

## World Heritage Scanned Nomination

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UNESCO Region: ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

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**SITE NAME:** **Bisotun**

**DATE OF INSCRIPTION:** 16 July 2006

**STATE PARTY:** IRAN (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF)

**CRITERIA:** C (ii)(iii)

**DECISION OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE:**

*Excerpt from the Decisions of the 30th Session of the World Heritage Committee*

**Criterion (ii):** The monument created by Darius I The Great in Bisotun in 521 BC is an outstanding testimony to the important interchange of human values on the development monumental art and writing. The symbolic representation of the Achaemenid king in relation to his enemy reflects traditions in monumental bas-reliefs that date from ancient Egypt and the Middle East, and which were subsequently further developed during the Achaemenid and later empires.

**Criterion (iii):** The site of Bisotun is located along one of the main routes linking Persia with Mesopotamia and associated with the sacred Bisotun mountain. There is archaeological evidence of human settlements that date from the prehistoric times, while the most significant period was from 6th century BC to AD 6th century. The Bisotun inscription is unique being the only known monumental text of the Achaemenids to document a specific historic event, that of the re-establishment of the Empire by Darius I The Great. It was the first cuneiform writing to be deciphered in the 19th century.

### BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS

Bisotun is located along the ancient trade route linking the Iranian high plateau with Mesopotamia and features remains from the prehistoric times to the Median, Achaemenid, Sassanian, and Ilkhanid periods. The principal monument of this archaeological site is the bas-relief and cuneiform inscription ordered by Darius I, The Great, when he rose to the throne of the Persian Empire, 521 BC. The bas-relief portrays Darius holding a bow, as a sign of sovereignty, and treading on the chest of a figure who lies on his back before him. According to legend, the figure represents Gaumata, the Median Magus and pretender to the throne whose assassination led to Darius's rise to power. Below and around the bas-reliefs, there are ca. 1,200 lines of inscriptions telling the story of the battles Darius waged in 521-520 BC against the governors who attempted to take apart the Empire founded by Cyrus. The inscription is written in three languages. The oldest is an Elamite text referring to legends describing the king and the rebellions. This is followed by a Babylonian version of similar legends. The last phase of the inscription is particularly important, as it is here that Darius introduced for the first time the Old Persian version of his res gestae (things done). This is the only known monumental text of the Achaemenids to document the re-establishment of the Empire by Darius I. It also bears witness to the interchange of influences in the development of monumental art and writing in the region of the Persian Empire. There are also remains from the Median period (8th to 7th centuries B.C.) as well as from the Achaemenid (6th to 4th centuries B.C.) and post-Achaemenid periods.

Behistun se trouve sur l'ancienne route marchande reliant le haut plateau iranien à la Mésopotamie et possède des vestiges de l'époque préhistorique aux périodes mède, achéménide, sassanide et ilkhanide. Le monument principal de ce site archéologique est un bas-relief et une inscription cunéiforme commandés par Darius I le Grand, quand il monta sur le trône de l'Empire perse, en 521 avant JC. Ce bas-relief représente Darius tenant un arc, symbole de sa souveraineté, et écrasant le torse d'un homme allongé sur le dos devant lui. Selon la légende, ce personnage serait Gaumata, le mage mède prétendant au trône dont l'assassinat permit à Darius la conquête du pouvoir. Sous le bas-relief et autour, quelque 1 200 lignes d'inscriptions retracent l'histoire des batailles que Darius a dû livrer en 521 - 520 avant JC contre les gouverneurs qui tentèrent de diviser l'empire fondé par Cyrus. L'inscription est rédigée en trois langues. La plus ancienne est un texte élamite faisant référence aux légendes qui décrivent le roi et les rébellions. Elle est suivie par une version babylonienne de légendes similaires. La dernière partie de l'inscription est particulièrement importante, car c'est là que Darius introduisit pour la première fois la version en vieux perse de ses res gestae (ce qu'il a accompli). C'est l'unique inscription monumentale achéménide connu sur la re-fondation de l'Empire par Darius I. Elle constitue également un témoignage sur les influences mutuelles dans le développement de l'art monumental et de l'écriture dans la région de l'Empire perse. On trouve aussi à Behistun des vestiges de la période mède (8e au 7e siècle avant JC) ainsi que des périodes achéménide (6e au 4e siècles) et post-achéménide.

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**1.b State, Province or Region:** Iran - Kermanshah

**1.d Exact location:** N 34 23 18 E 47 26 12

**Iranian Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization**

**BISOTUN**  
**THE SITE**  
**AND**  
**THE ROCK RELIEF OF DARIUS THE GREAT**



**UNESCO**  
**World Heritage Convention**  
**Nomination of Properties for Inclusion on**  
**The World Heritage List**  
**Tehran, January 2005**



