tells him, using tender words, that he has missed Histiaeus’ company and council and desires him to come to Susa to sit at the king’s table. How Histiaeus understands and feels about Darius’ direction is not recorded, but Darius “made Histiaeus accompany him” (5.25). Rawlinson’s translation “taking Histiaeus with him” does not convey to the modern reader the causative force of the participle καταστήσας. Darius is in this story shrewd, giving a soft answer to someone who has done him service. The reader knows that Darius’ words do not speak his true mind, but may infer that they are face-saving for Histiaeus, who is being checked without accusation or punishment. Herodotus here allows Darius to emerge as a character with his own voice. Darius’ words in this section focus only on solving the immediate problem in a wise manner that brings about the best outcome. However, Herodotus exploits this to show Darius as prudent and wise, but also a man whose motives may not be what they seem. While Herodotus may not have

problems with lying per se, it is inconsistent with the values of the Persians, which is an issue for Herodotus and his Greek audience. The character that emerges from the dialogue with other characters is in turn refined by the dialogue with the author.

It is not so much noteworthy that Darius' speech here does not truly reflect his motivation, as that the rest of the private speeches appear to do so. In each of the other speeches so far, there is nothing in the text explicitly to give us cause to doubt that the speeches do not actually reflect Darius' mind, in contrast to the pattern noted by Pelling, that speeches usually do not reflect the characters' true motives and in fact they only rarely do.<sup>48</sup>

Darius' final speech, "Grant, O God, that I may punish the Athenians" (5.105) is accompanied by an act, the shooting of an arrow in the air, and is addressed to "God." As such, it provides a deep and profoundly honest glimpse into his soul. Darius dictates his foreign policy against the Greeks, not out of strategy or a desire to expand his empire, but out of revenge for the Athenian participation in the Ionian revolt: "...his anger against Athens, already great enough on account of the assault on Sardis, was even greater, and he was more than ever determined to make war on Greece" (7.1). While it is possible that there is some grandstanding in his actions and speech in 5.105, the narrative gives no indication of that and the intent of Herodotus seems to be to drive home how profound Darius' anger truly is. His grudge burns and he commands his servants to repeat to him three times whenever he sat down to dinner, "Master, remember the Athenians" (5.105.2), thus nursing his wrath to keep it warm.<sup>49</sup> His anger sets the agenda of Persia, not only throughout the rest of Darius' reign but also throughout the reign of Xerxes.

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<sup>48</sup> Pelling, "Speech," 116.

<sup>49</sup> With apologies to Robert Burns who described the wife of Tam O'Shanter: "Where sits our sulky, sullen dame, / Gathering her brows like gathering storm / Nursing her wrath to keep it warm"



Collectively, the speeches of Darius as king provide short glimpses into the man. In every speech Darius the man emerges as a man who reacts with gratitude to generosity, who is moved by his wife's bedroom whispers, and who takes advice and changes his mind. However these glimpses are brief and few. We learn just enough about Darius to remember that he is human, but not enough to develop an ongoing sympathy for him as a character. Collectively, the speeches serve to present to the Greek reader an enemy who is just vulnerable and human enough to be resisted.

### **Darius' Oroetes Speech**

Darius makes this speech to a number of elite Persians asking for one of them to kill Oroetes. While not particularly significant in the overall narrative, the speech is one of the few glimpses into the courts of Darius and the only one in which Darius addresses a number of his followers. The chronotope of the *logos* in which the speech is given is complex and interconnects with a number of other *logoi* that do more significantly advance the plot and also nuances the understanding of Darius' character revealed in the speech. Similarly, the speech itself is double-voiced, manipulated by Herodotus to undermine the regal character Darius is seeking to present.

Darius' speech to Oroetes needs to be understood within its chronotope. The speech Darius makes in 3.127, classified above as a public speech, actually has elements of both. The number of people addressed is not clear, but there it appears to be a closed group. According to the text, Darius συγκαλέσας Περσέων τοὺς δοκιμωτάτους, "called a meeting of the leading men of the country" (3.127.2), translated by Rawlinson

“called together a meeting of all the chiefs of the Persians”. The adjective δόκιμος is defined as “famous ... excellent ... worthy”<sup>50</sup> and indicates that they represented at some level the elite of Persian society, although it is unclear exactly who they are. Darius addresses them simply as ὦ Πέρσσαι, “Oh, Persians” (3.127.2).<sup>51</sup> Sélincourt-Marincola translate it “gentlemen” indicating that they do not see the vocative as anything more than a formality. The use of the word δόκιμος, combined with the fact that the participants were gathered by Darius, suggests that it must have been somewhat of an elite crowd, although thirty of the company responded to Darius’ request, so the group was likely fairly large, perhaps fifty to one hundred or more.<sup>52</sup> There is no direct indication of where or when the speech is given except that it was very early in the reign of Darius. What Darius said, then, needed to be controlled and politically shaped, especially as “the country was still in an unsettled state” (3.127.1).

The speech itself asks for someone who will take on a task that must be done with craft, not force. Darius is requesting that someone slay Oroetes, or bring him to Darius alive. Darius describes the offenses of Oroetes, including failing to help Persia, slaying two of Darius’ friends, and now also slaying his messengers, all of these constitute “a defiance of authority that cannot be tolerated” (3.127.3). Oroetes must be put to death, Darius concludes, before he can do more damage.

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<sup>50</sup> Powell, ΔΟΚΙΜΟΣ, in *Lexicon*, 93.

<sup>51</sup> So Rawlinson (3.127).

<sup>52</sup> This supposes that if the thirty were either a very small minority, or the majority of the group, this fact would have been marked in the text. If it had been a large percentage of the group, this would have served Herodotus’ narrative purpose well in describing the heated competition to be the one who serves Darius, although the other assumption, that the group could not have been very much larger, is less certain.

### The Oroetes Speech in its Chronotope

Oroetes was a Persian who was installed as the governor of the province of Sardis by Cyrus. Oroetes killed Polycrates, who was the tyrant of Samos, an island off the coast of Sardis. Herodotus gives three *logoi* concerning the reason for the murder of Polycrates. The first involves a taunt by a third party, Mitrobates, who was one of the friends of Darius mentioned in Darius' speech (3.127), for not having already taken the island of Samos (3.120). A second version, which Herodotus notes is less generally accepted, is that Polycrates, whether deliberately or by chance, had his back turned to a messenger of Oroetes, and neither turned to face the messenger nor responded to him (3.121). Herodotus' own explanation is that Oroetes was aware of Polycrates' political ambitions, and wanted to see them checked (3.122).

Polycrates is himself an intriguing character, and the narrative of him and his slave, the physician Democedes, form a dominant strand throughout the third book. Polycrates first enters *The Histories* as a friend of Amasis, the king of Egypt, in 2.182, which is chronologically shortly after his conquest of Samos in 3.39. Polycrates grew in power and influence and "became the talk of Ionia and the rest of Greece" (3.39).

Early in the third book, there is an intriguing *logos* which tells a lot about Polycrates. It appears that Amasis, watching Polycrates have success after success, sends him a message in which he says "as I know the gods are jealous of success, I cannot rejoice at your excessive prosperity" and advises Polycrates to introduce a balancing sorrow in his life: "think of whatever it is you value most... and throw it away" (3.40). Polycrates thinks this advice is good, and goes out in a boat on the sea and throws away a prized signet ring (3.41). But the ring is swallowed by a large fish, which is in turn caught by a fisherman, who believes that such a fish is worthy only of the king, and so hands it

over as a gift. When the fish is cleaned, Polycrates ring is found and returned to him. Amasis was so disturbed that Polycrates was unsuccessful in dodging his fate, that he immediately severed the pact they had (3.42–43).

Van der Veen has provided a fascinating study of this story, arguing that, while Polycrates “approved of the advice which it contained” (3.40), he does not in fact follow it. Amasis’ advice to Polycrates is first to “think of whatever it is you value most ... and throw it away” and second, “[if] you do not find that success alternates with failure, then go on using the remedy I have advised” (3.40).<sup>53</sup> Van der Veen notes differences in the wording in the narrative. Amasis instructs him to “*think* of whatever it is *that you value most* and by the loss of which you would *suffer* most, and throw it away” (3.40). But Polycrates acts as follows: “*he looked around amongst his treasures* for what he would *probably* be most *annoyed* to lose” (3.40).<sup>54</sup> The change from one synonym to another is a deliberate effort to highlight the differences between Amasis’ instruction and Polycrates response.<sup>55</sup> The most significant difference between the advice and the response is that Polycrates attempts it only once. Van der Veen, noting that what Polycrates chooses is his signet ring, connecting that with other elements of the story, concludes that what Polycrates values the most is power, or more precisely, the grandeur and appearance of power.<sup>56</sup> He notes that Herodotus ends his treatment of Polycrates in 3.125.2 by talking about his magnificence and relating the story of how Polycrates loaded the boat with men and threw the signet ring in the ocean with all looking on (3.41).<sup>57</sup> Polycrates was a man

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<sup>53</sup> Van der Veen, “Lord of the Ring,” 435–436. Quotation from Sélincourt-Marincola.

<sup>54</sup> Van der Veen, “Lord of the Ring,” 436. Translation, including italics, are Van der Veen’s.

<sup>55</sup> Van der Veen, “Lord of the Ring,” 436–441.

<sup>56</sup> Van der Veen, “Lord of the Ring,” 442–443.

<sup>57</sup> Van der Veen, “Lord of the Ring,” 444. The need for witnesses lest the ring or a copy reappear may also be a factor.

of great and growing power, with a career that the king of Egypt feared would make the gods themselves jealous.

This understanding of Polycrates, which Herodotus is careful to narrate before Oroetes is mentioned, supports Herodotus' assertion that "Polycrates was the first Greek we know of to plan the dominion of the sea" and his supposition that this was behind Oroetes' desire to kill Polycrates. Once Oroetes kills Polycrates, taking over Samos in the process, Oroetes becomes incredibly powerful, either greatly extending Darius' power or becoming a greater threat to Darius. The slaying of the messenger makes a clear indication of which choice Oroetes makes. The inclusion of the story of Polycrates' ring within the chronotope of the death of Oroetes reflects how real a threat that choice made Oroetes to Darius.

The chronotope of the third book reveals a very complex narrative, containing a number of stories that interlock. As Wood notes, the story of the slaying of Oroetes is both a part of the second Samian *logos* (3.120–182) and of the first Persian penetration into Europe (3.129–138).<sup>58</sup> But the slaying of Oroetes (3.120–128) also is a part of the second phase of the story of Polycrates which begins in 3.39–46. The stories are connected by the reference in the second to the first (3.125, "It was just as Amasis, king of Egypt, had previously told") but are also paralleled, if, as Immerwahr suggests, one views the stories as two stories, each about two individuals, the first about Polycrates and Amasis, the second about Polycrates and Oroetes.<sup>59</sup> The slaying of Polycrates, causally linked to the slaying of Oroetes, is chronologically misplaced, and flashes back to the time of Cambyses. The result is an extended tale, woven and interwoven.

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<sup>58</sup> Wood, *Histories*, 79.

<sup>59</sup> Immerwahr, "Sameians Stories," 317.

### **Double-Voicing in the Oroetes Speech**

Darius' speech itself is carefully planned and deliberate, designed to present a public image to key supporters. In contrast to the private speeches, this speech does not reveal Darius in a personal way, but rather Darius presents himself as he wishes to be seen. In order to deal with Oroetes, a Persian with growing power in Sardis and Samos, who slew two friends of Darius, as well as a messenger, Darius calls an assembly of elite Persians and makes a speech to them. The speech begins with a broad statement that Darius wishes to take on a task that requires craft rather than force, which is backed up with a statement that where craft is required force is irrelevant. He then asks who would kill Oroetes, and enumerates the reasons he needs to be killed.

Herodotus offers three different situations to which Darius' speech is responding. There is, first of all, the growing power of Oroetes within the narrative world. While Herodotus does not explicitly draw the connection, his statements concerning Darius' strategy of subtlety and guile instead of force show a recognition, both on the part of the narrator but also on the part of Darius himself, of this growing power. But according to Darius' own words, he is responding to the death of the two Persians, Mitrobates and his son, the messenger, and the general disloyalty of Oroetes. The reason Darius states reveals more of the character's awareness of the growing threat of Oroetes than he may have intended. But Herodotus' explicitly states that the reason for the action of Darius is to fulfill a divine agenda. Sélincourt-Marincola's translation introducing the story of Oroetes death, "it was not long before Polycrates had his revenge" (3.126), is misleading while Rawlinson's, "It was not long before retribution ... overtook Oroetes," reveals a nuance that the other misses. Herodotus' belief in divine retribution forms a moral system

in which it is premised that evil will be punished.<sup>60</sup> His use of indirect terminology, and vague references to “the gods” or “God” should not be taken as some kind of atheism, but rather simply as reluctance to name a specific god when the exact god involved cannot be known. Here, the personification of retribution formed by making it the subject of the verb suggests that it is a vague reference to a divine act. It is, in the end, not Darius in whose hands Oroetes lies, but an unknown divine element.

But Darius, if he is aware of any of this, is not at all concerned about it. For Herodotus, the death of Oroetes is brought about as vengeance for the way Polycrates died, and Polycrates’ death is the result of his *hubris* and perhaps his desire to conquer all of Greece. For Darius, Oroetes is a disloyal, ambitious Persian who needs to be dealt with harshly. Oroetes potentially could have been a great asset for the expansion of Darius’ kingdom, but instead was a threat. But in his removal, Darius overtook the dominion of Oroetes. Herodotus and Darius see the death of Oroetes from very different perspectives which are in tension. Despite the claims of Herodotus to the contrary, Darius’ explanation for the death of Oroetes is, for the reader, a viable alternative.

The use of optatives in the speech is interesting. Three times Darius employs an optative, ἐπιτελέσειε (“let him place”), ἀγάγοι (“let him lead”), and ἀποκτείνειε (“let him kill”). The optative is used “to express a wish or a potentiality.”<sup>61</sup> The first of the optatives, ἐπιτελέσειε, “[who] would undertake,” accompanied by ἄν, is an optative of potential within an interrogative sentence. The next two are in parallel, Ὀροίτεα ἦ

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<sup>60</sup> For an overview of Herodotus’ religious beliefs, see Harrison, “Divine Retribution”; Niskanen, *The Human and the Divine*, 93–95; Mikalson, *Herodotus and Religion*, 136–143.

<sup>61</sup> Mastronarde, *Attic*, 243. It should not be assumed that the optative is as infrequent in Herodotus as it is in the New Testament. Karali (“Classification,” 390) classifies Attic-Ionic as an Eastern dialect, distinguishing dialects by vowel contractions and other details. Ionic, used in *The Histories* was the first dialect used for prose (Panayotou, “Ionic and Attic,” 408).

ζώνοντα ἀγάγοι ἢ ἀποκτείνετε, each optative again being an optative of potential, though this time unaccompanied by ἄν, presenting alternative possibilities, and are, like the first optative, within an interrogative sentence.<sup>62</sup> The remainder of the verbs are indicatives, within either the description of Oroetes and his threat or the maxim. Darius could also have used an imperative to give these instructions. But Darius does not, at any point, use a direct imperative to give an order, but rather asks who might carry out his wishes. While both the imperative and the optative in an interrogative sentence may be used to give a command, it seems probable that Darius' choice of the optative in an interrogative sentence over the imperative is significant.

The second curious feature of the speech is the maxim which is placed as a bracket between the first optative and the pair. Shapiro observes that the use of maxims is common in *The Histories*, and that contradictory maxims which disagree with each other, are used on alternate sides in dialogues as part of the debate.<sup>63</sup> She notes by way of example that all three of the constitutional speeches end in a maxim.<sup>64</sup> In her appendix, "Eighty-six Gnomai in Herodotus' *The Histories*," Shapiro specifically includes the sentence from this speech ἔνθα γὰρ σοφίης δέει, βίης ἔργον οὐδέν ("Force is always beside the point when subtlety will serve").<sup>65</sup> Maxims are pieces of wisdom of a general nature whose truth lies in general experience.<sup>66</sup> Here Darius is using a maxim to establish the validity of his wisdom and to gain support for his belief that the matter "calls for craft rather than the combined force of numbers" (3.127). This is reminiscent of Darius' speech in 3.82 in which he uses maxims to argue for action against the Magi. The

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<sup>62</sup> Mastronarde, *Attic*, 246.