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great

## Executive Summary

<b>State Party</b>	Islamic Republic of IRAN
<b>State, Province or Region</b>	Kermânshâh
<b>Name of Property</b>	Bisotun
<b>Geographical coordinates to the nearest second</b>	34° 23' 18'' N and 47° 26' 12'' E
<b>Textual description of the boundary(ies) of the nominated property</b>	From north to the Parthian Slope and Bisotun's rocks, from east to the ancient road located on the fringe of Sarâb, Sarâb-e Bisotun and Sassanids stream of water located at the side of the Sassanids monument in front of Farhad Tarash, from south-east to the Shah abbasi's Caravanserai, from south to the small town of Al-Zahra and from west to the north west to Bisotun mountain.
<b>A4 (or "letter") size map of the nominated property, showing boundary (ies) and buffer zone (if present)</b>	A copy of A0 size map showing core and buffer zones of the nominated property can be found attached to the file (map 3). A digital version is also enclosed.
<b>Justification  Statement of the Outstanding Universal Value</b>	The site of Bisotun bears a double significance for the history of ancient Iran and that of the southwest Asia in general. It is situated in a strategic location controlling the main route linking the Iranian plateau and Mesopotamia. This route has been used since ancient times, and still constitutes the principal way of trade between the eastern regions of Iran and Central Asia with Mesopotamia. From a historical point of view, the site of Bisotun has a continued archaeological sequence from Prehistoric times down to the 20 <sup>th</sup> century. Besides and above all, it includes one of the most remarkable documents of human history, i.e. the reliefs and inscriptions of Darius the Great, which was the key evidence for the



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	<p>decipherment of cuneiform script. It was, indeed, thanks to the inscriptions at Bisotun that Sir Henry Rawlinson began his long and painstaking work which resulted in the reading of the Old Persian cuneiform script in 1847. The inscriptions also constitute a very important document for the history of ancient Iran and the southwest Asia relating the events of the Achaemenid empire at its crisis in the years 522 and 521 B.C.</p>
<p><b>Criteria under which property is nominated</b></p>	<p>(ii), (iii) and (iv)</p>
<p><b>Name and contact information of official local institution/agency</b></p>	<p>Research Organization of Cultural Heritage and Tourism, Iranian Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization (ICHTO), Bureau for International Activities and World Heritage, Research Center for Conservation of Cultural Relics (RCCCR) Address: 15, Imam Khomeini Ave., Tehran 11365, IRAN Tel: (+98 21) 6673 65 17-20 Fax: (+98 21) 6673 65 22 Email: whc@rcccr.org Web address: <a href="http://www.ichto.ir">www.ichto.ir</a> <a href="http://www.iranmiras.ir">www.iranmiras.ir</a></p>



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# 1

## IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROPERTY



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great

## 1. Identification of the Property

### *1.a Country (and State Party if different)*

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

### *1.b State, Province or Region*

KERMÂNSHÂH

### *1.c Name of Property*

BISOTUN

### *1.d Geographical coordinates to the nearest second*

The site of Bisotun lies 25 km to the east/northeast of the city of Kermânshâh, at 34° 23' 18'' N and 47° 26' 12'' E, at 2300 m above sea level (map. 1).

### *1.e Maps and plans showing boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone*

See the maps 3, 4, 5 and 10 attached to the end of the file.

### *1.f Area of nominated property (ha.) and proposed buffer zone (ha.)*

**Single Nomination Table for the Bisotun Site**

<i>Site Name</i>	<i>Map Reference</i>	<i>Core Zone (ha)</i>	<i>Buffer Zone (ha)</i>	<i>Landscape Zone (ha)</i>
Bisotun	3,4,5,10	187	361	35054





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### Reference table to the vestiges in Bisotun

<i>N°</i>	<i>Site Name</i>	<i>Map reference</i>	<i>Picture/slide Reference</i>	<i>Text reference</i>
1	Prehistoric remains (caves)	3,4,5,10	1-5	2a.1
2	The Maddian fortress	3,4,5,10	---	2a.2
3	Achaemenid remains <b>Darius's rock-relief</b>	3, 4,5,6, 7,10	Pics 6-12, 41,46-48 Slides 1-9	2a.3
4	The Seleucid figure of Heracles	3, 4,5,8,10	Pics 13-14 Slide 10	2a.4
5	Parthian Slope and the Sang-e Belâsh	3,4,5	pic 15-16 & slide 13	2a.5
6	Parthian remains reliefs of Mithradates and Gotarzes II	3,4,5,9,10	Pics 17-18 Slide 4, 11	2a.6
7	Sassanids & Ilkhanid remains	3,4,5,10	Pics 19-22, 49	2a.7
8	Farhâd Tarâsh	3,4,5,10	22-24 Slide 12	2a.8
9	The Gamâsyâb retaining wall and Pol-e Khosrow	3,4,5,10	26-28	2a.9
10	Shâh-Abbâsi Caravanserai	3,4,5,10	29-32, 50-53 Slide 14	2a.10

### Reference table to the histo-cultural monuments inscribed in the National List (within cultural landscape zone of Bisotun)

<i>N°</i>	<i>Site Name</i>	<i>Historical Period</i>	<i>Date of registration</i>	<i>Number of registration</i>	<i>Map reference</i>
1	Old Baghistan	Achaemenid	1931	26	5, 10
2	Takht-e Shirin	Sassanids	1932	27	5, 10
3	Darius's rock-relief	Achaemenid	1931	70	3,5,6,7,10
4	Bisotun bridge	Safavid	1967	765	3,5,10
5	Shah-abbasi Caravanserai	Safavid	1974	974	3,5,10
6	Sassanids & Il-Khânid monument	Sassanids	2001	4880	3,5,10
7	reliefs of Mithradates, GotarzesII and Shaykh Ali Khân	Historical – Islamic	2001	4881	3,5,9,10
8	Mar-Âftaw cave	Palaeolithic	2001	4882	3,5,10
9	Maddian temple	Historical	2001	4883	3,5,10
10	Sang-e Belâsh	Parthian	2001	4884	3,5, 10
11	Mar-Kher cave	Palaeolithic	2001	4885	5, 10
12	Dressed stones	Sassanids	2001	4886	3,5, 10
13	Farhâd Tarâsh (Farhâdtash)	Sassanids	2001	4887	3,5, 10
14	Naderi mound	Palaeolithic-Afshari	2001	4888	5, 10