<sup>63</sup> Shapiro, "Proverbial Wisdom," 89, 98.

<sup>64</sup> Shapiro, "Proverbial Wisdom," 98.

<sup>65</sup> The particle γὰρ in 3.127 is left untranslated by Marincola-Sélincourt.

<sup>66</sup> Shapiro, "Proverbial Wisdom," 90; Christidis, "Proverbs," 1337.



determining factor in the maxim is the sufficiency of subtlety or craft. When craft is sufficient, strength is of no advantage. But Herodotus has made it clear that in fact strength of force was not an option, as the country was still unsettled, he was new to the throne, and Oroetes was a powerful man with a large army (3.127). Herodotus creates a narrative world in which it is not that subtlety is sufficient, but rather that subtlety is the only option.<sup>67</sup>

These two elements of the speech, the choice of optatives over imperatives for command, and the inclusion of a maxim, highlight double voicing. For Darius, they are royal rhetoric. The choice of the optative gives the impression of a casual indirect instruction, uttered by one who knows he need only wish, for his wish is their command. In the mind of the character Darius, the maxim may have been intended to make him sound pithy and wise. However, Herodotus, the author, creates another impression with these elements. Rather than making Darius appear royal and wise, he seems to be seeking a solution, asking for help and hoping for the best. Rather than declaring with authority, Darius defends his statements with common wisdom, as if he needed to win the support of his followers. The application of the maxim in a manner that inverts the reality he faces (force being not unnecessary, but impossible) makes Darius' attempt to manipulate his followers transparent to the reader, and so *The Histories* subverts his efforts to appear royal.

The response Darius receives is impressive: "Thirty of the company who were there competed so hotly for the privilege of undertaking this service, that Darius was

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<sup>67</sup> Georges, ("Persian Ionia," 25) notes that the Persians could only war with the Ionians, in this case under the control of Oroetes, by using the Phoenician navy at the very time when they were going to need it against the Greeks. Whether or not this statement is historically accurate is not our concern, however the observation is true of the narrative world created by *The Histories*.

forced to make them draw lots” (3.128). Bagaeus, who won the draw, created a number of documents “which he sealed with the king’s seal,” which were presented at court in Sardis. The last document commanded the guards, in the name of the king, to stop protecting Oroetes, which they did, making his arrest possible. It is important to note that it is in handing over his seal, temporarily, that Darius brings about vengeance for Polycrates. Polycrates’ fate was foreshadowed in the story of the signet ring, the royal seal as it were, that he attempts to throw into the ocean. It passes from him but only temporarily. Now it is by Darius’ seal temporarily passing from him that Polycrates’ revenge is fulfilled. The echoing reminds the reader that Darius is not, in fact, in control. There is a divine agent behind his actions.

### **Darius’ Character as Response**

To understand why Darius is characterized in this manner, and what impact Herodotus may have intended to have on his audience through this, it is worth considering two fundamental realities that form the backdrop of the author’s world. First, Greece was a divided collection of city-states at war with one another. And, second, the Persian Empire remained a massive world empire, just to the east of them. This reality is reflected in *The Histories*, in which the Greeks are divided and the outcome remains far from certain.<sup>68</sup> Herodotus further connects with his own political situation by pulling on three elements of fifth century political thought: 1. an empire will expand or be absorbed by their neighbors; 2. a tough environment creates a tough people, while luxury and riches lead to softening and collapse; and 3. there is a strong relationship between

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<sup>68</sup> In contrast, fourth century historians writing after the Persian wars portrayed the Greeks as a united group, and each event contributing to the eventual victory (Marincola, “Persian Wars,” 122).

political freedom and military strength.<sup>69</sup> Forsdyke notes that Herodotus emphasizes connections between historical events by using narrative patterns.<sup>70</sup> It is possible to see in Herodotus narrative connections with his own time. The nuanced character of Darius is designed to shape the response of the Greeks to the Persian king in their own time. Darius is a great, noble and powerful king, a king who is a formidable enemy, as would be the Persian king of Herodotus' own time. But the regal greatness of Darius is subverted in *The Histories* as he emerges as a vulnerable human character, dependent on friends and allies. The Persian kings need to be respected, but they are not invincible.

### Conclusion

The character of Darius emerges within the chronotope of *The Histories*, as well as through his own speeches, sometimes double-voiced. Herodotus talks about Darius and what he does, characterizing him as a great king, with great power, who grows from an impulsive trickster to a leader capable of subtle strategy and great anger. The Darius that emerges from his speeches, however, in contrast to the great king, is a man with feelings, grateful to those who have done him past favors, a friend to some and a loving husband, human and vulnerable, under the control of the fates as any mortal. The speech concerning Oroetes shows a leader who combines both. He presents himself as a powerful leader who is in control, using the support of others at his convenience. Through double-voicing that same speech emerges as a naive political move in which Darius is unaware of his role as an instrument of the fates avenging the death of Polycrates. Darius is human. He is, to be sure, a great man, a mighty king, and a man

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<sup>69</sup> Forsdyke, "Political History," 228–231.

<sup>70</sup> Forsdyke, "Political History," 227.

with a burning anger for Athens. But he is, nonetheless, a man – a human who can be defeated. The choice of optatives rather than imperatives, undermines the sense of authority of the utterance and makes it appear Darius is building consensus, not giving direction. Further, the inclusion of the maxim portrays Darius not as the wise teacher he would like but rather as dependent on common wisdom. Darius' explicit reason for his course of action is undermined by the preceding passage and by Herodotus setting the speech within the context of a narrative about divine retribution, which is seen to be the moving factor behind all the action. Darius is portrayed not only as a royal figure and a mighty king, but as a man, controlled by fates, needing the support of his friends, and in the end human and vulnerable.

## CHAPTER 4

### Hearing Darius in Ezra

Perhaps no other period in the history of the Hebrew people is both so influential on the development of the world's faiths and yet so little discussed by the early church as the period covered by the narrative of Ezra-Nehemiah. Ezra-Nehemiah was neither quoted in the New Testament, nor discussed by the church fathers before Bede.<sup>1</sup> It lacks the narrative drama and complexity of Genesis and the epic feel of Judges, yet the story, told through collected documents, lists and memoirs, is as powerful as any in Scripture. In it the people of God return to their promised land, reconstruct a fallen infrastructure, re-establish the temple and its worship, and rebuild the defensive walls of the city. No less important is the reconstruction of a community identity, the reestablishment of the law of Yahweh in the land, the rebuilding of the orthodox faith, and the purification of the people from elements of pagan worship that had been snares for centuries.<sup>2</sup> The events of this period shaped the identity and ideology of the community that confronted the challenges of the Hellenistic age a few centuries later; the community from which Judaism of the late Second Temple period, including Christianity, was borne. For a number of reasons, Ezra-Nehemiah has not attracted as much attention as some other books, but it is worth a more careful look.

This study will examine specifically how the letter of Darius in Ezra 6 functions within the book using the Bakhtinian concepts of chronotope and double-voicing. This

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<sup>1</sup> Conti, "Introduction," xviii.

<sup>2</sup> The historical reliability of this narrative is not the subject of this study but it is not without its problems. Note, for instance, the extensive literature trying to determine whether Ezra or Nehemiah came first (e.g. Batten, *Commentary*, 160; Soggins, *Introduction*, 422–424; Fensham, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 6–9; Yamauchi, "Ezra, Nehemiah," 583–586).

chapter will begin with an orientation to the book, discussing briefly issues of continuity and discontinuity between Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles, and the cultural milieu from which the book of Ezra-Nehemiah emerged. Some brief comments will be made on how the Persian kings are presented in Ezra-Nehemiah in order to set a context for examining Darius. This chapter will then use the Bakhtinian concept of chronotope and double-voicing to explore how the character of Darius is developed, seeing how Ezra makes excellent use of the interaction between narrative and chronological time at the nexus of Ezra 5—6 to nuance the character of Darius that arises from a straight reading of the chapters, and how the character is further nuanced through the intersection of Darius' voice with those of the narrator and other characters. Finally, this chapter will consider how the nuanced character of Darius addresses his or her own community.

### Orientation

It has long been held that Ezra should be read as part of a larger book, consisting of Ezra-Nehemiah or Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah. Williamson argues that the books were connected in antiquity because 1) Josephus' count of 24 books in the Hebrew Bible requires it; 2) Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* 4.26.14 [3]) suggests it; 3) the Talmud considers Ezra-Nehemiah a single book; 4) the Masoretes count Neh 3:22 as the middle of the book; 5) ancient Jewish commentaries move from Ezra to Nehemiah without pause; and 6) the books are not divided in the earliest manuscripts of the Septuagint and of the Hebrew Bible.<sup>3</sup> Modern scholars note commonality in language and theme in Ezra and Nehemiah and the use in 1 Esdras of material that overlaps both books.<sup>4</sup> VanderKam, on

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<sup>3</sup>Williamson, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, xxi.

<sup>4</sup>VanderKam, "Ezra-Nehemiah," 55–56.

the other hand, notes that even the ancient tradition is not completely ambiguous and that there are some differences in names for God and for Israel between the two books.<sup>5</sup> However, his comparison is based on only the editorial material, excluding the documents.<sup>6</sup> Further, he notes that while Ezra quotes several full letters, Nehemiah merely alludes to them, conceding, however, that “There may be reasons for this ... (e.g. he had no access to such documents for Nehemiah).”<sup>7</sup> For VanderKam notably different themes in the two books, such as the restoration of the temple in Ezra and the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the wall in Nehemiah, argue against the unity of the two books.<sup>8</sup> However, even within Ezra there is movement from the rebuilding of the temple in chs. 1–6 to the restoration of the people in chs. 7–13. Further, there are themes running throughout Ezra-Nehemiah, such as the theme of marrying foreign women. It is not difficult to identify themes that unite both books, such as the restoration of the Jewish people under God. Finally, VanderKam argues that the lists of returnees, presented in Ezra 2 and Neh 7, are used differently and the best explanation for the difference is different editors.<sup>9</sup> Recently the issue has been recast, as scholarship moves away from the search for an original author to recognizing the complexity of compositional history, to ask “what are the markers of unity and disunity in Ezra-Nehemiah?”<sup>10</sup>

Unlike the unity of Ezra-Nehemiah, there is no ancient tradition that connects

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<sup>5</sup>VanderKam, “Ezra-Nehemiah,” 64–66. His argument is based only on the editorial frame, and excludes the letters, leaving an inadequately small sample.

<sup>6</sup>VanderKam, “Ezra-Nehemiah,” 63.

<sup>7</sup>VanderKam, “Ezra-Nehemiah,” 66–67.

<sup>8</sup>VanderKam, “Ezra-Nehemiah,” 69–70.

<sup>9</sup>VanderKam, “Ezra-Nehemiah,” 67–68. Eskenazi (“Structure in Ezra-Nehemiah,” 641–656) proposes that Ezra 2 and Neh 7 form an *inclusio* that defines the structure of the book Ezra-Nehemiah, and from there develops her reading. While VanderKam interacts extensively with Eskenazi’s article as well as her other works, he does not demonstrate that the lists could not be *inclusios*.

<sup>10</sup>Eskenazi, “Responses and Reflections,” 315. Eskenazi suggests that to find an original author would be like trying to “unscramble the omelettes,” borrowing the metaphor from Alter.

Ezra-Nehemiah to Chronicles, unless one so interprets the overlap of 1 Esdras. The view that Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah were written by a single compiler was widely accepted until relatively recently, when it was challenged by Japhet and Williamson, though their views have not been universally accepted.<sup>11</sup> Not only the issue of the (dis)unity of Ezra-Nehemiah, but also the relationship of Ezra-Nehemiah to Chronicles and the role 1 Esdras plays in understanding these issues all remain highly controversial topics, perhaps precisely because compositional history cannot be easily reduced to the simple question “who wrote it?”

In terms of dating the entire book, I see no reason to question Williamson’s conclusion that the final form of the book likely dates to around 300 BCE.<sup>12</sup> This chapter will read Ezra 1–6 as a literary unit, part of a larger work, against the backdrop of late Achaemenid Yehudite culture, assuming that the major cultural and intellectual reforms of the Hellenistic age had not yet become deeply rooted.<sup>13</sup>

Traditionally, whether treated as a single book or not, Ezra and Nehemiah were considered as at least separate sections, with Ezra itself further divided into two parts, the second part beginning with the words “after these things” (Ezra 7:1) and containing the memoirs of Ezra.<sup>14</sup> More recent scholarship on Ezra-Nehemiah has sometimes not

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<sup>11</sup> The assessment of the state of the discussion is based on those of VanderKam, “Ezra-Nehemiah,” 55; Grabbe, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 93; Eskenazi, *Age of Prose*, 13–16. The view was considered probable by Batten (*Commentary*, 1) and accepted by Driver (*Introduction*, 544), Eissfeldt (*Introduction*, 238), Harrison (*Introduction*, 1135–1136), all of whom present the issue as a general consensus. By 1984, Clines (*Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, 9) is noting fissures in the consensus and, in 2008, Williamson notes in response that in a volume of essays, *Unity and Disunity in Ezra-Nehemiah*, no contributor championed the view that Ezra-Nehemiah was a part of a larger work including Chronicles (“More Unity,” 329).

<sup>12</sup> Williamson, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, xxxvi.

<sup>13</sup> But here I disagree with Fried who states “we may reasonably expect Hellenistic influence” (Fried, “Documents,” 6). While some Greek influence is certain even before Alexander, a deep familiarity with Greek literature and thought, as Fried requires, seems highly unlikely at so early a juncture in the Hellenistic era.

<sup>14</sup> The division of Ezra into these two sections has long been recognized (Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary*, 3:2–3; Myers, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, xlviii–xlix; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 7–8).



recognized a major division between the end of Ezra and the beginning of Nehemiah, but has tended to recognize a significant divide between Ezra 6 and Ezra 7. Even Throntveit, who divides Ezra-Nehemiah into two parts at Neh 7:3, maintains within that structure a division of the first part at Ezra 7:1.<sup>15</sup> Eskenazi divides Ezra-Nehemiah into three parts: Potentiality (Ezra 1:1–4): Process of Actualization (Ezra 1:5—Neh 7:72), and Success (8:1—13:31), further subdividing the second part into an Introduction (Ezra 1:5–6), three movements with the first two movements divided between Ezra 6:22 and 7:1.<sup>16</sup> However, it is important to remember that whatever the compositional history, within the canonical text Ezra 1–6 is not a separate book, and so it is valid and even essential to look for the relationship between Ezra 1–6 and Ezra 7–10 and the Ezra–Nehemiah complex. One would expect to find bridges, and interplay between Ezra 1–6 and what follows.

The first part, chs. 1–6, is a narrative, told through a collection of documents which tells the story of the initial return of the Jews from the Babylonian exile and their reconstruction of the temple in the face of opposition. However, resistance from the surrounding peoples discourage them and force a stoppage of work until the reign of Darius (Ezra 4:24). This situation persists until, in the second year of Darius, the prophets Haggai and Zechariah motivate the people to once again begin building and under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Jeshua the Jews return to the work and make good progress (Ezra 5:1–2). At that time Tattenai and Shethar-bozenai and other authorities interrogate the Jews about their right to build and report the matter to Darius in a letter, asking for verification of the claims of the Jews that they had authorization from Cyrus (Ezra 5:3–17). Darius has a search done and finds a copy of the edict of Cyrus, which he quotes in a

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<sup>15</sup>Throntveit, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, xi–xiii.

<sup>16</sup>Eskenazi, *Age of Prose*, 38.

letter to Tattenai and the other officials (Ezra 6:1–12).<sup>17</sup> Tattenai, Shethar-bozenai and their colleagues do all that Darius has ordered, and the Yehudites finish the temple and hold a dedication ceremony (Ezra 6:13-18). The narrative then records a Passover celebration (Ezra 6:19-22).

The narrative then moves to the seventh year of Artaxerxes, at which time Ezra along with a number of priestly functionaries returned from Babylon to Jerusalem. Artaxerxes provides them with a letter of endorsement that gives Ezra the financing and the mandate to reform the community, and ensure that the laws of God and of the king are being followed (7:1-26). The book then moves into the first person account of Ezra arriving in Jerusalem with a letter from Artaxerxes and purifying the people by correcting temple practices and dealing with mixed marriages (Ezra 7:27—10:44). The narrative then moves to the voice of Nehemiah, who describes his return to Yehud at the bequest of the king and the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, despite resistance from hostile neighbours (Neh 1:1—7:4). The narrative, again in the third person, relates the celebration of the Festival of Booths and a national rededication (Neh 7:5—9:38). The population increases, the wall is dedicated and the narrative returns to the voice of Nehemiah and again records acts of reformation (Neh 10:1—13:31).

### **Genre**

Early modern commentators took it for granted that Ezra-Nehemiah was historiography and attempted to draw from the work what they could for understanding the history of the period. When they were not successful, the tendency was simply to

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<sup>17</sup> The boundaries of Darius' letter and whether it includes the edict of Cyrus as a quotation will be considered in more detail later in this chapter.

argue that it was poor historiography or poorly preserved and in either case in need of reconstruction.<sup>18</sup> Subsequent research focused on the individual sources and documents, analysing them first for their historical value, applying form-critical method to the individual parts but generally not looking at how the parts function together to form a coherent literary unit.<sup>19</sup> More recently, efforts have been made to understand Ezra-Nehemiah as a literary whole and to examine the complex literary techniques it engages.<sup>20</sup> At this point, with the relationship between Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles not yet settled, it is perhaps too early to attempt a description of the book as a whole. However, the volume of recent work is collectively demonstrating that Ezra-Nehemiah is carefully written and structured and can be profitably studied for its literary features.

### **The Persian Kings in Ezra-Nehemiah**

There is no doubt that, from the perspective of the book of Ezra-Nehemiah, the Persians, and especially the Persian kings, were basically viewed positively. Under Cyrus the Yehudites were able to return, under Darius the temple was completed, and under Artaxerxes the walls were completed. While Yehud did not enjoy pre-exilic independence, things had definitely changed in the transition from Babylonian to Persian rule and this change is reflected in the more positive attitude of Ezra-Nehemiah toward the Persian kings. The precise organization of the Jewish people and their relationship to the Persian Empire remains unclear. Coin discoveries and a Babylonian legal text both

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<sup>18</sup> For instance, Sayce, *Introduction*, 44–45; Batten, *Commentary*, 28; Driver, *Introduction*, 548.

<sup>19</sup> For instance, Eissfeldt, *Introduction*, 551; Childs, *Introduction*, 627–630.

<sup>20</sup> LaSor et. al., *Introduction*, 557–558. Also the more recent commentaries by Throntveit (*Ezra-Nehemiah*) and Davies (*Ezra and Nehemiah*), Eskenazi (*Age of Prose*), as well as a number of the articles, essays and books used in this chapter use this approach. To recognize literary features one need not necessarily deny the work is history as, in the words of von Ranke, “History is a science in collecting, finding, penetrating; it is an art because it recreates and portrays that which it has found and recognized” (*History*, 33).

point strongly to the conclusion that Yehud was a separate province within the satrapy Abar-nahara with a certain degree of autonomy and was not subordinate to Samaria.<sup>21</sup>

Each province remained an independent socio-economic region with its own social institutions and internal structure; with its own local laws, customs, traditions, systems of weights and measures, and monetary systems.<sup>22</sup>

While the governors of the provinces were carefully watched, it seems that they enjoyed a large degree of autonomy in internal affairs, provided that they paid their taxes and did not rebel. The rebellions in other parts of the world would have had the effect of distracting the attention of the monarch from Yehud as the impressive, yet limited resources of the monarchy would have been invested in settling troubled areas. This distraction would have given the community of Yehud more autonomy as the eyes of the king were looking elsewhere. This was further accompanied by rising prosperity, as can be seen in the growth in the population during that time.<sup>23</sup> Carter concludes that while Yehud was a small and under-populated community with few resources, it nevertheless had financial resources coming in from outside that made it both more viable and more significant than pure statistics would suggest.<sup>24</sup> The very literary activity of the community would suggest a level of resources above subsistence. And the fortunes and

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<sup>21</sup> Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 487, 488. The degree and nature of the autonomy is unclear due to ambiguous terminology in the primary texts and a degree of fluidity of boundaries and lines of authority in the ancient world. For recent discussion see Stolper, "Governor of Babylon"; Stern, "New Evidence"; Wieschöfer, *Ancient Persia*, 59–62; Weinberg, *Citizen-Temple Community*; Williamson, "Judah and the Jews"; Carter, *Emergence of Yehud*, 279; Janzen, "Politics"; Cataldo, "Persian Policy," 240–252; Berquist, "Identity"; Kessler, "Loyal Yahwists," 240–252; Knauf, "Bethel," 291–394; Dandamaev, "Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid State Administration"; Wright, "Remapping Yehud"; Maxwell and Miller, *History*.

<sup>22</sup> Dandamaev and Lukonin, *Culture and Social Institutions*, 97.

<sup>23</sup> Carter, *The Emergence of Yehud*, 226, notes a 42% growth in population in Benjamin and a 63% growth in Judah from the Persian I to the Persian II period. (In his introduction [p. 27], he divides the two periods roughly at 450 B.C.E.) See also Lipschits, *Fall and Rise*, 154–181.

<sup>24</sup> Carter, *The Emergence of Yehud*, 294.

wealth of this land are consistently linked with the Persian kings.<sup>25</sup> The reestablishment of the Yehudite community, framed as the returning of the Jews to the promised land, is credited to the decree of Cyrus, who also authorizes the rebuilding of the temple (Ezra 1). While Artaxerxes is manipulated into opposing the construction work (Ezra 4), opposition is removed by Darius (Ezra 5-6), and Artaxerxes supports the work of Ezra (Neh 1). While Nebuchadnezzar is used by God to bring vengeance on the Jews (Ezra 5:12), there is no such negative role attributed to the Persian kings, except that of Artaxerxes in Ezra 4. In fact, Cyrus specifically reverses the acts of Nebuchadnezzar (Ezra 1:7, 5:14), undoing the judgment of God. The temple is built by the decree of the God of Israel and the decree of Cyrus, Darius and Artaxerxes, the kings of Persia (Ezra 6:14).

But the Yehudites were somewhat trying to define their boundaries as a people under their God and this is reflected in their views of the Persian kings. The community that produced the Ezra-Nehemiah complex was very concerned with its own purity, as shown by its concern about mixed marriages in the text of both Ezra (chs. 9–10) and Nehemiah (13:23–31) and in its purification of pagan-popular elements noticeable in the archaeological evidence.<sup>26</sup> Most significantly, the tensions between the Yehudites and their neighbours, described as *צָרֵי יְהוּדָה* (“enemies of Judah”)<sup>27</sup> before the event, either begins or is intensified by the refusal of the Yehudites to allow them to participate in rebuilding the temple (4:4–5).<sup>28</sup> Gruen notes that Cyrus’ edicts in the first chapter do not

<sup>25</sup> Gruen, “Looking-Glass,” 60–61. Gruen nuances his statements, as shall be seen below.

<sup>26</sup> Stern, “Religious Revolution,” 201, 204.

<sup>27</sup> Translation my own. The NRSV “adversaries” seems to miss some of the animosity of the word. (HALOT 1052, e.g. see Ps 27:2).

<sup>28</sup> The actual history of the division with the Samaritans, on which much has been written, is not a concern in this study. See, for instance, Cogan, “We, Like You”; Eph’al, “The Samaritan(s)”; Fried, “The ‘am hā’āreš in Ezra 4:4”; Knoppers, “Samaritan Question.”

come to fruition. When Darius comes to the throne the temple is still not completed. Artaxerxes similarly looks somewhat weak and easily manipulated in Ezra 4.<sup>29</sup> Further, it may be significant that the Persian kings are referred to as kings of Babylon (Cyrus in 5:13, and Artaxerxes in Neh 13:6) and Assyria (Ezra 6:22). It has been noted that this may not be inappropriate, reflecting connections to previous kings and is consistent with the Cyrus cylinder and the ancient Near Eastern practice of foreign kings placing themselves in the line of the kings of a nation they conquered.<sup>30</sup> While these solutions address the issue as to why the kings can be called by these titles, for the most part they do not address the question of why they would be. Individual suggestions, that Cyrus is referred to as the king of Babylon in Ezra 5:13 to contrast him with Nebuchadnezzar as a predecessor and that the reference to the king of Assyria in Ezra 6:22 alludes to the Passover in the days of Hezekiah recorded in 2 Chron 30:6, while useful, do not account for the overall impact this recurring pattern makes on the reader.<sup>31</sup> It is difficult to imagine, given the negative relationship of this people group with the Babylonians and Assyrians that the references would not have come with at least some negative connotation. One needs to recognize the tension between the praise of the Persians on the one hand, and this tendency to exclusivity, seen, for example, in the Yehudite marriage policy on the other, and be wary of a simplified reading of the character of Darius.<sup>32</sup> Gruen rightly concludes, “The texts, in brief, appear more subversive than supportive. The Persian kingdom and its rulers lose their glitter on close inspection.”<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Gruen, “Looking-Glass,” 60–61.

<sup>30</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 133, 335; Fensham, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 84, 96–97; Williamson, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 78–79, 85–86, 387.

<sup>31</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 133; Williamson, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 78–79.

<sup>32</sup> Ackroyd (“Portrayal,” 5), observing an overall positive or at least neutral disposition towards the Persians, notes that there may be similar undercurrents in the prophetic material.

<sup>33</sup> Gruen, “Looking-Glass,” 69.

### **Darius' Letter in its Chronotope**

There is, perhaps, no aspect of the book of Ezra-Nehemiah that has caused more confusion than that of chronology. The arrangement of events, each dated by the king involved is, as Brown suggests, the author's "...most obvious yet complex literary technique."<sup>34</sup> Narrative time in Ezra usually corresponds to chronological time, although sometimes the narrative covers a short period with a lot of detail, while at other points decades are skipped over in a few verses. This being the case, the instances where narrative time is not aligned with chronological time, where the narrative moves achronologically, become much more significant. The chronology is deeply confusing, with considerable controversy over the order of the Persian kings and the timing and order of the missions of Ezra and Nehemiah. The concept of chronotope, which brings narrative, historical and chronological time in dialogue, provides a useful means of understanding the relationship between the order of the narrative in Ezra-Nehemiah, and the chronological order of the events in the narrative world.

The complex interplay of narrative time and chronological time in the chronotope of Ezra-Nehemiah has led to a great deal of confusion, which has been treated in a number of different ways. For Grabbe, the collection of stories in Ezra 1–6 contains the remnant of three, or possibly even four, foundation stories.<sup>35</sup> For Torrey, the issue of the arrangement of the kings is of little significance as the Aramaic portions of Ezra are "compositions exactly on a par" with Daniel 1–6 and Esther, and have "not used events

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<sup>34</sup> Brown, "Chronological Anomalies," 36.

<sup>35</sup> Grabbe, "Mind the Gaps," 86.

or names of persons which can legitimately be received by us as historical material.”<sup>36</sup> Kaiser, and more recently Dequeker, argued that chronological confusion has arisen out of confusion between Darius I and Darius II.<sup>37</sup> The complex compositional history and the apparent use of sources has prompted a critical historical study of the text that attempts to factor out theological motives, but, as Shaver points out, this is not exegesis.<sup>38</sup> It is an error to ignore the literary features of the book in order to establish what can be known of history from it, but it is also an error to read the narrative disregarding the chronological anomalies that occur when chronology is so important to the narrative. The chronotope of Ezra is deeply embedded in historical time, beginning with the external chronological reference, “In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia” (Ezra 1:1), and continuing in more than forty more temporal markers.<sup>39</sup> Japhet, nonetheless, concludes that Ezra-Nehemiah “does not seem to have a consistent chronological skeleton or a systematic chronological framework from which the individual dates receive their meaning.”<sup>40</sup> She argues that Ezra-Nehemiah is structured around periodization. The book covers two periods of a generation, the first from the beginning of the reign of Cyrus into the reign of Darius, the second within the reign of Artaxerxes. She notes several significant parallels between the two periods, and in turn parallels with the Exodus, which she sees as the driving ideology behind the periodization of the narrative and the

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<sup>36</sup> Torrey, *Ezra Studies*, 143; Torrey, “Ezra Story,” 287. Driver (*Introduction*, 544) and Eissfeldt (*Introduction*, 551) similarly dismiss achronology as the result of poorly combined sources or copyist errors.

<sup>37</sup> For Kaiser (*Introduction*, 185) the confusion that is the author’s while Dequeker suggests that it is our misreading of the text as referring to Darius I is the problem when in fact it is Darius II that is meant. However, he does not adequately address the 70 years of exile mentioned in Jer 25:11–12, as well as Zech 1:12 and 7:5.

<sup>38</sup> Shaver, “Ezra and Nehemiah,” 80. One such source analysis is that of Lester Grabbe who sees in Ezra-Nehemiah three different foundation stories and the remnant of a fourth (Grabbe, “Mind the Gaps,” 84–86).

<sup>39</sup> Brown, “Chronological Anomalies,” 33.

<sup>40</sup> Japhet, “Chronology and Ideology,” 491–492.



structure of the book.<sup>41</sup> While Japhet makes a number of interesting observations, her proposition of periodization leaves many important questions unanswered, especially as regards the first period, covered by Ezra 1–6. Japhet’s article does not address these questions, even ones as significant as the intrusion of Artaxerxes, from the second period, into the narrative of the first.

Looking at issues of chronology specifically in Ezra 1–7, Brown notes four instances of achronism in Ezra: the move from the time of Artaxerxes in 4:23 to the time of Darius in 4:24, the completion of building by the decree of “Cyrus, Darius and King Artaxerxes” in 6:14, “after these things” in 7:1 (assuming with Brown that the referent is the entire narrative of chs. 1–6 and that the time period covered must have included the time when Ezra arrived), and the end of Ezra’s journey being given before the beginning (7:6–9).<sup>42</sup> The last two can be dealt with fairly easily. It seems much more likely that the antecedent of *הַיְּמֵי הַבְּרִיָּים הֵּם* (“these things”) is the more immediate time of the rebuilding of the temple and the Passover (Ezra 5–6). The inversion of the order of the dates of Ezra’s arrival and departure do not seem terribly significant, as the effect can be as minimal as communicating the length of the journey or the preparations involved.

Further, there is a change in speaker in 7:9, beginning the first person narrative of Ezra.

Brown rightly points out that the first four chapters are in chronological order with skips and telescoping. The entire period from the end of the reign of Cyrus through the reign of Darius is telescoped into a single verse and the entire reign of Xerxes is summarized in the following verse (4:5–6). The mention of Darius in 4:24 indicates “that time has been warped, and what was long past is present again” and what had been

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<sup>41</sup> Japhet, “Chronology and Ideology,” 491–505.

<sup>42</sup> Brown, “Chronological Anomalies,” 36–48.

telescoped into 4:5 is now being reopened.<sup>43</sup> For Brown, the placement of the events of the reign of Darius after the events of the reign of Artaxerxes brings the past of Darius into dialogue with the authorial present. He sees the reversal brought about this way as much more satisfying for Ezra's readers "living in the aftermath of the Samaritan's heavy-handed enforcement of Artaxerxes' decree,"<sup>44</sup> pointing to the control of Yahweh in these situations. It is unfortunate that Brown stops there, as his argument assumes that Ezra's point is that what God has done in the past he can do in the future, but the very temporal reversal suggests that God's great deeds are in the past. Brown also sees the theme of divine sovereignty over history reflected in 6:14 as the author gathers together all the Persian kings who contributed to the temple— from initial rebuilding to final beautification— and unites the preceding narrative" around this theological centre.<sup>45</sup>

But the discourse division between Ezra 6 and 7 is not impermeable, and if one allows, as Brown seems unwilling to do, interaction across the great Ezra 6–7 divide, then Brown's point is significantly strengthened. The chronotope created by Ezra brings into dialogue the incidents of Japhet's two periods within Ezra 4–7. This does not mean that the discourse line between chs. 6 and 7 needs to be ignored, but rather the successive letters of the kings in these chapters form three parallel panels.<sup>46</sup> The first two parallel panels are in chs. 4–6, while the third is in ch. 7, acting as a link connecting the two sections.