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15	Shekârchiyân cave	Palaeolithic	2001	4889	3,5,10
16	Remains of Sassanids bridge (Pol-e Khosrow)	Sassanids	2001	4890	3,5, 10
17	Sarâb -e Bisotun	Pre historic to present	2001	5020	3, 5, 10
18	Bisotun Cultural historical complex	Prehistoric-Qajaried	2002	6463	3,5, 10
19	Azim mound	Prehistoric	2002	6876	5, 10
20	Gorgivand mound	Islamic	2002	6878	5, 10
21	Patappeh (mound)	Historical	2002	6880	5, 10
22	Chenaran cave	Chalcolithic	2002	6882	5, 10
23	Nazeliyan mound	Chalcolithic	2002	6884	5, 10
24	Qusivand mound	Chalcolithic	2002	6885	5, 10
25	Amadol dolle Barnaj mound	Prehistoric	2002	6886	5, 10
26	Kashantu cemetery mound	Historical-Islamic	2002	6983	5, 10
27	Karkhaneye Shen and Maseheye chehr mound	Bronze	2002	6984	5, 10
28	Qale kharabe mound	Historical-Islamic	2002	6987	5, 10
29	Sarmaj fortress	Historical	2002	6989	5, 10
30	Sagaz mound	Historical	2002	6990	5, 10
31	Kud/ Kabud mound	Historical-Islamic	2002	6991	5, 10
32	Qaravali mound	Historical	2002	6993	5, 10
33	Farhâdkan	Sassanids	2002	7000	5, 10
34	Dehchogha 3 mound (paper industry)	Prehistoric	2003	8137	5, 10
35	Qolame gohare mound (102-h)	Prehistoric	2003	8138	5, 10
36	Arow (Arab) mound	Prehistoric	2003	8141	5, 10
37	Chambatan oliya mound	Historical	2003	8144	5, 10
38	Nejubaran (10-k)mound	Prehistoric	2003	8145	5, 10
39	Paghabale inscription (123-h)	Islamic	2003	8148	5, 10
40	Latechogha mound (Qarb paper industry)	Parthian	2003	8155	5, 10
41	Kenibazi mound (100-h)	Historical	2003	8165	5, 10
42	Quzivand bridge	Sassanids-Pahlavi	2003	10165	5, 10
43	Old farrash mound	Parthian-Islamic	2005	11779	5, 10
44	Homaile gohare mound	New chalcolithic	2005	11786	5, 10
45	Old Songhor abad mound	Prehistoric	2005	12181	5, 10
46	Jahanshahe Qaytul mound	Parthian – Islamic	2005	12182	5, 10
47	Rutavand Qaytul	Islamic	2005	12183	5, 10
48	Do chogha 2 mound	1 <sup>st</sup> millennium BC	2005	12186	5, 10
49	Dor abadiye takht-e shirin mound	Prehistoric	2005	12465	5, 10
50	Pagare chambatane oliya mound	Neolithic – historical	2005	12470	5, 10
51	Songhorabad cemetery mound	Historical	2005	13938	5, 10
52	Do rahiye zolmabad mound	Early Achaemenid	2005	13940	5, 10



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## 2 DESCRIPTION



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## 2. Description

### 2.a Description of Property

The original Old Persian form of the name *Bisotun* can be recovered from the Greek rendering *Bagistanon* (*oros*) “Mt. Bagistanon” in Diodorus Siculus (2.13.1, from Ctesias) as *Bagastana* “place or stand of the god(s).” In the works of medieval Persian and Arab geographers such as Ibn Hawqal, Estakhri, and Yâqut the Middle/New Persian form *Bahesotun/Behesotun* (lit. “with good columns”), a recast of an unattested *Bahistan*, occurs. The modern forms *Bisotun*, etc. (with or without anaptyctic vowel; lit. “without columns”), which are also used by Yâqut, Estakhri, Qazvini, and Moqaddasi, represent popular transformations of *Behestun* (Schwarz, *Iran IV*, p. 452 for the cliff, 487ff. for the village). The name clearly shows that the place had been holy from time immemorial and Darius’s monument was well known to the ancients: Ctesias (Diodorus, 2.13.1-2) speaks of Mt. Bagistanon with its sheer cliffs rising to a height of 17 stades as *hieron Dios* “sacred to Zeus” (i.e., to the supreme god Ahura Mazda) and mentions a great park (Gk. *parkdeisos*) laid out by Queen Semiramis. He also refers to an image of her and an inscription in Syrian (i.e., Assyrian) letters (cuneiform writing); obviously he took Darius’s relief and inscriptions for a monument belonging to the legendary Babylonian queen. Moreover, Diodorus (17.110.5) tells of a Bagistane district, through which Alexander the Great had passed, and calls it “best fitting for the gods” (*itheoprepestkte*), an epithet recalling the etymon of the name.<sup>1</sup>

**2.a.1. Prehistoric remains** (maps 3,4,5 and 10, pics 1-5): Some Palaeolithic cave finds are the earliest evidence of human presence at the spring-fed pool (Sarâb) of Bisotun. Altogether a cluster of five caves tunneled through the basal cliff on the southern face of Bisotun near the confluence of the Gamâsyâb and Dinawar Rivers can be observed. Some of the caves were formed on sub-horizontal lines transversing the

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<sup>1</sup> See further Isidore of Charax, *Parthian Stations*, ed. by W. H. Schoff, London, 1914, p. 5, mentioning a city, Bagistana (his emendation for ms. *Bkptana*), situated on a mountain, with an image and stele of Semiramis; and Stephanus Byzantius, *Ethnica*, ed. by A. Meineke, Berlin, 1849, p. 155, listing a Maddian city Bagistana and Mount Bagistanon. A full discussion is given in H. Luschey, 1974, pp. 114-49; and in F. Weissbach, “Bagistana,” in *Pauly-Wissowa*, 11/2, 1896, col. 2769-71.