The first of the three panels is the exchange between the opponents of the

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<sup>43</sup> Brown, "Chronological Anomalies," 39.

<sup>44</sup> Brown, "Chronological Anomalies," 41.

<sup>45</sup> Brown, "Chronological Anomalies," 42–43.

<sup>46</sup> Throntveit (*Ezra-Nehemiah, 6–7*) discusses Ezra-Nehemiah's use of parallel panels, finding the best example in Neh 7:73b—10:39. Matzal proposes that Ezra 4:1—6:22 constitute a literary unit made up of two parallel panels, marked off by an inclusio. While he does demonstrate that Ezra 4:1—6:22 is a literary unit, and the significance of 6:22/7:1 as a boundary line has been discussed, I do not believe this prevents us from seeing a third, echoing frame in Ezra 7.

Yehudites and Artaxerxes, which leads to a cessation of work (4:7–24). It appears two letters are written, one by Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel and their companions, the second by Rehum and Shimshai, which is quoted.<sup>47</sup> The letter that Rehum and Shimshai writes is full of rhetoric and is very hostile toward the Yehudites, describing Jerusalem as “that rebellious and wicked city” (4:12), and warning that if the city is rebuilt the king will lose tax revenue (4:13). Rehum and Shimshai are concerned that they not “witness the king’s dishonour” since they “share the salt of the palace” (4:14).<sup>48</sup> The letter goes on to invite the king to search the annals to find out about Jerusalem’s rebellious past, and warns that if the city is rebuilt, all the king’s possessions in the region will be lost (4:15–16). Artaxerxes writes back and states that the letter has been read, a search has been made of the archives, and it is indeed found “that rebellion and sedition have been made in it” (4:17–20). The king gives direction that rebuilding is to stop without delay until further notice (4:21–22). The king’s edict was carried out and work on the temple stopped (4:23–24).

The second panel is found in chs. 5–6, the exchange with Darius. The structure is similar, beginning with the investigation by those outside the Yehudite community, in this case Tattenai, Shethar-bozenai and their associates, who ask of the Yehudites from whom they received permission to build (5:3–4). Tattenai, the governor of Abar-nahara, Shethar-bozenai, and their colleagues send a report to Darius concerning what they found when they visited the province of Judah, and especially the building site of the temple. Tattenai

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<sup>47</sup> Grabbe (*Ezra-Nehemiah*, 129) sees here a confusing mess that evinces an authentic document of some kind which the narrator crams in whether it fits or not; however, the confusion extends even to how many characters are named (Steiner, “Why Bilsham”). Unfortunately there is no space to explore this issue here.

<sup>48</sup> To “share the salt of the palace” may refer to a loyalty oath (Davies, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 22, note 6). See also Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 114; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 56.

was likely a regional governor, and Shethar-bozenai and their colleagues were high ranking officials within the Persian government at a regional level.<sup>49</sup> They ask the unnamed elders of Yehud two questions, the first concerning the legality of the building project, and the second concerning the names of those who are leading it. The answer they receive to the first question is recorded by the narrator within the letter that Tattenai, Shethar-bozenai and their associates had written to Darius. Their response has four basic components: 1. The Yehudites are servants of the God of Heaven; 2. They are restoring a previously existing temple; 3. The reason for the destruction of the temple was theological, not political; and 4. Cyrus had approved the restoration of the temple.<sup>50</sup> The answer of the Yehudites is carefully constructed not only to appeal to Darius' interests, but also to provide the reader with an alternative history to the one presented by Rehum, Shimshai and others in the letter to Artaxerxes (4:11–16). Notably, while in the first panel the impetus for the inquiry is hostility on the part of the Samaritans as a result of the Yehudites refusing their help in building the temple (4:1–5), here there is no reason for the investigation stated. Fleishman understands the visit from Tattenai and Shethar-bozenai as a pivotal one. Seeing it against the very early years of Darius' reign, which were filled with turbulence and rebellion, he believes that this visit was ultimately about loyalty to the empire and much more was at stake than the temple building project.<sup>51</sup> While Fleishman may be right in seeing the visit against this historical context, the turbulence of Darius' early years do not appear to be remembered in Ezra-Nehemiah and

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<sup>49</sup> Fleishman, "Investigating Commission of Tattenai," 81–83.

<sup>50</sup> Fleishman ("Investigating Commission of Tattenai," 92) summarizes the response this way, and notes the absence of any reference to Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of the temple because of their rebellion against him (93). For similar analysis, see also Myers, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 41; Williamson, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 12.

<sup>51</sup> Fleishman, "Investigating Commission of Tattenai," 84–85.

are not a part of the narrative world they create. The narrator also presents the visit as of great significance, but does so by placing it immediately after the exchange with Artaxerxes in ch. 4.

Williamson notes that there is nothing in the letter that indicates hostile intent, and believes, following Ellison, that the wording of the question in 5:3 suggests that those making the inquest actually expected that there was a valid legal explanation.<sup>52</sup> As Blenkinsopp notes, the letter to Darius concerning the building of the temple is devoid of the angry rhetoric and rather presents the facts, including what appears to be a verbatim report of the answers of the Yehudites to their inquiry.<sup>53</sup> The largest chunk of the letter consists of the response of the leaders of Yehud to the inquiry by Tattenai and the rest. They respond that they are servants of the God of heaven and are rebuilding the temple which God sent the Babylonians to tear down because “our ancestors had angered the God of heaven” (5:11–12). They then go on to explain that Cyrus, in his first year, issued a decree allowing them to return from the exile that the Babylonians forced on them, had commissioned them to rebuild the temple, and had returned to them the sacred items taken by Nebuchadnezzar (5:13–16). They also ask the king to investigate, in this panel asking the king to confirm that there really was such an edict from Cyrus (5:17). Darius searches for, finds, and quotes the edict of Cyrus, then actually amplifies the decree of Cyrus, as noted above (6:1–12). Tattenai, Shethar-bozenai and their associates carry out Darius’ edict, and the temple is completed (Ezra 6:13–15).

The letter of Darius reflects a response specifically to this letter, responding to the

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<sup>52</sup> Williamson, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 76, but contra Fried (“Because of the Dread,” 12) who argues that this inquiry also was suspecting rebellion and occasioned fear. If Fried is right then the absence of indications of that in the text becomes all the more significant from a literary point of view.

<sup>53</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 121.

issues raised, and going beyond what was asked. In response to the request that Darius search the archives in Babylon to verify the statement of the Jews that they had permission from Cyrus to build, Darius not only searches in Babylon, but in other archives as well, finally finding the decree in Ecbatana (6:2). The verb **וְהִשְׁתַּכַּח** (“they found”) is the first element in the sentence following the connective **וְ**, and **בְּאַחַת מִן** **מְדֵינָהּ** **בְּבִירְתָּא דִּי בְּמֵדִי מְדֵינָהּ** (“in Ecbatana the fortress, which is in Media the province”)<sup>54</sup> follows immediately after the verb placing emphasis first on the discovery, and then on the location of the discovery. The mention of the province of Media may have been a necessary clarification for Jewish readers, but also highlights how broad a search was made for the document by Darius.

Darius’ response stands in dialogic relationship not only to the direct request, but to the history of conflict behind the letter. But, in fact, it is noteworthy that very little of the ongoing conflict is reflected in this letter. Myers sees the investigating committee as deriving from Persian concerns about the loyalty of Yehud in the early years of Darius.<sup>55</sup> But the visit may have been routine.

Clearly the theological argument of the Yehudites influenced Darius, as suggested by 6:12. Darius here expresses strong concern not only that the temple be rebuilt but also that it be funded from the royal treasury and protected. While the earlier directives in Darius’ letter all involve restoring the temple, 6:8–9 involves the establishment of new worship, with the intent of seeking the blessing of “the God of heaven” on the royal family.

But there also exists a dialogue between Darius and Cyrus, as Darius is

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<sup>54</sup> These translations are my own.

<sup>55</sup> Myers, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 44.

responding to the Cyrus edict. This edict is quoted or mentioned four times in the Bible. It is quotation in part at the end of 2 Chronicles (36:23) and in a fuller version in Ezra 1:2–4. The quotation from 2 Chronicles is in Hebrew identical to the quote from Ezra 1, except that it ends part way through. The edict is mentioned in Ezra 5:13–17 by the Yehudites responding to the inquiries of Tattenai, which response Tattenai includes in his letter to Darius. The decree is quoted a fourth time in the letter from Darius. Ezra 5:1—6:18, including these letters, is in Aramaic. Within the narrative the edicts function differently and are given different purported authority. The quotation of the edict in Ezra 1, found also in 2 Chron 36, is part of the Hebrew narrative which frames several documents in Ezra and may be taken as a summary and paraphrase, reliable within the narrative world. The paraphrase of the edict in Ezra 5 is presented as a verbal report of the Yehudites, presumably from memory as there is no indication that they presented a copy of the document, the authenticity of which Tattenai may test. Similarly, given that the verbal report is itself embedded in the letter of Tattenai, the reader cannot trust its accuracy. The quote of the edict in the letter of Darius (Ezra 6:3–5) is prefaced by the word **דִּכְרֵי יְהוָה** suggesting that this is the decree that was found.<sup>56</sup> As such, it is this version of the decree that the narrator is putting forth as the authoritative version.<sup>57</sup> The instructions of Darius that follow the letter not only reiterate and enforce the instructions of Cyrus, but actually amplify and add to them. Cyrus' instructions were that the temple should be rebuilt, that the cost should be paid out of the treasury, and that the vessels should be returned to the temple (6:3–5). Darius reiterates not only the command to allow

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<sup>56</sup> Note that the word is in the determinative state, marked unusually here by the use of **ד** rather than the more common **ס**.

<sup>57</sup> This is not, of course, to make any historical claims about the authority or authenticity of the letter.

the work to proceed and that it be paid from the treasury (6:6–8), but also that supplies be given for offerings. Further, Darius lays out specific penalties for anyone who alters the decree (6:11) and a curse on any king or nation that threatens the temple. Darius is clearly portrayed as deferring to Cyrus, seeking to carry out the edict of Cyrus and going beyond it.

But the narrative does not begin with the investigation of Tattenai, Shethar-bozenai, and their colleagues, but rather with the words of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah (Ezra 5:1–2). The letter of Tattenai, Shethar-bozenai and their colleagues to Darius is prompted by the discovery of the construction of the temple. The continuation of work on the temple is a response in turn to the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah (5:1–2) which in turn are assumed to be from God. Darius, responding to Tattenai, Shethar-bozenai, and their colleagues, is also very consciously responding to the Cyrus edict which either immediately precedes his letter, or is quoted within it. This, it seems, is the reason for Darius' decision. But the chain of responses also connects back through the construction of the temple and the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah. Further, the edict of Cyrus itself comes about because “the Lord stirred up the spirit of King Cyrus of Persia.”<sup>58</sup> Thus the building of the temple is not the result, ultimately, of the decree of Cyrus, but of the will of Yahweh expressed most immediately through Haggai and Zechariah. This theme is returned to after the ratification of the work by Darius is given in 6:14.

The chronotopic interplay created by the first two panels, the letter exchange in Ezra 4 and the letter exchange in Ezra 5–6, is continued in the third panel. The third

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<sup>58</sup> It is not necessary to consider whether Yahweh might have in turn been responding to Jeremiah, as Jeremiah's words would have in turn been responding to Yahweh.



panel, 7:11–28, does not follow the pattern of the first two, but echoes elements from them. It sits on the other side of the strong discourse boundary dividing Ezra 1–6 from the rest of the book, as well as outside the structural unit of Ezra 4:1—6:22 which Matzal demonstrates was established by inclusios.<sup>59</sup> The third panel, echoing the first two, provides a connective bridge between the two portions of the book of Ezra, as well as extending the conversation between Darius and Artaxerxes.

The most obvious echo is that it contains another letter from Artaxerxes; however, in content, this letter echoes the letter of Darius and the decree of Cyrus. Further, as the first two frames are in Aramaic, so this letter is again in Aramaic. Both Cyrus' decree and the letter of Artaxerxes begin with the invitation for the Yehudites to return home (1:3, compare 7:13) and bring with them substantial wealth, donated by those around them (1:4, compare 7:15–16). Artaxerxes and Darius both give specific instructions to provide for the needs of the temple out of the royal treasury, including specific items mentioned (6:8–11, compare 7:21–23). Further, the very structure of the letter, transitioning from echoes of Cyrus to echoes of Darius, is itself an echo of the second panel.

The use of these parallel panels to bring the letters of Artaxerxes and the letter of Darius into dialogue serves to drive home the point that God is sovereign and in control. What begins as a great trial in the first panel turns into a victory, albeit in past time, in the second panel, and then that victory is brought back into more recent time. But the other effect of this chronotope is to bring the character of Darius into a dialogic relationship with Artaxerxes. In the first panel, the opponents of the Yehudites send a letter and Artaxerxes replies. In the second panel, the opponents of the Yehudites again write a letter to the king, here Darius, and he again replies. Further, the ambiguous beginnings of

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<sup>59</sup> Matzal, "Structure," 567.

the letter, possibly including the quotation of Cyrus, bring Darius and Cyrus into dialogue, so that Darius is responding to Cyrus. The structure of the chronotope, inverting narrative time here, while maintaining the parallel panels, also brings Darius into dialogue with Artaxerxes. Darius in ch. 6 responds not only to Tattenai, Shethar-bozenai, and their companions, and to Cyrus, but also to Artaxerxes' letter in ch. 4. And while there is no stated utterance to which Artaxerxes' letter in ch. 7 responds, through the use of parallel panels and the inverted narrative time, this letter is also brought into dialogue with Darius' letter in ch. 6. The complete reversal of Artaxerxes' position in the two letters, thus, is suggested to be a response to the letter of Darius, his grandfather. Artaxerxes speaks. Darius responds. And Artaxerxes changes his position as a result. Darius, then, emerges as the champion of the temple project not only in his own age, but in the age of his grandson.

But there is a limit placed on this by the writer through this very same use of chronotope. Within ancient Near Eastern thought, it is necessary prior to a temple being rebuilt that the gods who have abandoned the people return to them, and that such projects are at the initiative of the king in responding to the god.<sup>60</sup> While working within this ideology, the writer of Ezra carefully structures the narrative to remind the readers that the temple, while in many ways a Persian project, was not in fact a Persian idea. The temple building is not initiated by Darius. While he sponsors it and protects it, the continuation of the building project is not initiated by him but by Haggai and Zechariah. Not only is Darius set apart as superior to all the other Persian kings, save Cyrus, through the use of the three narrative panels, but the cessation of the work is emphasized by the

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<sup>60</sup> Fried ("House of God," 10, 12) looks carefully at this ideology and how it is understood in a Yehudite context.

insertion of the first panel, achronologically, before the second. The temple building project is born of Yahweh, and communicated through his prophets. While Darius supports it, he does not initiate it, or even initiate the continuation of the building.

This more nuanced understanding of the role of Darius is reflected in Ezra 6:14, cited above. Not only are the three kings united here, but they are also joined to the work of God. It is, however, the work of God which comes first, reflecting what has been shown in the narrative so far, that the kings are instruments of God who alone initiates the temple projects.

### **Double-Voicing in the Letter of Darius**

It is worth noting at the outset that the letter of Darius in Ezra 6 is the only place that this character, explicitly associated with Darius I, speaks in the Hebrew Bible. Darius the Mede, who is introduced in the book of Daniel as the first Persian king after Belshazzar, cannot be identified with any known historical figure.<sup>61</sup> Goldingay argues that there may have actually been a historical person represented as Darius the Mede and that Darius may be a throne name for a known ruler.<sup>62</sup> Within Rabbinic tradition, Darius the Mede is the conqueror of Babylon, reigns one year, and is succeeded by Cyrus, while the Darius in Ezra, by contrast, establishes the temple, and is the son of Esther and Ahaseurus.<sup>63</sup> Collins speculates that the name Darius may attach to Darius the Mede because the subsequent narrative of Daniel and the lion's den originated from the reign of Darius I.<sup>64</sup> However there is simply no connection within the Hebrew Bible as it stands now to postulate that the Darius of Ezra and Darius the Mede in Daniel are the same

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<sup>61</sup> Porteous, *Daniel*, 83–84.

<sup>62</sup> Goldingay, *Daniel*, 112–113. For Lucas (*Daniel*, 134–137) the most likely candidate is Cyrus.

<sup>63</sup> Rabinowitz, *Ezra*, 58.

<sup>64</sup> Collins, *Daniel*, 30–32.

character.<sup>65</sup>

The voice of Darius I emerges in Ezra 6 in the letter he writes to Tattenai, Shethar-bozenai, and their colleagues. The letters throughout Ezra 1–6 emerge from the narrative and create in Ezra a polyphonic text. However, recognition of the presence of polyphony within Ezra-Nehemiah is not without its opponents. Hays argues strongly that Ezra 7–10 is monologic, noting that monologism is not the absence of multiple voices, but the subsuming of multiple voices to a single ideological purpose: "...no matter how many different voices speak in the text, the reader must always ask whether or not they enter into the 'authentic life' of dialogism...Are their ideas genuinely challenged?"<sup>66</sup> Within Ezra 7–10, Hays is no doubt correct that there is a single ideology, deliberately presented as monologic. But despite the strength of this voice within these chapters, it is not the only voice in the book. Other agendas emerge as sources, including the lists, letters and even memoirs of Ezra and of Nehemiah are used. The voices of Tattenai and the other composers of the letters of protest to the kings are represented through polyphony. Their concerns are voiced from their own perspective and apparently from pre-existing documents.

There is perhaps no book in the Hebrew canon that claims to make as much use of sources. In fact, Davies notes that the very action of the plot in the first six chapters of Ezra is driven by documents.<sup>67</sup> Whether these documents are pure inventions or have underlying authentic sources, they introduce to the text speakers other than the narrator, and create, at least potentially, polyphony. Polyphony is marked in part by heteroglossia, in which conflicting voices are preserved with different ideologies and sometimes

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<sup>65</sup> For a further discussion see Boda, "Terrifying," 41, n. 71.

<sup>66</sup> C. Hays, "Silent Wives," 69.

<sup>67</sup> Davies, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 32.

national or even social language features. Elements such as the use of different morphology and vocabulary, as well as the inclusion in a speech of ideas typical or atypical of the speaker, are all aspects of heteroglossia. These same features have been leveraged by scholars over the years in debating the authenticity of these letters.<sup>68</sup> The discussions around the authenticity of the letters in Ezra look at linguistic characteristics, as well as ideological features that are also probative in understanding heteroglossy in a text. Scholars exploring the authenticity of the documents in Ezra have looked for Aramaic linguistic features that are older than the surrounding narrative, while comparing the features of the letters with extant Aramaic letters from that period. The narrator, whether preserving features from source texts or inventing them, has kept these linguistic and genre features in the text, creating a distinction between the language of the letters and the surrounding narrative. Grabbe notes, however, that these features are not evenly applied and some documents bear more distinctive linguistic features than others.<sup>69</sup> These features create a sense of authenticity and heteroglossy. For Snell this is the reason for bilingualism in Ezra.<sup>70</sup>

The narrator, further, has carefully created heteroglossia by reflecting significant linguistic differences between the Aramaic of the letters from the various opponents of the Yehudites in Abar-nahara and the Aramaic of the responses from the Persian kings. Given the sample size we have and our limited knowledge of the culture of that time, it is

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<sup>68</sup> As noted in the first chapter, heteroglossic texts are necessarily polyphonic, however a text may be polyphonic without including all the elements of heteroglossy. Appendix A will explore in more detail the relationship between evidence for authenticity of the documents and evidence of heteroglossy.

<sup>69</sup> Grabbe, "Persian Documents."

<sup>70</sup> Snell, "Why is there Aramaic?" 32. As an interesting aside, Snell argues that the use of Aramaic in Daniel is imitative of Ezra ("Why is there Aramaic?" 41) and Valeta ("Polyglossia and Parody," 91–93) specifically discusses the use of Aramaic in Daniel as an example of heteroglossia. Berman ("Narratorial Voice," 313–314 "Narratorial Voice," 313–314) argues further that the voice presented in the Aramaic portion is Samaritan, although this may be overstated.

difficult to know of these features. The letters from the Persian kings reflect longer sentences with more complex sentence structure.<sup>71</sup> Further, there are significantly more object initial sentences, which this study suggests are a marked form, in the letters from the opponents in Abar-nahara. Further study is required to determine what the social or linguistic significances of these differences are. It is possible that they reflect regional difference, social/economic differences, or even emotional emphasis. That these documents are heteroglossic seems well established.

Grabbe finds evidence of several non-Jewish elements, such as the reference to “the God who has established his name...in Jerusalem” (Ezra 6:12).<sup>72</sup> While one may not agree at every point with his analysis, it does point to a character whose pro-temple ideology is not necessarily Jewish, and whose language is distinct in some of the archaic forms.<sup>73</sup> The voice of Darius does emerge as one with whom the reader can dialogue, and, in fact, Grabbe does in his analysis. Grabbe’s suspicion of the pro-Jewish elements that point him to marks of editing also leads the reader to question the sincerity of Darius’ motives. Darius’ own words show him to be a generous king, as noted by Fensham, but not a rash one.<sup>74</sup> Rather, the language is that of a carefully thought out, legally binding instruction. While his instruction to Tattenai and Shethar-bozenai, רַחֲקִינָן הָרוּ מִן־תְּמָה, (“be far from here”),<sup>75</sup> sounds harsh in translation, Rundgren suggests that the phrase is a legal term meaning to withdraw a complaint or renounce a deed.<sup>76</sup> While the exact

<sup>71</sup> The supporting argument for assertions concerning differences in the Aramaic of the letters can be found in Appendix B.

<sup>72</sup> Grabbe, “Persian Documents,” 550–551.

<sup>73</sup> Grabbe, “Persian Documents,” 550–551.

<sup>74</sup> Fensham, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 89. Fensham speaks particularly of verses 8–10.

<sup>75</sup> Translation is my own.

<sup>76</sup> F. Rundgren, “Über einen juristischen Terminus bei Ezra 6,6,” *ZAW* 70 (1958) 209–215, cited in “רַחֲקִינָן,” *HALOT*, 1981; Myers, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 50; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 127; Fensham, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 89; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 127. The closeness of wording to English phrases such as “Get away from there!” suggests to the English reader a harshness and disrespect that the Aramaic does not

meaning of this legal term in this context is not clear, the sense of it seems to be to remove any potential injunctions that Tattenai and his companions may have had or were about to put on the work. The use of a legal term sets the tone for the carefully considered, if strongly worded, document that follows and shows careful attention to details. Darius orders 1) that the Yehudites be left alone to work (6:7); 2) that the house be rebuilt on its site (6:7); 3) that the cost be paid out of the royal treasury (6:8); 4) that daily provisions for offerings be given (6:9); and 5) that anyone who alters the edict be punished (6:9). The only stated reason contains two parts: offering sacrifices to God and praying for the king and his children (6:10).<sup>77</sup> Darius' stated agenda is merely to facilitate prayer for his family. However, the amount of direction given and the sponsoring of the project suggests he may actually be trying to take it over, acting as the king initiating temple building in ancient Near Eastern ideology. It is, of course, to be expected that Darius would see himself as the master of the temple building project. It was not uncommon for a Near Eastern king to assert his authority through a temple building project.<sup>78</sup> This is confirmed by his instructions that they “rebuild this house of God *on its site*” (6:7).<sup>79</sup> This is anachronistic as the work had already progressed past the point of determining where the temple was to be built (5:8). Ackroyd sees behind this a belief on Darius' part that he is the divinely authorized king who rightfully sits on the throne of David.<sup>80</sup> This seems plausible and helps explain the harsh punishments and curses

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convey.

<sup>77</sup> In the Aramaic, 6:10 is a subordinate clause connected to 6:9 with the word <sup>77</sup> joined by a maqqef to the jussive <sup>77</sup>, “that they may be” both “offer sacrifices” and “pray” translate participles that are governed by the jussive.

<sup>78</sup> Nykolaishen, “Restoration,” 183.

<sup>79</sup> Italics added.

<sup>80</sup> Ackroyd, “Written Evidence,” 214.

brought down on anyone who works against this decree.<sup>81</sup> Darius views this as a matter of personal importance, not merely civic policy. The character and ideology of Darius emerges from his letter independent of the narrator's description.

But the voice of Darius is nonetheless double-voiced, being merged with the editorial voice which enhances the instructions to favour the Yehudites, and with the voice of Cyrus whose edict is quoted in 6:3–5. Determining the boundaries of Darius' letter is problematic as it lacks an introduction and may include the edict of Cyrus as a quotation. That 6:6–12 is the voice of Darius is apparent, however, the decree of Cyrus, 6:2b–5, may also have been quoted within the Darius letter. As Williamson notes, it is not clear how else the decree would have reached Jerusalem, granting that the Yehudite community did not have it to produce when they were responding (5:11–16).<sup>82</sup> He then goes on to note, "We must thus conclude that a fuller introduction once stood at the head of the letter before the copy of Cyrus' decree. It would have included the address and salutation, together with a record of the finding of the decree which is then cited."<sup>83</sup>

Unfortunately, no such introduction has come down to us and we are left to read the text we have. In 6:6 the speaker is now clearly Darius, distinguished from Cyrus by the reference to the writers of the letter from ch. 5 and from the narrator by the maintenance of the second person and by the orders given. The transition is made to feel more abrupt

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<sup>81</sup> Impalement and curses such as found here are commonly noted to be typical of the Persian kings (see for example Myers, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 52; Williamson, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 82–83; Fensham, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 90–91; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 127–128). Blenkinsopp notes that impalement was "generally reserved for the most serious crimes, especially sedition and the violation of treaty oaths" (*Ezra-Nehemiah*, 128). But contra Kidner (*Ezra and Nehemiah*, 65) who notes the possibility that crucifixion may be what is meant.

<sup>82</sup> Williamson, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 75; Fleishman ("Investigating Commission of Tattenai," 96) suggests that the original proclamation may have been oral, but definitely agrees with Williamson that if the elders had the decree, they would have produced it and a search would not have been necessary. It does seem possible, however, that a search may have also been necessary to verify the legitimacy of a copy in the possession of the elders.

<sup>83</sup> Williamson, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 75.



as the first word that is unambiguously Darius' is  $\text{בְּעַי}$ , which is most commonly found in the Bible as a transitional discourse marker, usually introducing a logical transition in an argument either to a conclusion or to an imperative (Ezra 4:13,14, 21; 5:17; Dan 3:15; 4:34; 5:12, 16; 6:9) and occasionally as a temporal marker (Ezra 5:16; Dan 2:23, 5:15). Nowhere else in the Bible does  $\text{בְּעַי}$  introduce the beginning of a discourse.<sup>84</sup> The lack of an introduction to the letter and the abrupt transition leaves the reader at 6:6 looking back to determine where the letter began. The abrupt transition conveys quite definitely the sense that the reader is not at the beginning of the conversation.

It is also possible that the letter begins in 6:1 with Darius himself reporting the search and its results. Artaxerxes writes in his letter  $\text{וַיִּבְקְרוּ וַיִּהְיוּ שֹׂכְחֵי}$  (“and they searched and they found,” 4:19). These same verbs are used in the same way in 6:1, 2, the only difference being that here there is expanded detail as to where the search was done and where the item was found. If Artaxerxes included early in his letter a report of the search and its results, it seems reasonable to assume that a similar report in ch. 6 could be from the letter of Darius. This reading works when one reaches v. 6 and recognizes that the words of Darius have been resumed and looks back for where they started. However, it does not suggest itself at a first reading. In fact, the understated subject of the verb  $\text{וַיִּבְקְרוּ}$  (“they found”) can only be the people to whom the edict was given, and the conjunctive  $\text{וַ}$  continues the action of  $\text{וַיַּעַשׂ}$  (“made a decree”). The decree, then, is not the letter that follows, but a memo instructing someone to make the search. Again, while this reading makes good sense of the verse, it then leaves the letter of Darius without any introduction at all, and it is not until one gets to 6:12 that Darius is named as speaker. However, the

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<sup>84</sup> A single Aramaic letter recently found begins the body of the letter with  $\text{וּבְעַי}$ . While no transliteration is provided, the photograph appears to have this reading, and Shaked translates the word “Et maintenant.” Shaked, *Satrape Baktriane*, 36.

nature of the decree and the use of  $\text{קטו}$  with some form of the verb  $\text{ק'ש}$  does tie the whole chapter together.

In fact, without an introduction to Darius' letter, where the letter of Darius begins is ambiguous. The letter to Artaxerxes in ch. 4, in contrast, has a multiplicity of introductions which seem to suggest it should start in vv. 8 or 9, but it clearly begins in v. 11.<sup>85</sup> It is introduced with statements that the conspirators "wrote to King Artaxerxes" (v. 7); that they "wrote a letter...as follows" (v. 8); that they "wrote" (v. 10); and finally it is introduced with the words "this is a copy" (v. 11). While there is some discussion as to whether or not all of these refer to a single letter, assuming they do, the ambiguity is caused by redundant introductions which, within the narrative, reinforce the authenticity of the letter that is quoted. In contrast, the letter of Tattenai, Shethar-bozenai and their associates includes quite clearly a quotation from the Yehudite elders, but the boundaries are very clearly marked. The letter of Tattenai is clearly polyphonic, though not double-voiced, in that Tattenai presents the words of the elders objectively in such a manner as to allow the king to weigh the merits of the case. But in Ezra 6, the absence of an introduction creates ambiguity.

The merging of the letters of Darius and Cyrus in this manner, so that one is not clear where Darius begins to speak, has the effect of portraying Darius as attempting to merge his own thoughts with those of Cyrus, such that Darius is not acting on his own creativity or initiative, but rather his edicts follow as the completion of Cyrus' thoughts. Darius is clearly following through on and amplifying the will of Cyrus. The commands of Darius in 6:8–9 are derivative of the will of Cyrus expressed in 6:3, the key difference being that what Cyrus permits, Darius commands and provides for. So Cyrus is quoted as

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<sup>85</sup> Grabbe, "The Persian Documents," 544.

saying “let the house be rebuilt,” and Darius echoes that, adding to it the specific command for the administration to stop hindering the work (6:7–8). While Cyrus commands that the building should be paid out of the treasury (6:4), Darius decrees the mechanism by which that is to happen. Further, Darius reads the phrase אֶתֶרֶרֶר יִי־בְּחַיִּי (‘‘the place where sacrifices are offered’’), which is in apposition to the subject of the verb ‘to build’ (‘‘rebuild the house, a place where sacrifices are offered’’<sup>86</sup>), as a command, and in 6:9-10 gives commands to ensure that this also is done. Darius does not reiterate the dimensions of the temple as he cannot amplify them without actually changing what Cyrus has said, nor does he command the return of the sacred objects, as this was already done in the reign of Cyrus (1:8).<sup>87</sup> Darius interacts only with the written decree found in Ecbatana and quoted in his letter, not the decree of Cyrus quoted in ch. 1, and in fact, there is no renewal of the decree concerning the people going up to Jerusalem (1:3). Implicit in the ambiguous beginning of Darius’ letter is the connection with Cyrus, and, therefore, with a series of activities initiated by Yahweh. Darius’ edict is an utterance which responds on the one hand to Tattenai, Shethar-bozenai, and their associates, but on the other hand to the stirring of hearts by Yahweh. However, unlike Cyrus (Ezra 1:1) there is no reference at all to Darius’ heart being stirred or Yahweh communicating to him in any other way, leaving the impression that Darius is an unknowing accomplice to Yahweh.<sup>88</sup> The narrator nonetheless clearly associates Yahweh with the temple building project, as Yahweh initiates it through Haggai and Zechariah (5:1–2; 6:14) and the eyes of God remain on the elders (5:5).<sup>89</sup>

<sup>86</sup> Translation is my own.