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foot of the rock Nearby is the first Mousterian site excavated in Iran, the Hunter's Cave (Ghâr-e Shekârchiyân) at Bisotun overlooking the famous spring and very near Darius' inscription. It was completely excavated by C. S. Coon in 1949, under the auspices of the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania, and is the only excavated Palaeolithic site in Iran that has been published in detail in a monograph.<sup>2</sup> The industry here is much like that at Warwasi, being well made with some Levallois element present. Judging by the faunal remains, red deer were the principal game, followed by an equid (probably an onager) and some gazelle, but oddly enough, no sheep or goat. Perhaps it was less a living site (there are no hearths and the site is small, really a rock-shelter rather than a true cave) than a place to butcher game that came to drink at the spring gushing from the base of Bisotun rock; however, Coon suggested, rather improbably, that it may also have served the Mousterian people as a kind of shrine where they cached their finer artefacts. From here, too, came a fragment of a human arm bone described by Coon as "Neanderthaloid." Perhaps the nearby site of "Ghar-i-Khar" (Mar-Kher), tested by T. C. Young and Ph. Smith in 1965 was a true living place for the Mousterian inhabitants of the Bisotun area.<sup>3</sup> It is a long and deep cave in the cliff high above the valley floor, and the Mousterian level-barely touched in the narrow test pit dug-is surmounted by about two meters of Upper Palaeolithic deposits; the industry features thick blades and flakes with scrapers. No Levallois element was found, possibly because the sample was small.<sup>4</sup> Evidently the cave could have been occupied at intervals from at least the Middle Paleolithic (probably ending at about 40,000 B.C.) period until recent times. Stone artifacts and faunal remains were plentiful. Hearth areas could also be distinguished throughout the sequence of occupations. At the base of the sounding a Middle Paleolithic level yielding typical Mousterian artifacts such as asymmetrical side-scrapers and thick retouched blades was reached. The identification of artifacts in the zones extending approximately 1 meter above the Mousterian was somewhat difficult due to the limited sampling, but in all likelihood they represent occupations by

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<sup>2</sup> Coon, 1951, pp. 6-15.

<sup>3</sup> Young and Smith.

<sup>4</sup> Coon, 1951, p. 86.



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Advanced (or Upper) Paleolithic groups who produced blade-tools analogous to certain artifacts of the Baradostian industry as defined at Shanidar Cave in northern Iraq.

In the summer of 1986, F. Biglari visited three cave sites between Ghar -i Khar and Hunter's cave at an altitude of about 1500 – 1600m. These caves lie close together on an almost horizontally fault line about 250m above the Chamchamal plain with a good elevated view. They contain Middle Paleolithic artifacts; one of them also producing a small number of Upper Paleolithic artifacts.

In 2004 Mar Tarik Cave with a rich Mousterian lithic assemblage, was tested by Jaubert and Biglari. Their studies of the lithic materials confirmed the techno-typological relationship with previously published data from the area which are strong proportion of retouched tools with a majority of points, elongated points, convergent scrapers, *déjetés* or double scrapers with frequently sharpened edges. This industry thus represents a particular economic and functional facies, related most probably on the location and the operating mode of the site itself. A slab of fine grained limestone engraved of geometrical patterns was also discovered although its association to Mar Tarik Mousterian is not certain. The same is for some human remains probably of Holocene age attributed to *Homo sapiens* on the basis of first diagnosis. The initial study on faunal assemblage, mixed and poorly preserved, indicates the presence of mammals of small to average size and micro-vertebrates. The micro-vertebrates bones correlate to fish, reptiles, and birds. Most of mammal remains belong to caprines. A first date on stalagmite at the base of the sequence: 123, 6 [+3, 4/-3, 2] kyr BP.

The presence of Middle Paleolithic archaeological remains at all five caves at Bisotun may illustrate their importance in the Middle Paleolithic period. Seemingly the Middle Paleolithic bands of people (Neanderthals?) used these caves for temporary or seasonal occupations. Such compact cluster of sites dating to the Middle Paleolithic period has not been reported elsewhere in the Zagros. It is highly possible that the recorded sites could bear sufficient evidences resulting to further information on subsistence-settlement patterns of the Middle Paleolithic period leading to the similarities of their assemblages with other Zagros Mousterian assemblages.