<sup>87</sup> That the dimensions are problematic is not worth noting, having been recognized as such as early as Bede, who believed Cyrus made them up (Bede, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 86).

<sup>88</sup> Nykolaishen, ‘‘Restoration,’’ 188.

<sup>89</sup> This phrase, in fact, contrasts ironically with the Persian reference to the eyes of the king

The narrator also seems very interested in connecting Darius and Cyrus. As noted above, the narrator blurs the beginning of the letter of Darius so that not only is it quoted, but the decree of Cyrus and the letter of Darius merge into a single voice. Association with the founder of the Persian Empire, Cyrus helps legitimize Darius' claim to the throne and strengthen his position as emperor, but for the narrator, the connection of the declarations of Darius with the edict of Cyrus reminds the reader that the royal support for the temple is still the result of the single edict of Cyrus. While Darius in ch. 6 shows no familiarity with the edict of Cyrus in ch. 1, and in fact, it may be that the record in ch. 1 is to a different document,<sup>90</sup> it is nonetheless fresh in the mind of the reader who will recall that this edict was the result first of all of a move of Yahweh to stir up the heart of Cyrus. Thus the support of Darius does not ultimately come from Darius, but from God through Cyrus. That Darius would wish to establish his project as an extension of previous projects is possible.<sup>91</sup> Boda notes several instances in which Nabonidus connects his work on a temple to that of Nebuchadnezzar II.<sup>92</sup> However, in Boda's examples Nabonidus contrasts his efforts with those of his predecessors and may have even attacked one, while Darius only differs with Cyrus to amplify and add to his decree.<sup>93</sup> Nykolaishen notes "Darius appears to have been motivated primarily by a desire to have Cyrus' decree carried out, rather than any personal concern for the Judeans themselves."<sup>94</sup> Darius wishes to identify himself with Cyrus, and the narrator concedes, allowing the two identities to merge into a single voice.

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referring to the satraps, thus suggesting that Yahweh had bypassed the Persian administrative system .  
Nykolaishen, *Persian Sceptre*, 130–131.

<sup>90</sup> Kidner, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 63.

<sup>91</sup> Nykolaishen, *Persian Sceptre*, 152.

<sup>92</sup> Boda, "Utopia," 222.

<sup>93</sup> Boda, "Utopia," 222, n. 38.

<sup>94</sup> Nykolaishen, *Persian Sceptre*, 153.

### Darius' Character as Response

The character of Darius, revealed not only overtly but also through the use of chronotope and double voicing, is of paramount importance in the narrative, echoing and building on Cyrus. Through Darius the temple is finally completed. The centrality of Darius is further highlighted by the convergence of narrative and chronological time in the chronotope, which places Darius as the central figure, who corrects Arataxerxes and to whom even Artaxerxes must respond. But at the same time, it is not Darius who originates the temple rebuilding, but rather he is following the lead of Cyrus. While Darius presents himself as the Near Eastern monarch, responsible for the temple building project, this presentation is subverted and he is revealed as a follower. The ultimate responsibility for the building of the temple lies, in the end, not with either Cyrus or Darius, but with Yahweh.

In addition, the theme of building or rebuilding a temple is always associated strongly with kingship. Riley notes that in the ancient Near Eastern world, the king “was responsible for the building and maintenance of the national temples.”<sup>95</sup> A common pattern in temple building stories throughout the Near East was that they began either with a god commanding a king to build a temple, or with a king seeking permission to build a temple.<sup>96</sup> In fact, all of the elements Hurowitz notes as the base elements for temple building stories in the ancient Near East are found in Ezra 5–6.<sup>97</sup> The first element, “the circumstances of the project and the decision to build,” is found in two

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<sup>95</sup> Riley, *King and Cultus*, 37.

<sup>96</sup> Hurowitz, *Exalted House*, 143.

<sup>97</sup> Hurowitz (*Exalted House*, 64) identifies six basic elements to these stories and throughout the book notes how they manifest in a wide variety of inscriptions and other literary forms, including 1 Kings. The quoted element descriptions in this paragraph come from this page.

stages. The first stage, the initial rebuilding is given in the response of the elders in 5:11–16 while the second stage, the prophetic words of Haggai and Zechariah, is provided in 5:1–2. Fried notes that specifically in the rebuilding of temples belonging to peoples returning from exile, a precondition is the return of the god to the temple.

Fried notes that for people rebuilding a temple after an exile there is also a precondition. Before any sacrifice can begin the god must be returned, and before any rebuilding can be started there must be an understanding that the god is willing to reconcile and return.<sup>98</sup> The return of the god is manifest in the return of the image. “The return of the image proved the god’s willingness to reconcile with his people and to return to his temple.”<sup>99</sup> This, of course, was under the control of the conquering kings. For Fried the return of temple vessels fulfills the role of the return of the image of the god, and “reveals nothing less than the return of God himself to Judah” (1:7–8; 5:14).<sup>100</sup> If Fried is correct in this, then Persian involvement was essential since only the Persian king could return the vessels.<sup>101</sup>

The second element, “preparations, such as drafting workmen, gathering materials,” is found in Darius’ instructions to provide for the work of the temple (6:8–10). The third element, “description of the temple,” is found in the Cyrus decree (6:3–4). If one understands the Passover as a celebration of the temple, then the fourth element, “the dedication rights and festivities” is found in 6:16–18 and is continued with the Passover in 6:19–22. The fifth and sixth elements, “blessings and/or prayer of the king, etc.” and “blessings and curses of future generations,” are condensed together, but both are present

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<sup>98</sup> Fried, “Cyrus, Darius and the Temple,” 8, 9.

<sup>99</sup> Fried, “Cyrus, Darius and the Temple,” 11.

<sup>100</sup> Fried, “Cyrus, Darius and the Temple,” 14.

<sup>101</sup> Fried, “Cyrus, Darius and the Temple,” 16.

in the threat and blessings of Darius at the end of his letter (6:11-12). That these elements are clearly out of order and that there is much additional material demonstrates that these chs. are not modelled after the Near Eastern texts, but are influenced by them. For Riley, the role of temple builder, shared between David and Solomon, is a dominant theme in the Chronicler's development of David, Solomon and the Davidic dynasty.<sup>102</sup>

The ancient Near Eastern connection between royalty and temple building can be seen in Ezra-Nehemiah, but there is tension. As noted above, it would have been impossible for the Yehudites to reconstruct the temple without Persian involvement as the return of the god(s), controlled by the conquering kings, was a necessary prerequisite to the building of the temple.<sup>103</sup> But at the same time, building the temple was the job of the king of the land and people. Both Darius and the Yehudites knew that his association with the building of the temple was an assertion of sovereignty over the people. By separating the return of the temple vessels under Cyrus (Ezra 1:7) and the completion of the temple under Darius (Ezra 6:14) the temple project involves the joint, corporate efforts of different Persian kings. Darius' character is carefully constructed, and subtly subordinates the role of Darius to a bigger agenda. While Darius is a central figure in the project, he is not as much in control as he believes. The project belongs to Yahweh.

### Conclusion

It is definitely the case not only that Ezra-Nehemiah as a book is pro-Persian, but further, that it sets Cyrus and Darius up as emperors worthy of special honour. Cyrus, by ending the Babylonian captivity and facilitating the rebuilding of the temple, has a

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<sup>102</sup> Riley, *King and Cultus*, 60.

<sup>103</sup> Fried, "Cyrus, Darius and the Temple," 4, 8.

foundational role to play in the rebuilding of the Yehudites, both socially and religiously. Cyrus is held in high regard by the narrators, who portray him in a key and pivotal role, as well as by the character Darius, who echoes and amplifies Cyrus' edict. Darius is portrayed as an exalted king in his own right. The narrator of Ezra-Nehemiah uses chronotope to give Darius a voice that is able to chastise his grandson and cause Artaxerxes to reverse his position. It is under his rule that obstacles to the building of the temple are removed and the temple is finally completed.

However, there is a nuance to this praise that can be easily overlooked. While Darius is definitely exalted, the writer also takes care to limit his authority and role. First, Darius' gracious acts toward the Yehudites are not borne of his own intention, but are subservient to the will of Cyrus. More importantly, the writer takes great pains constantly to trace the impetus to rebuild, and to complete the temple not back to Darius, but to Yahweh himself. It is not through the king that Yahweh communicates his will, but rather through the prophets Jeremiah, Haggai and Zechariah. The role of initiating the temple work, which belongs to the king in ancient Near Eastern thought, is denied Darius, and passed through prophetic agents to the people. In the end, it is not Darius who, as king, initiates and rebuilds the temple, nor is it Cyrus. The initiative comes from Yahweh through the prophets. The true king of Israel is Yahweh.



## Conclusion

This study has looked at the voice of Darius using the Bakhtinian concepts of chronotope and double-voicing. Chronotope is the intersection of space, narrative time, chronological time and historical time. Double-voicing is the use of a direct or indirect quotation to express both the views of the one being quoted and the views of the one doing the quoting. The voice of Darius was examined as it appeared in three ancient sources. The Behistun inscription is almost entirely written as a first person narrative in the voice of Darius. *The Histories* of Herodotus quote Darius a number of times. All instances were examined, with special attention to the Oroetes speech. In the Hebrew Bible, Darius is heard only in Ezra 6, in which a letter in the voice of Darius is recorded.

## Project Survey

Comparing three texts of such diverse backgrounds and genres as the Behistun inscription, Herodotus' *The Histories*, and Ezra-Nehemiah requires a theoretical frame that can ask common questions. Bakhtin's dialogism, especially as it is worked out in the ideas of chronotope and double-voicing was used to frame the analysis of the voice of Darius in these texts. Chronotope is the dialogue in the narrative between the chronology of the events in the narrative (chronological time), the arrangement of events in the narrative (narrative time), the events as they occurred in history (historical time) and space, both real and within the narrative world. Chronotope is developed within each of these texts to highlight aspects of Darius' character. Double-voicing occurs in a polyphonic text when the words of the character are manipulated by the author in such a

way that they contain two meanings and speak with two voices. The character emerges in a polyphonic text as someone with whom the reader can interact. The reader comes to understand the character through the utterances of the character itself, not dominantly through the objective description of the author. The character's words can, nonetheless, be manipulated to communicate the ideas of the author as well. The authors of the three texts studied each use this technique to nuance the reader's understanding of Darius. This study then looked at how each text used that nuanced understanding to shape the reader's perception of the character as part of a response to the circumstances of the community that produced the text.

### **Findings**

Although they come from different cultures and are written in different languages, all three of these ancient sources make creative use of chronotope to nuance how the voice of Darius is heard. The Behistun inscription uses narrative time and geological distance to minimize the significance of Darius' enemies and to highlight Darius' significance. The flow of time and pacing of the narrative is carefully manipulated to create the impression of an ordered and efficient campaign. Narrative time is slowed to create a greater perceived distance between the two Babylonian rebellions, but sped up to make the rebellions in year two and three appear to be put down quickly. Similar use is made of the manipulation of space and the dates of the rebellions themselves. Chronotope is carefully managed to control the perception of how the rebellions are put down.

In *The Histories* the Oroetes speech is set in a narrative context of *logoi* concerning the death of Polycrates in which both his death and the revenge upon the one

who slew him is orchestrated by the fates. Darius' decision to have Oroetes killed is presented within that *logos* and his own speech as a response to Oroetes' rebellion against the Persians. But within the flow of the narrative it is portrayed as the fulfillment of the vengeance of the fates on Oroetes and part of a series of events that changes the course of world history. Chronotope is used to show Darius as a participant in a sequence of events that he does not control, and of which he is not completely aware.

The letter of Darius in Ezra 6 is written in response to Tattenai, Shethar-bozenai, and his colleagues who ask about the work being done on the temple. The setting of this letter within the chronotope serves to highlight Darius as the true champion of the temple building project, both in his age and in the age of Artaxerxes. The narrative of Darius' letter is set in the second of three frames. The first frame narrates the exchange between Artaxerxes and Rehum et al. in Ezra 4, in which the enemies of the Yehudites successfully stop the building then being done. The third frame narrates the arrival of Ezra in Ezra 7, in which Artaxerxes commends and strongly supports Ezra and the Yehudite community. The chronotope created by these three narrative frames creates a dialogue between Darius and Artaxerxes. Darius responds to Artaxerxes in effect challenging Artaxerxes' decision. Artaxerxes' support of Ezra in the third frame can be seen as a response to Darius and a reversal of his position in the first frame. However, while Darius is exalted as the champion of the Yehudites, the work of the temple is initiated not by Darius, but by Yahweh, the true king of Israel. Darius responds to Cyrus and to Tattenai, but is used by Yahweh indirectly and without Darius being aware. As in *The Histories*, Darius is a part of a larger chain of events. In Ezra-Nehemiah the chain is initiated by Yahweh and Darius does not control it and is not completely aware of it.

The interaction of the voice of the narrator and the voice of the character is also used in each of the three texts to further nuance the overt presentation of Darius' character. The Behistun inscription begins each paragraph, except the first, with the words "Proclaims Darius, the King." Theoretically, this should create a number of individual utterances in which Darius is quoted. To the modern mind the third person narrative frame is a constant reminder that this is the perspective of Darius that is being given. The result is a double-voicing in which the authoritative proclamation is undermined with the constant reminder of subjectivity. However, within its own milieu the Behistun inscription must be accepted as an authoritative utterance. The double-voiced reading possible for a modern reader would not have been possible to an initial readership for whom the message must be accepted, or rejected in its entirety, since to question it is treason. In this context, the only voice is Darius' and the third person frame is subverted to the role of discourse markers within Darius' utterance. Rather than the voice of Darius being controlled by the narrator, it overpowers its narrative frame to create a single, monologic utterance in which only the voice of Darius is heard.

While most of the speeches of Darius are not double-voiced in *The Histories* and the character is permitted to freely express himself, in the Oroetes episode this is not the case. Darius portrays himself as a shrewd manipulator of regal power, using maxims to appear wise and choosing to express commands using optatives within interrogative sentences. By this he creates the impression that all he need do is express a wish and he could expect it to be done. However the narrator uses the precise wording and the immediate context to portray Darius as a man in need of support who must rule through consensus. The maxim, as expressing the voice of the narrator, is a transparent attempt to

mask Darius' limited options and the choice of optatives suggests rather a weakness. Rather than regal, the narrator manipulates the speech to create double-voicing that shows Darius to be human and vulnerable.

In Ezra, Darius tries to take ownership of the temple project by means of his letter through giving a variety of instructions, one anachronistic, and pledging support for the project. However, the narrator brings the letter into dialogue with Cyrus in such a way that the voice of Darius is merged with the voice of Cyrus. In the end it is not Darius' project but Cyrus', which Darius is merely expanding on. And Cyrus himself is moved by Yahweh. Darius wishes to be the ancient Near Eastern king who is responsible for the defence of the cultus, but the narrator insists that in the end the temple project is not Persian but Yehudite.

In each case the character of Darius is nuanced in response to the situation of the community that produced the text. The Behistun inscription becomes an authoritative discourse that cannot be argued with, but only transmitted or rejected. Darius demands complete, unquestioning acceptance. For the readers of Herodotus' *The Histories* Darius becomes, even in the very courts of the Persians, a more vulnerable, human figure. The great Persian kings are not, in fact, untouchable, but can be defeated. And the narrator of Ezra-Nehemiah refuses to concede religious authority over the temple to Darius. While gratefully acknowledging his support, the writer very deliberately but subtly subverts the authority of Darius over the temple to return it to Yahweh.

While the inscription of Behistun, *The Histories* of Herodotus, and Ezra-Nehemiah are very different pieces of literature, coming from very distinct communities with very different relationships with Darius, there are some striking commonalities

between the texts. Each text makes careful use of specific chronotope structures and the voice of Darius, either by double-voicing it or by giving Darius a monologic voice, to nuance the overt characterization of Darius. This nuancing may subvert the overt representation of Darius or amplify it, but in every case seeks to address a critical situation of the community that produced the texts.

### **Implications**

This thesis has great implications for our understanding of the historical person of Darius. While this study did not generally engage historical issues, it did look very carefully at the major primary sources for understanding the life of Darius. A careful reading of the text, looking at literary features, showed nuancing in how Darius is portrayed in these texts. Using Bakhtin's concepts of chronotope and double-voicing, it has been shown that the portrayal of Darius is more complex than had previously been realized, and this portrayal is carefully shaped to respond to the communities that produced the texts.

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The nuancing of Darius' character in the Behistun inscription suggests that the text cannot be taken at face value, especially as regards the details of the rebellions. Darius is very deliberately constructing the narrative to portray himself as conquering without significant challenge. The use of Indo-Iranian mythological elements as well as the manipulation of chronotope to streamline Darius' conquests, points to the possibility that Darius is attempting to show himself as above this world. Furthermore, if the text is read as transhistoric, it enhances the possibility that the Behistun inscription is seeking to take the events of Darius' first year and frame them as part of the foundational,

mythological history of the Persians.

Herodotus' *The Histories* is similarly very careful in its use of chronotope and double-voicing to create a nuanced character. Darius is, of course, extensively described in *The Histories*. The nuancing of the character that is revealed in this study points to an agenda on the part of Herodotus to portray Darius as a human character. Herodotus' use of sources and reliability were not a part of this study. However, a better understanding of Herodotus' agenda will add to that work by assisting in determining what might be the creative work of Herodotus and what might be in his sources. Herodotus' agenda of portraying the human Darius does necessitate a transformation of his character. His purpose is served as much by bringing to light stories in his sources that reflect who Darius was as it would be by manipulation and creation of material. Without making comment on the broader issues of the historicity of *The Histories*, it is worth noting that the personality of Darius portrayed in *The Histories* may well reflect Darius as Herodotus actually believed him to be.

The agenda of Ezra-Nehemiah that is revealed in how Darius is portrayed differs significantly from that of Herodotus. Interestingly, the character of Darius that emerges nonetheless has some striking commonalities. In both, Darius is a sly politician who manipulates his communication to create a deliberate effect. In *The Histories* he seeks to present himself as the wise, serene ruler but uses similar strategies to portray himself as the sovereign king, the divine agent, in Ezra-Nehemiah. The narrator, in contrast, subverts that presentation to ensure that the regal agent behind the construction of the temple is Yahweh. It is easy to read the Persian kings as positive figures in Ezra-Nehemiah and other biblical literature, but this suggests that Darius is not a completely

positive character, and suggests the need for caution in assessing the Persian kings. While Darius is clearly used by God, the narrator takes care to distance him from certain cultic functions traditionally associated with the king. This may have important implications for our understanding of Yehudite religion.

It is worth noting that a fairly consistent picture of Darius emerges. Presented most clearly in Herodotus' *The Histories*, this picture shows Darius as a clever leader who is very much aware of how he appears and chooses how he expresses himself, at least in public, to create the image he wishes. Ezra supports this by showing how Darius' letter, while giving support for the temple, attempts to take ownership of the project. The Behistun inscription is carefully crafted to show Darius as above all such concerns. However to the degree that Darius was involved in the creation of the Behistun monument, and we may assume he had at least some involvement, then the careful crafting of the inscription confirms in itself Darius' careful management of his image.

### **Further Research**

The implications point to the need for using literary critical methods on primary sources as a part of historical research, especially with the Behistun inscription, for which there is only limited literary analysis currently available. There is much need for further research applying this Bakhtinian approach to develop a more nuanced reading of Darius in other texts or of other kings. Does the statue inscription of Udjahorresne found in Egypt have similar careful narrative features? Or would a study of Cyrus, using Ezra-Nehemiah alongside *The Histories* and Cyrus' cylinder, bear similar results as this study did for Darius?



Particularly promising is the use of double-voicing to explore the nuances of Artaxerxes' character in Ezra-Nehemiah and Esther. A fuller study of the chronotope of Ezra-Nehemiah may also address the longstanding issues of chronology. While I believe that Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah are different books, there is clearly connective material between them which suggests the possibility of extending the study of the voices of the foreign rulers not only forward but also back through later sections of Chronicles. And finally, it suggests that there is a need to re-examine passages elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible in which the Persian kings, especially Cyrus, are viewed favourably and see if there is not a similar nuancing to the praise there as well.

### **Conclusion**

This study has shown that the Behistun inscription, Herodotus' *The Histories* and the book of Ezra each present a carefully nuanced character of Darius to their readers to address the specific needs of their community. In the Behistun inscription he is the ruler who rules by the will of Ahuramazda and need not be concerned with earthly things. To Herodotus, he is a truly powerful adversary but nonetheless a human one who is vulnerable. To Ezra he is a beneficent foreign king who supports the temple project but who cannot play the role of the true king of Israel in cultic issues.

## Appendix A

### Heteroglossy, Source Authenticity, and Bilingualism in Ezra

The discussions around the authenticity of the letters in Ezra look at linguistic characteristics, as well as ideological features that are also suggestive that a text may be heteroglossic. As a result, the discussion of the authenticity of the source documents can be very informative in understanding heteroglossy in Ezra. However, the authenticity of these sources has been questioned on issues that are not related to heteroglossia, such as the inherent probability that such a letter would be written. If a document is considered authentic, it is a good indicator that it may represent a separate voice in a heteroglossic text; however, it is the evidence presented, not the conclusions, that are of interest in a discussion of polyphony.

In considering the documentary sources of Ezra three dominant lines of reasoning have been found to be probative: the analysis of the Aramaic of the documents, comparative epistolography and pro-Jewish elements. Each line of reasoning establishes not only the probability of authenticity of the letters, but also informs us as to the degree to which they are heteroglossic and polyphonic within the narrative.

Taken as a whole, Biblical Aramaic seems to represent a transitional state between the Aramaic of the Achaemenid age and later Aramaic forms. The biblical texts include a mixture of older Aramaic forms and more recent ones.<sup>1</sup> Torrey further argues that several of the words are from a later date, including three that he believes are of Greek origin. The first, אִפְרָסְתִּיכִי (‘‘the envoys’’), Torrey considers as a naturalized form of the Greek word ἐπάρχος; however, it is more likely derived from the Old Persian

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<sup>1</sup> Torrey, *Ezra Studies*, 163–164.

*\*prasaka/\*frasaka*. This theory does not require the *s/k* transposition, and does not lead to the admittedly minor difficulty of the translators of the Septuagint not recognizing a Greek word.<sup>2</sup> Torrey argues for either of two possible Greek derivations for the word **ספרא** in 4:13. Torrey concluded that the documents found in the book of Ezra were literary creations, “made-up documents.”<sup>3</sup>

More recent studies, while using many of the linguistic observations of Torrey, have tended to allow for at least some possibility of original material, if heavily modified, behind the Aramaic correspondence. Fitzmyer reviewed the epistolography in Aramaic correspondence and noted several features that were more or less common to correspondence written in Aramaic in these early periods but noted that no feature was represented in every letter and time period under consideration.<sup>4</sup> Alexander built on Fitzmyer, performing a more nuanced study that took more careful note of synchronic distinctions and differences between informal and official letters. The result was a more descriptive list of features, but he too cautioned that “...in any given Aramaic letter in our corpus not all these elements will be present...”<sup>5</sup> Dismissal of the authenticity of a document based on one or more missing common epistological elements is thus hazardous.<sup>6</sup>

Perhaps the safest approach to the problem of the authenticity of the letters in Ezra is that of Grabbe, who looks at each letter individually, recognizing that each letter could be authentic, with little editing, complete fiction or anywhere in between those two

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<sup>2</sup> Torrey, *Ezra Studies*, 175, HALOT, 1822-1823. The translators of the Septuagint assumed it referred to a people group and transliterated it Αφρασαχαῖοι.

<sup>3</sup> Torrey, *Ezra Studies*, 156.

<sup>4</sup> Fitzmyer, “Aramaic Epistolography,” 220.

<sup>5</sup> Alexander, “Remarks on Aramaic Epistolography,” 168.

<sup>6</sup> So Torrey’s comment, “Genuine documents would have borne dates” (*Ezra Studies*, 156), is rebutted by Alexander’s observation, “Few Aramaic letters are dated” (“Remarks on Aramaic Epistolography,” 168).

poles. He notes at the outset that all the letters from a linguistic point of view are not from the Achaemenid period, but they also have forms earlier than standard Aramaic of the Greek period.<sup>7</sup> A detailed look at each letter, including examining Jewish elements and the inherent believability of the letters as well as dispersion of earlier and later Aramaic forms leads Grabbe to place the documents on a spectrum from the fourth document (Ezra 5:7–17), which he believes to contain a good deal of authentic material, albeit edited, to the first, the Decree of Cyrus in Ezra 1, which he considers a near complete fabrication. Collectively this evidence demonstrates that there is heteroglossia in Ezra and suggests that at least some of these letters may be double-voiced. The older Aramaic forms Grabbe notices in the letter from Tattenai and Shethar-bozenai (Ezra 5:7–17) are strong evidence of heteroglossy. However, not all Grabbe’s arguments are compelling for this. Grabbe reasons that Darius’ response to Tattenai and Shethar-bozenai (Ezra 6:6–12) is more likely to have authentic material as a result of its connection to that letter. This argument, while having merit in its own right, is not at all informative as to whether the letter is heteroglossic. While not all the evidence brought forth in the discussion of the authenticity of the documents is useful, the overall force of these discussions demonstrates that the text is heteroglossic.

Perhaps the most obvious feature of the book of Ezra for anyone reading the original is that it is bilingual, written in both Hebrew and Aramaic. The letters exchanged between the Samaritans and the Persian kings, as well as some narrative frame around them, are all in Aramaic while the rest of the Ezra-Nehemiah complex is in Hebrew. While a redactional theory can explain why there would be underlying documents in multiple languages, it does not explain why they are not translated into a single language

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<sup>7</sup> Grabbe, “Persian Documents,” 533.

in the final form. Snell suggests that a better explanation is to look at the Aramaic in the portions as a deliberate attempt to “give a sense of authenticity” or create heteroglossia at the most basic level.<sup>8</sup> Matzal’s observation that the boundaries of the Aramaic portions correspond to the boundaries of literary panels, along with other evidence, is used by Berman to suggest that the Aramaic portions in Ezra reflect a shift to a different perspective.<sup>9</sup> Berman suggests further that in the Aramaic portion of Ezra 4–6 the author gives the voice to a Samaritan narrator, and that these sections are written from the Samaritan point of view, citing the first person plural, and other linguistic features. While Berman perhaps overstates his case, it is clear that the use of Aramaic reflects a polyphonic shift in perspective.

While the questions of whether a text exhibits characteristics of heteroglossia within the narrative world and whether a quoted source in a text is authentic are conceptually very different questions, many lines of evidence are probative for both. In the case of the letters of Ezra, linguistic features that differentiate the letter from the surrounding narrative and from each other demonstrate that, to varying degrees, the letters are in fact heteroglossic.

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<sup>8</sup> Snell, “Why is there Aramaic?” 32.

<sup>9</sup> Matzal, *Structure*, 121; Berman, “Narratorial Voice,” 313–314.

## Appendix B

### Sentence Order and Complexity Variation in the Aramaic Epistles

The subtleties of language use that differentiate between speech genres or create heteroglossia are generally fairly evident within one's own tongue. For non-fluent speakers detecting these differences can be more challenging. To detect them in ancient texts requires careful statistical analysis. Such an analysis of the Aramaic letters in Ezra reveals some linguistic trends that indicate social or speech-genre differentiation. A careful look at the language of the letters of the kings, contrasted with the language of the letters from the opponents of the Yehudites shows that there are significant linguistic differences between them, although these differences are not great enough to argue for a different dialect. I will show here that these differences are real, although at this point the significance of the differences cannot be determined.

Greenfield's fourfold classification includes the entire corpus of Biblical Aramaic within literary official Aramaic (contrasted with Official Aramaic, Standard Aramaic and Western Aramaic).<sup>1</sup> Even a quick contrast between the biblical and extra-biblical material in Greenspahn's grammar will confirm that there are many important differences between the Aramaic of the Bible and the other texts, including morphological shifts, the objective particle, and the use of ׀, which occurs in a shortened form, ׀, outside Biblical Aramaic but not within it.<sup>2</sup> Eastern Aramaic was characterized by a preference for placing the verb in the final position, probably due to influence of Akkadian or possibly Old Persian. In contrast, Old Aramaic inscriptions from Syria more frequently have a VSO

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<sup>1</sup> Folmer, *Aramaic Language*, 16, 19.

<sup>2</sup> Greenspahn, *Aramaic*, 175.

word order.<sup>3</sup> Within a language, or a dialect there is, of course, regional variation, variation in individual language use, and variation in speech genre. Heteroglossia occurs when these differences are reflected in the language of characters in a narrative.

Biblical Aramaic exhibits a good deal of flexibility in word order, but within Ezra one use is to create heteroglossia between the letters.<sup>4</sup> There appears to be some disagreement as to what the standard word order is in Biblical Aramaic, as Greenspahn notes that overall object initial sentences are more frequent, while Buth argues that the Aramaic in Daniel is dominantly VSO.<sup>5</sup> This study restricted itself to Aramaic letters in Ezra. When contrasted with these works the Aramaic of Ezra and Daniel is quite homogenous, however, there are enough differences to suggest heteroglossia.

There are some difficulties in studying word order, including determining the boundaries of the sentence. For the purposes of this study, a sentence will be defined as clause containing an independent verb, along with its subject, predicate and all connected modifiers. A verbless clause, in which the verb 'to be' is understood, will be treated as a sentence. Similarly, unless the use is clearly otherwise, participles are treated as main verbs, as they are the dominant verb form in nominal clauses.<sup>6</sup> While this simple definition of a sentence overlooks interrelationships between clauses, it is sufficient for comparing sentence order and complexity. However, to compensate for this simplicity in part, careful note has been made of how each clause is introduced, recognizing that ׀ often introduces a subordinate clause.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Folmer, *Aramaic Language*, 521, 522. Interestingly, the SVO word order is attested without exception in the Persepolis texts (533).

<sup>4</sup> Greenspahn, *Aramaic*, 124; Shepherd, "Distribution of Verbal Forms," 234.

<sup>5</sup> Greenspahn, *Aramaic*, 123; Buth, "Word Order," 311.

<sup>6</sup> Shepherd, "Distribution of Verbal Forms," 230.

<sup>7</sup> See the Data Tables below for the data used in this section.

The letters from the Persian kings are noticeably more complex than those from Abar-nahara. The letter from Rehum and his colleagues has an average of 3.46 words per sentence, and the letter from Tattenai and his colleagues has an average of 5.38 words per sentence, for a combined average of 4.69 words per sentence. In contrast, the Persian king's letters have averages of 3.93 (Artaxerxes' first letter), 6.72 (Darius), and 9 (Artaxerxes' second letter) for a combined average of 6.95 words per sentence. The sentences used by the Persian kings were, on average, almost 50% longer than the sentences used in the letters from Abar-nahara. A second measure of complexity, especially important given this study's arbitrary definition of a sentence, is the number of sentences that are subordinate clauses, as indicated by the use of the word 'ָ' to introduce the sentence. Of the 64 sentences in the two letters from Abar-Nahara, only 9, or 14%, begin with 'ָ', while, of the 76 sentences written by Persian kings, 18, or 23%, begin with 'ָ'. Related to this is the number of sentences that are conjoined in such a way that they should be considered a single sentence. A relative comparison can be made by looking at the number of one word sentences there are, as these are most probably syntactically linked to the previous sentence. Even though the letters of the Persian kings have longer average sentences than those of the letters from Abar-nahara, there are three times as many one word sentences (six compared to two). Even though there are more one word sentences the average word length is greater shows greater sentence length variety in the letters by the Persian kings. Further, only two subordinate clauses are embedded within the main clauses in letters from Abar-nahara (Tattenai's letter, sentences 24 and 25 in 5:14) whereas seven subordinate clauses are similarly embedded in the main clauses in the letters from the Persian kings. The letters of the kings, having longer sentences, more embedded sentences and more relative pronouns, reflect a more complex



language use than the letters from Abar-nahara.