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**2.a.2 The Maddian fortress** (map 3,4,5 and 10): This name has been given to the remains of a fortress on the mountain slope because a bronze triangular fibula of the 8<sup>th</sup> / 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C. was found in its wall. The fortress was first investigated by F. Hinzen, then fully explored by W. Kleiss.<sup>5</sup> In its construction, with rectangular buttresses, it resembles the fortress at Tepe Nushi-Jan, which is not very far away. Probably it was the old fortress named Sikayauvatig where Darius and his companions killed Gaumata, as reported in his inscription.<sup>6</sup> The terrace below the relief of Darius, which was covered with debris from the relief, may well be Maddian or early Achaemenid – perhaps for the worship of an earlier image that has not been preserved.<sup>7</sup> Other important monuments which can be considered as parts of this slope, such as the Maddian fortress for instance, are referred to separately hereafter. (See 4.a.2)

**2.a.3. Achaemenid remains, Darius's Rock-Relief** (maps 3,4,5,6 and 7, pics 6-12 and slides 1 to 9): A glance at the relief shows that it was carved into a flattened rectangular rock surface measuring about 3 x 5.5m. Darius is portrayed standing and facing right, wearing a Persian garment, the 'royal' shoes, a bracelet and a crenulated crown of an especially elaborate design. In his left hand he holds a bow, a sign of sovereignty often portrayed in this form. His right hand is raised at face level. With his left foot Darius is treading on the chest of a figure who lies on his back before him and, according to the legends, represents Gaumata, the Maddian Magus and pretender to the throne whose assassination led to Darius's reign. Gaumata, who is also dressed in Persian attire, which is no indication of any specific ethnic group, is raising his arms as a sign of submission.

From the right-hand side, a group of rebels is walking towards the king. Their hands are tied behind their backs and a long rope is bound around their necks, attaching them to each other. These figures are distinctly smaller than the king, measuring only 1.17 m against his 1.72 m. Each of these prisoners can be identified not only by his legend, but also by his specific ethnic costume, while the variations in physiognomy

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> R. Kent, *Old Persian, Grammar, Texts, and Lexicon*, New Haven, 1951, fo DB 1.58, pp. 118, 120, 209; Lushey, 1968, pp. 66-68.

<sup>7</sup> Lushey, 1968, p. 66, figs 1-2.



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and headdress are no doubt also meant to convey a semblance of individuality or of a definite ethnic type. The first eight standing figures represent the leaders of the rebellions that broke out in the year after Darius came to power - rebellions about which the king himself says that he had to smother them in a sea of blood. The last captive, the Scythian Skunkha with the pointed hood, was added to the scene at a later time, after Darius had successfully concluded his Scythian campaign of 519 B.C. With the help of the inscription, it has been possible to establish that the pretenders to the throne are depicted in the order in which their rebellions had been quelled.

Behind the king stand two armed figures who have been assumed to represent two of Darius's fellow conspirators, but the inscriptions do not identify them. Above the scene lies the "winged man", who for a long time was believed to depict Ahura Mazda, the god frequently invoked by Darius in the inscription, but perhaps this image should rather be interpreted as the symbol of his royal ancestors.

The next two illustrations clarify the spatial relations between relief and inscription - or rather inscriptions. At the same time, they serve to provide information about how - i.e. in what order - the inscription and relief were carved into the rock face. The relief was evidently created first, that is, with the first eight 'liar kings', but without Skunkha, the Scythian ruler with the pointed hood. The only text at the end of this phase was the Elamite legend for the king, for its beginning differs in several minor but significant formulations from that of the royal protocol of the large Elamite inscription produced later.

A second phase saw the creation of the older Elamite version of the inscription in four columns with 323 lines on the right-hand side of the relief and the Elamite legends for the rebels (DBb-j). The asymmetrical placing of the large inscription next to the relief and the above-mentioned changes in the wording of its first section point to a revision or elaboration of the text and the monument as a whole.

The third phase marks the creation of the 112 lines in the Babylonian version of the inscription on the left of the relief, as well as the Babylonian legends (DBb-j).





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Since this version had evidently not been planned to start with, room had to be found on the ledge to the left of the relief. Similarly unplanned were the Babylonian legends. So it was necessary to omit that of the king and to cram those of the rebels Gaumata and Acina together under Gaumata's Elamite legend.

In the particularly important fourth phase, Darius had the Old Persian version of his *res gestae* placed in four columns below the relief (pic 12). Compared with the earlier versions, this contained one additional passage (§ 70), and the same passage was simultaneously added to the Elamite inscription (above the Elamite legend for the king). Apart from that, the relief figures (with the exception of the king) were now also provided with Old Persian legends whose lack of harmony with the rest of the relief confirms that they were created later. It is obvious that § 70 was already part of the initial design of the Old Persian version, while the Elamite version did not contain it to start with, and the Babylonian version omits it altogether for lack of space. This proves that the Old Persian script, and hence the Old Persian inscription, did not yet exist at the time when the Elamite version was conceived. And in fact in this § 70, Darius actually states that he had the Old Persian cuneiform script made for the purpose of composing this inscription:

By the favour of Ahura Mazda, this [is] the form of writing [OP *dipicifa*] which I have made, besides, in Aryan. ... And it was written down and was read aloud before me. Afterwards I have sent this form of writing everywhere into the countries. The people strove [to use it].

In the next phase, starting around 518 B.C., the figure of the Scythian Skunkha, who was captured in the third year of Darius's reign, was added to the relief and given a Persian and an Elamite legend. Because of this addition, the original Elamite version had to be eliminated, and its text was carved anew word-for-word on the left-hand side of the Old Persian and underneath the Babylonian version (later Elamite version).

Shortly afterwards, a sixth phase saw the addition of a fifth column (§§ 71-76) to the Old Persian version, containing information about the second and third years of Darius's reign. Lack of space prevented an extension of the Elamite and Babylonian



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versions to contain this part of the *res gestae*. At the very end, the Old Persian legend for the king was created, already following the protocol of the Elamite version instead of the older and more personal formulation of the Elamite legend.

What could have been the royal conception of the inscriptions and the relief? Philological and historical analyses of the different versions of the inscription prove beyond all doubt that the Elamite and Old Persian versions on the one hand, and the Aramaic and Babylonian ones on the other, are closely connected.

However, the apparatus of variants in the existing versions of inscriptions, the impossibility of immediately translating an oral dictation and carving it into stone, as well as other factors, show that the editorial work must have been considerably more extensive and varied than the surviving (written) versions would let to believe. These rules out drawing up a simple stemma. Among the peculiarities of certain versions, some are especially striking - for example the mention of the numbers of fallen opponents in the Aramaic and Babylonian versions; and supplementary statements and clarifications in some versions, evidently with a view to contributing to a better understanding of the content by the respective groups of populations addressed. In the Old Persian version produced last of all, some statements included in the Elamite version that could hardly be flattering to Darius, for instance regarding the troops of Persian guards who had deserted him, were simply omitted, which shows that the content of the text had been re-examined. Questions such as how the composition of the relief relates to the rest, whether it was designed prior to the text, as the genesis of the monument would lead us to believe, or whether the first thing planned was to instruct the population about its contents, in which case the text would have been produced first, can hardly be decided. And in view of the rapid creation of both parts of the monument, they are of minor significance.

The earliest Aramaic versions or copies, which have not survived, were no doubt made for the speedy instruction of different parts of the empire and must have been reproduced for this purpose; it was copied, dispatched, and again recopied, perhaps at the courts of the satraps. All this may be explained by the location of the



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monument, making it impossible for the passer-by in Bisotun to understand the reliefs or to decipher the inscriptions. It is hardly surprising that later ancient historians attributed the monument to the legendary Queen Semiramis.

The way in which the various versions of the inscription were distributed in different parts of the empire is unknown. Copies of the cuneiform versions were no doubt less common than those of the Aramaic version, which was easier to read and to copy. For one thing, the Aramaic language was spoken and understood by many of the inhabitants of the empire, and for another, the Aramaic script, which, unlike all cuneiform scripts, was most suitable for papyrus, leather, etc., eminently met the requirements of the administration and propaganda service. If we think of the distribution of the content in terms of the area covered, as suggested by the copy from Elephantine, this would mean that the text may also have been translated into other regional and local languages, for instance Greek, although no such versions have actually been found.

Oddly enough, the papyrus from Elephantine contains, probably in lieu of § 55 of the Bisotun inscription, a passage from the lower epitaph of Darius in Naqsh-e Rostam (DNb); this might be connected with the origin of the Aramaic copy more than 100 years later, although nothing is known of the surrounding circumstances. On the other hand, the epitaph is interesting because, like the reliefs outside Bisotun, it describes the qualities of the Achaemenid rulers in an indeterminate time.

Little is known about the places where the copies of the inscriptions were set up, or about the ways in which their content was circulated (through readers, town-criers, etc.). Considering the limited literacy of the population in the regions where cuneiform script was used, and even in those where Aramaic, Egyptian or Greek was written, the proclamation of the *res gestae* would in fact only have made sense by word of mouth. And indeed, the great king explicitly declares in § 70 that the text of the Old Persian version, for which a system of writing had just been created, was “read” to him after completion.



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**2.a.4. The Seleucid figure of Heracles from 148 B.C.** (map 3,4,8 and 10, pic 13-14 and slide and 10): This rock carving of Heracles recumbent is in such high relief that it almost seems to have been sculpted in the round. It was found during work to lower the level of the main road.<sup>8</sup> It is an awkward piece of work, not up to the standard of the period, but important because of its datable Greek inscription. Perhaps inspired by a carving from the time of Alexander, it is an early example of the tradition of portraying Heracles reclining. Opinions differ on the question whether the figure of a lion below that of Heracles is a somewhat unusual depiction of the lion skin on which he is supposed to be reclining or, as D. Stronach supposed, an independent carving from the Maddian period.

**2.a.5. Parthian Slope and the Sang-e Belâsh** (maps 3,4 and 5, pics 15-16 and slide 13): The site roughly includes the slope of the mountain situated in-between the eastern side of Darius rock-relief and the west side of the Statue of Heracles. Here and there, Parthian “clinky” shards are scattered around, hence its name: Shib-e Pârti / the Parthian Slope. Moreover, the isolated rock called Sang-e Belâsh (Belâsh’s Stone) is to be found on the lower side of the same slope, about 500m east of Heracles’s statue. The stone was discovered in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and bears a crude carving of a sacrificial victim on an altar and another human figure beside it. The man represents one of the five Parthian emperors who bore that name (transcribed as Beles, Valakhs or Vologeses). The attribution is based on an inscription, carved on the representation of a fire altar which stands on that rock close to the imperial figure. As in its present state, the inscription contains no more the name of the emperor’s father, it has not been up to know possible to know to which one of these emperors the rock-relief must be attributed. They reigned between 105 and 223 A. D.

In 2003, some preliminary excavations were undertaken in the area of the Parthian Slope, but these experimental limited works did not reveal noticeable vestiges. Perhaps further studies will show more traces of a 2nd-millennium settlement which has been noticed previously by previous archaeologists. Some fragments of prehistoric pottery

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<sup>8</sup> A. Hâkemi, 1338 / 1959.



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washed down from the ravine below the Darius's relief have been also found in the debris below the relief, but the evidence for this period remains on the whole scanty as already reported.<sup>9</sup>

Other important monuments likely to be considered as being also parts of this slope, such as the Maddian fortress, the figure of Heracles and the Parthian remains, due to their importance are taken in consideration hereunder separately (see 4.a.2, 4.a.4 and 4.a.6).