Further, within both the letters from the kings and from Abar-nahara, the verb seems to naturally be in the first position. It is the first element in 23 of Abar-nahara sentences (36%) and in 28 of the sentences from the Persian kings (44%). If there is a separate subject and the verb is in the first position, the subject always follows the verb. In fact, if both the verb and the subject are expressed, they are always together in letters from Abar-nahara, and only 5 times are they separate in letters from the Persian kings. While the verb and subject can appear in either order, in both sets of letters the subject comes before the verb three times as often as the verb comes before the subject, regardless of where the verb is found in the sentence.<sup>8</sup> This suggests that the verb and subject can be considered a unit, with the separation of the two likely being significant. If one does consider the subject and verb as a unit, then this unit introduces 36 (56%) of the letters from Abar-nahara and 46 (60%) of the letters from the Persians. While this difference is not significant, there is a striking difference in the number of sentences that begin with the object. There are six such sentences (8%) in the letters from the Persian kings, but 18 cases (28%) in the letters from Abar-nahara. While it is commonly recognized that word order in Aramaic is much looser, in fact SV/VS initial order is dominant, and an O/IO initial sentence can be considered marked.<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately we are too far removed from the culture to determine the significance of this marking without much further study, however, the differentiation in the frequency of marked sentences and

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<sup>8</sup> This is consistent with other Achaemenid texts and in fact in some texts a VS order is never attested. Folmer, *Aramaic Language*, 523, but contra Shepherd, who calls instances in which the subject precedes the verb "...since such clauses show an inversion of what is most common," Shepherd, "Distribution of Verbal Forms," 12. It is not at all clear at how he would come to such a conclusion, contradicting not only the statistics here, but also his own observations earlier in the paragraph about SVO being statistically the most common word order.

<sup>9</sup> Greenspahn, *Aramaic*, 124. His assertion "...it is more common for the object to come first" is not true within the letters.

sentence complexity definitely proves heteroglossic distinction between the letters from the Persian kings and the letters from Abar-nahara.

Data Tables<sup>10</sup>

## Rehum, Shimshai and Companions

Sentence	Introduction	Location	1 <sup>st</sup>	2nd	3rd	Length
1	וכענת	4:12a	V(subj)	IO	O	3
2	די	4:12b	S	V(subj)	IO	8
3	-	4:12c	O	V(subj)		4
4	ן	4:12d	O	V(subj)		2
5	ן	4:12e	O	V(subj)		2
6	פען	4:13a	V(subj)	IO		2
7	די הן	4:13b	S	V		3
8	ן	4:13c	S	V		2
9	-	4:13d	O	V(subj)		5
10	ן	4:13e	O	V(subj)		3
11	כל קבל די פען	4:14a	O	V(subj)		3
12	ן	4:14b	O	Predicate	S (verbless) <sup>11</sup>	6
13	-	4:14c	IO	V(subj)		3
14	ן	4:14d	V (subj)	O <sup>12</sup>		2
15	די	4:15a	V (imper)	IO		5
16	ן	4:15b	V	IO		3
17	ן	4:15c	V			1
18	די	4:15d	S (verbless)	Predicate		4
19	ן	4:15e	V	O		3
20	ן	4:15f	O	V		6
21	-	4:15f	IO	S	V	5
22	-	4:16a	V	S	O	3
23	די הן	4:16b	S	V		3
24	ן	4:16c	S	V		2
25	לקבל דנה	4:16d	S	V	IO	6

<sup>10</sup> Symbols used on the table include V for verbs, V(subj) for verbs, the form of which is the only expression of the subject, S for an expressed subject, and O for a direct object. The object is deemed to be direct if it is either unmarked, or marked with a known direct object marker, such as ך. A word or subordinate clause is marked as an indirect object if it is marked with a preposition of any kind, other than the ך of the direct object.

<sup>11</sup> The infinitive in this verse serves as the subject, modified by the predicate adjective. The object is the object of the infinitive.

<sup>12</sup> If the verb is translated "informed" then the ך can take its common role as direct object marker.

## Artaxerxe's First Letter

Sentence	Introduction	Location	1 <sup>st</sup>	2nd	3rd	Length
1	-	4:18 all	S	V	IO	7
2	דִּי	4:18 all i <sup>13</sup>	V (subj)	IO		2
3	וְ	4:19a	IO	V	S	3
4	וְ	4:19b	V (subj)			1
5	וְ	4:19c	V (subj)			1
6	דִּי	4:19d	S	Adv	V	8
7	וְ	4:19e	V (subj)			1
8	וְ	4:19f	O	V	IO	4
9	וְ	4:20a	S	V	IO	5
10	וְ	4:20b	V (subj)	IO		4
11	וְ	4:20c	S (verbless)	IO		5
12	כִּעֵן	4:21a	V (subj)	O	IO	5
13	וְ	4:21b	O	V (subj)		4
14	עַד-	4:21c	IO	O	V (subj)	3
15	וְ	4:22a	V (subj)	O	IO	6
16	לְמַה	4:22b	V	S	IO	4

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<sup>13</sup> This sentence is embedded within sentence 1. Here as elsewhere the roman number indicates the embedded sentence.

## Tattenai, Shethar-bozenai and Colleagues

Sentence	Introduction	Location	1st	2nd	3rd	Length
1	-	5:8a	V (subj)	IO		2
2	דִּי	5:8b	V (subj)	IO		6
3	ן	5:8b	S	V		2
4	-	5:8c	S	IO		5 <sup>14</sup>
5	ן	5:8d	S	V		4
6	ן	5:8e	V	IO		2
7	אֲדִין	5:9a	V (subj)	O		3
8	-	5:9b	O	V (subj)	IO	2
9	-	5:9c	S	V	IO	10
10	וְאֵף	5:10a	O	V (subj)	IO	4
11	דִּי	5:10b	V (subj)			5
12	ן	5:11a	O	V (subj)	IO	4
13	-	5:11b	S (verbless)	Predicate		7
14	ן	5:11:c	V	O		2
15	דִּי	5:11d	S	V	IO	7
16	ן	5:11e	S	V		4
17	ן	5:11f	V (subj)			1
18	לְהֵן מְרִדִי	5:12a	V	S	O	4
19	-	5:12b	V (subj)	O	IO	7
20	ן	5:12c	O	V (subj)		3
21	ן	5:12d	O	V	IO	3
22	בְּרַם	5:13a	Adv	S	V	15
23	וְאֵף	5:14a	O	V	S	27
24	דִּי	5:14a i	S	V	IO	6
25	ן	5:14a ii	V (subj)	O	IO	5
26	ן	5:14b	V (subj)	IO		3
27	דִּי	5:14c	O	V (subj)		2
28	ן	5:15a	V	IO		2
29	-	5:15b	O	V <sup>15</sup>	O <sup>16</sup>	8
30	ן	5:15c	O	V	IO	5
31	אֲדִין	5:16a	S	V		3
32	-	5:16b	V (subj)	O		7
33	ן	5:16c	Adv	V (subj)		5
34	ן	5:16d	negation	V		2
35	וּכְעַן	5:17a	IO	O	(verbless)	4
36	-	5:17b	V (subj)	IO		8
37	-	5:17c	V (subj)			2
38	דִּי	5:17d	IO	V	S	13
39	ן	5:18e	O	V (subj)	IO	6

<sup>14</sup> This sees וְאֵף גָּלַל וְאֵף functioning as the subject of the participle מְרִדִים.

<sup>15</sup> While throughout this study each verb, regardless of how closely related to other verbs, is treated as the base of an independent sentence, in this case it seems that the three verbs clustered together, וְאֵף אֲדִין וְאֵף, seem to form a single syntactic unit, bracketed between the direct object and the resumptive pronoun of the same object דְּמִן.

<sup>16</sup> The direct object in this sentence precedes the verb then follows it by means of the resumptive pronoun דְּמִן.

## Darius

Sentence	Introduction	Location	1st	2nd	3rd	Length
1	ן	6:1b <sup>17</sup>	V (subj)	IO		8
2	ן	6:2a	V (subj)	IO	O	8
3	ן	6:2c	S <sup>18</sup>	V	IO	4
4	-	6:3a	adv	S	V then O	8
5	-	6:3b	S	V	IO	9
6	ן	6:3c	S	V	IO	8
7	ן	6:4b <sup>19</sup>	S	IO	V	5
8	ואף	6:5a	S	V		16
9	די	6:5a i	S	V	IO	6
10	ן	6:5a ii	V (subj)	IO		2
11	ן	6:5b	V (subj)	IO		5
12	ן	6:5c	V (subj)	IO		3
13	בען	6:6 (all)	S	Predicate	IO	15
14	-	6:7a	V (subj)	O		5
15	-	6:7b	S	O	V	10
16	ן	6:8a	IO	V	S	3
17	למא די	6:8b	V	IO		9
18	ן	6:8c	IO	S	V	12
19	די	6:8d	V (subj)			2
20	ן	6:9a	S	IO	V	22
21	די	6:9b	S	verbless		2
22	די	6:10 all <sup>20</sup>	V (subj)	Predicate	IO	9
23	ן	6:11a	IO	V	S	3
24	די	6:11b	IO	V	S	10
25	די	6:11b i	V (subj)	O		3
26	ן	6:11c	V (subj)			1
27	-	6:11d	V (subj)	IO		2
28	ן	6:11e	S	O	V	5
29	ן	6:12a	S	V	O	9
30	די	6:12a i	V (subj)	IO		3
31	די	6:12b	V (subj)	O	IO	9
32	-	6:12c	S	V	O	4
33	-	6:12d	adv	V		2

<sup>17</sup> מְהַחֲתִין is read here as an adjective, and as such is not treated as a verb in identifying sentences.

<sup>18</sup> While בְּן is in fact an adverb, here it functions to sum up the contents of the decree “was written.” Functionally as such then it seems to be taking the place of the subject of the verb כְּתוּבִים to which it is joined in the Masoretic text by a maqqeph.

<sup>19</sup> The phrase חֲדַת דִּיאָע וְנִדְבָךְ וְנִדְבָךְ וְנִדְבָךְ (6:4a) is excluded from analysis. It is a verbless string of nouns and modifiers that seems to function as an engineer’s shorthand in describing the temple design. This shorthand does not lend itself to this kind of word order analysis.

<sup>20</sup> The participle מְצַלֵּן I view as nominal, acting, along with מְהַחֲתִין, as the object of the verb לְהוֹן.

## Artaxerxes Second Letter

Sentence	Introduction	Location	1st	2nd	3rd	Length
1	-	7:13a	IO	V	S	3
2	דִּי	7:13b <sup>21</sup>	S	IO	V	12
3		7:14, 15a	IO	V (subj)	IO	19
4	וְ	7:15b	S	V	IO	4
5	דִּי	7:15b i	IO	V (subj)		2
6	וְ	7:16 all <sup>22</sup>	O	V	IO	17
7	דִּי	7:16a i	V (subj)	IO		4
8	כָּל־קִבֵּל דְּנָה	7:17a	V (subj)	IO	O	9
9	וְ	7:17b	V (subj)	O	IO	9
10	וְ	7:18a	S	IO	V	12
11	-	7:18b	V (subj)			1
13	דִּי	7:19 a i	V (subj)	IO		6
12	וְ	7:19 all	O	V (subj)	IO	11
15	דִּי	7:20 a i	V	IO	IO	4
14	וְ	7:20 all	O	V	IO	13
16	וְ	7:21a	IO	V (subj)	O	11
17	דִּי	7:21b	V (subj)	S	O	10
18	-	7:21c, 22	V (subj)	O		20
19	כָּל־דִּי	7:23a	IO	V	IO	9
20	דִּי	7:23b	IO	V	S	7
21	וְ	7:24a	IO	V (subj)	O	13
22	-	7:24b8	O	V (subj)	IO	7
23	וְ	7:25a	S	V	O	9
24	דִּי	7:25b	V (subj)	Predicate		8
25	-	7:25c	IO	V (subj)		1
26	וְכָל־דִּי	7:26a	V	O		10
27	-	7:26b	S	V	IO	12

<sup>21</sup> The subject of the verb יִהְיֶה is לְמִתְנַדָּב...כָּל־קִבֵּל דְּנָה. While this could be treated as a subordinate clause, the force of the participle is nominal, and the clause is deeply imbedded in the rest of the sentence.

<sup>22</sup> This interpretation reads מִתְנַדָּב as the main verb, in contrast to the NRSV.

Data Count Table

Persian	Word order	Quant
Intro	IO / O / V	1
עד	IO / O / V	1
בען	S / Pred	1
בען	V / O / IO	1
ואף	S / V	1
למה	V / S / IO	1
כל־קבל דנה	V / IO / O	1
No Intro	adv / S / V	1
No Intro	adv / V	1
No Intro	IO / V	2
No Intro	IO / V / S	1
No Intro	O / V / IO	1
No Intro	S / V / IO	3
No Intro	S / V / O	1
No Intro	S / O / V	1
No Intro	V	1
No Intro	V / IO	1
No Intro	V / O	2
ן	IO / S / V	1
ן	IO / V / O	2
ן	IO / V / S	3
ן	O / V	1
ן	O / V / IO	4
ן	S / IO / V	3
ן	S / V / IO	4
ן	S / V / IO	1
ן	S / V / O	2
ן	V	4
ן	V / IO	5
ן	V / IO / O	1
ן	V / O / IO	2
די	IO / V	1
די	IO / V / S	2
די	S	1
די	S / adv / V	1
די	S / IO / V	1
די	S / V / IO	1
די	V	1
די	V / IO	4
די	V / IO / IO	1
די	V / O	1
די	V / O / IO	1
די	V / Pred	1
די	V / S / O	1

Abar-nahara	Word order	Quant
Intro	S / V	2
די הן	S / V	2
בען	V / IO	1
ובען	IO / O	1
אדין	S / V	1
אדין	V / O	1
ואף	O / V / S	1
ואף	O / V / IO	1
ברם	adv / S / V	1
ל־קבל דנ	S / V / IO	1
No Intro	IO / S / V	1
No Intro	IO / V	1
No Intro	O / V	1
No Intro	O / V / IO	1
No Intro	O / V / O	1
No Intro	S / IO	1
No Intro	S / Pred	1
No Intro	S / V / IO	1
No Intro	V	1
No Intro	V / IO	2
No Intro	V / O	1
No Intro	V / O / IO	1
No Intro	V / S / O	1
ובענת	S / IO / O	1
ן	adv / V	1
ן	O / Pred / S	1
ן	O / V	6
ן	O / V / IO	4
ן	S / V	5
ן	V	1
ן	V	2
ן	V / IO	4
ן	V / O	4
בען כל־קבל די	O / V	1
די	IO / V / S	1
די	O / V	1
די	S / Pred	1
די	S / V / IO	3
די	V	1
די	V / IO	2
להן מודי	V / S / O	1



דִּי	V Pred	1
כִּלְ-קַבֵּל דִּי	IO / V / IO	1
כִּלְ-דִּי	IO / V / IO	1
וּכְל־דִּי	V / O	1
לְמַא דִּי	V / IO	1

Data Summary Table

Old Persian		
Sentence Introductions		
	Number	Percent
No intro	15	19.74%
ן	33	43.42%
דִּי	18	23.68%
Other	10	13.16%
Total	76	100.00%
<b>Words per Sentence</b>		6.95
First Position		
S	21	27.63%
V	32	42.11%
O	6	7.89%
IO	5	6.58%
Other	12	15.79%
Total	76	100.00%

Trans Euphrates		
Sentence Introductions		
	Number	Percent
No Intro	14	21.88%
ן	28	43.75%
דִּי	9	14.06%
Other	13	20.31%
Total	64	100.00%
<b>Words per Sentence</b>		4.69
First Position		
S	17	26.56%
V	23	35.94%
O	18	28.13%
IO	4	6.25%
Other	2	3.13%
Total	64	100.00%

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