**2.a.6. Parthian remains, reliefs of Mithradates and Gotarzes II** (maps 3,4 and 9, pics 17-18 and slides 4 and 11): The remains of the Parthian period comprise reliefs of Mithradates II (123-87 B.C.) and Gotarzes II (*ca.* 50 B.C.) and the Parthian Stone (see above, paragraph 2.a.5).<sup>10</sup> These rock carvings were among the earliest discoveries at Bisotun. The relief of Mithradates depicts four satraps in a line before the king, with all the figures in profile, and thus is still strongly within the Achaemenid tradition. The relief of Gotarzes or Gudarz, which shows horsemen in combat and Nike hovering above, is more in a Roman style. Both these somewhat provincial works have suffered damage from weathering, and part of the Mithradates relief has been obliterated by the insertion in 1094 / 1684-85 of a *waqf* inscription by the Statesman Shaykh Ali Khân Zangeneh, who also built the New Caravanserai (see below 2.a.10).<sup>11</sup>

**2.a.7. Sassanids (Palace) and the Il-Khânid remains** (maps 3,4,5 and 10, pics 19-22): It is admitted that the lands situated between the Shâh Abbâsi Caravanserai and the present ICHTO House contains old remains. As a large section of these lands situated towards the South-East and the Shâh Abbâsi Caravanserai were occupied by the security zone of a 'rehabilitation centre', it has not been possible to survey them, hence the white section on the map (map 3). Excavations were thus limited to the North-West of this area. They were first led by German archaeologists and then by a Persian team up to 2001. Two periods were recognised: a Sassanids occupation and an Il-Khânid one.

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<sup>9</sup> See also Kleiss, 1970.

<sup>10</sup> See Lushey in Kleiss and Clameyer, pp. 89-90.

<sup>11</sup> This Zangeneh was an ancestor of the engineer Zangeneh of Kermânsâh, who built the sugar factory which is 800m away from the relief of Darius.



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The upper level, the Il-Khânid occupation (13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> cent. A. D.), contains the remains of a mosque and parts of a caravanserai built on the top of the Sassanids building. The Caravanserai has been destroyed during the Timurid epoch (14<sup>th</sup> cent.) by a violent earthquake. Its fallen vaults and walls show the violence of the seismic movements. A century later, a new caravanserai (the Shâh Abbâsi Caravanserai, see below 2.a.10) was built near by to replace it.

The Sassanids period is represented up to now mainly by the vestiges of an unfinished palace attributed to the emperor Khosrow II (590-628 A.D). It lay partly under the Il-Khânid remains. There are also types of unidentified monuments and objects. First, there are three large sculptured capitals. These capitals were the first Sassanids remains at Bisotun to attract attention, having been sketched by G. A. Olivier in 1796.<sup>12</sup> They are amongst the some of the most significant monuments at Bisotun and constitute important documents for the history of Sassanids art. The question of where and when they were originally erected has been highly controversial. Herzfeld considered them to be from Tâq-e Bostân and datable to the reign of Kosrow II (590-628 A.D.), though he mentioned that two of them had been found at Bisotun whereas K. Erdmann argued for Bisotun and the reign of Peroz (459-483 A.D.).

On each capital the king is portrayed on one side and the goddess Anahid on the opposite side; the remaining two sides are carved with floral ornament, including finely detailed lotus plants. Together with a fourth capital, now missing, they must have formed an architectural unit in which the goddess on one capital presented the garland of sovereignty to the king on the next capital, each capital and its column being linked to the next by an arch. In an attempt to find the original position of this unit, some trial trenches were excavated in an area beside the Bisotun pool, but no trace of any former structure was found. It was impossible to explore the whole area because part of it is covered with massive buildings. Another possibility is that the site of the capitals may have been on the bank of the Gâmâsyâb some 100 m north of the Il-Khânid building at the point where the retaining wall intersects with one axis of a 19th-century garden

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<sup>12</sup> Luschej, 1974, p. 12, figs 19-24, p. 141, fig. 41a.



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(which probably follows an older alignment). Various Sassanids architectural remains belonging to the so called Khosrow II's Palace including one section of a profile, a piece of column, and some fragments of stone blocks, have been discovered closer to the Il-Khânid building. At any rate, a site near water would explain the portrayal of Anahid on the capitals. She is similarly associated with Khosrow II on the reverse of one of that king's silver coins. The capitals are products of the last flowering of Sassanids art, in the years around A.D. 600, in Khosrow's reign, and cannot be dated to the 5<sup>th</sup> century, which would shorten the history of Sassanids art by 150 years.

**2.a.8. Farhâd Tarâsh** (maps 3,4,5 and 10, pics 22-24 and slide 12): This section of the cliff is of key importance in understanding the entire Sassanids building program at Bisotun. It is a huge chiselled rock face approximately 200m wide and 30m high, with a retaining wall ca. 150 m in front of it; it is thus the biggest such work in Iran and has interested writers from medieval geographers like Estakhri and Yâqut to travellers and archaeologists in modern times. Interpretations have differed widely. Rawlinson thought it to be the rear wall of a palace of Khosrow Parviz prepared for a relief of Semiramis; while King and Thompson believed that it was the location of the Sassanids palace itself.<sup>13</sup> Others like A. Williams Jackson wrote that it was the field prepared for another inscription of Darius.<sup>14</sup> and there is the same uncertainty about its date. Nevertheless, a Sassanids date has been the most accepted one amongst scholars.

Local tradition, as reported in the 1960s and as noted earlier by Jackson, attributes the work to Khosrow Parviz's architect Farhâd, which points to the Sassanids period and prompts examination of Nezâmi's celebrated poem, *Khosrow va Shirin*, written about A. D. 1180. Nezâmi mentions three great works of Farhâd: the milk channel, the passage cut through the mountain at Bisotun, and the portrait of Shirin.<sup>15</sup> Miniature paintings are

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<sup>13</sup> King and Thompson, p. xxvi

<sup>14</sup> Jackson, pp. 187-197.

<sup>15</sup> Written between 1177 and 1180, "Khosrow and Shirin" was dedicated to three patrons: the Seljuq king Abu Taleb Toghrul ibn Arsalên, Atabak Shams-od-Din Abu Ja'far Mohammad Jahân Pahlavân, and the latter's brother, Atabak Qezel Arsalân. About 6500 distiches in length, the story depicts the love of Sassanian Khosrow Parviz towards his Armenian queen, Shirin. Shirin is in love with Khosrow as well as with Farhâd, a famed stone-cutter, commissioned by the king to cut a channel in the Bisotun mountain. When the king learns about Shirin's love for Farhâd, he becomes jealous. To test Farhâd's love, he sends Farhâd a message informing him of Shirin's death. Upon hearing this, the stone-cutter throws himself



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particularly helpful in clarifying matters at Bisotun. The story of Farhâd and Shirin was a favourite theme for miniatures, stucco work, and paintings on tiles and under glass from the 9<sup>th</sup> / 15<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> / 20<sup>th</sup> century. This subject requires detailed study. One of the most revealing works of art in this connection is a miniature of ca. 973 / 1575 (at Oxford), which depicts a meeting of Farhâd with Shirin in front of the pool at Mount Bisotun; a slab carved with effigies of two lovers is set into the hillside, which is clearly identifiable as the great rock face. Taken together, the poetry, the miniatures, and the data from examination of the site suggest that Farhâd was the architect of the Sassanids works at Bisotun. The chiselled rock face must be the wall of his “passage through the mountain for twenty horsemen.” The milk channel, which is also often depicted in miniatures, is likely to have been the working channel on top of the cliff -an opinion in which G. Cameron concurred (oral communication). The notion of the “portrait of Shirin” may well have been evoked by the capitals showing Anahid and Khosrow Parviz, which were certainly visible in the time of Nezâmi and his informants, as they have never been buried under earth. References to the Sassanids remains in the literature of the early Islamic period apparently stirred people’s imaginations and inspired poetic compositions in later times. Although Nezâmi never left his hometown, Ganjeh on the northern side of the Araxe River, and thus never saw Bisotun, he had access to information recorded by geographers in the 4<sup>th</sup> /10<sup>th</sup> century and passed on as part of the literary tradition.

Study of the cliff face of Farhâd from a different point of view was undertaken by the German architect W. Salzman. His researches included especially the risky examination and measuring of the work area above the cut-away section of the rock. He has considerably clarified the method of working and has calculated the volume of rock removed at approximately 40,000m<sup>3</sup>. In attempting to reconstruct what was originally planned, he concluded that there was to be a huge terrace at a height of 30m and an enormous *eyvân* hollowed out of the rock, probably on the same scale as the Tâq-e Kasrâ at Ctesiphon, with reliefs on either side.

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down the side of the mountain and dies. Khosrow lives with Shirin until he is assassinated. Shirin kills herself and joins her lovers.





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The dressed stone blocks on the hillside were noted by early European travellers but were not identified as Sassanids until recent studies showed new evidences. It was found that these stones are of the same rock as the Farhâd Tarâsh and that they bear masons' marks that match markings on Sassanids seals and are clearly of the same form as the masons' marks on the Farhâd Tarâsh, the Gâmâsyâb retaining wall, and the dressed stones in the Old Caravansary which belongs to the Safavid period. The blocks, numbering several hundred, are found along the whole stretch of the hillside below the Farhâd Tarâsh as far as the ravine of Darius and beyond along the Parthian Slope up to the Kurdish gravestones -a distance of more than 2000 m.<sup>16</sup> (map 3 and 4, pic. 25)

**2.a.9. The Gâmâsyâb retaining wall and the Pol-e Khosrow** (maps 3, 4,5 and 10, pics 26-28): Due to the distance, these remains fall within the landscape limits of Bisotun, but not in its core or buffer zones; naturally, as they are inscribed on the list of Iranian National Monuments, they are by law protected. Their importance justifies their presentation here all the more so as an extension of the limits of the site of Bisotun may be considered in future.

Early investigators had missed the vestiges of the Gâmâsyâb retaining wall; they were pointed out to archaeologists by local people later. They are 5 m thick and faced with two or three courses of large blocks, mostly 70 cm high; the infill is of small stones set in mortar. On the land side the wall reaches a height of about 5 m.<sup>17</sup> Its course can be followed for approximately 1,000 m on the right bank of the Gâmâsyâb (Gamasab), which flows directly south at this point; the wall forms a right angle with the Sassanids bridge known as Pol-e Khosrow. In the 1930s, according to Qâzizâdeh, a former village headman, many of the stone blocks were removed and used in the new bridge, which was built some distance downstream on the road to Harsin; they can still be recognized there.

As for the Pol-e Khosrow, remains of a bridge by this name were mentioned by H. Rawlinson, and the name is still in use among the local people. The masonry consists of

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<sup>16</sup> Lushey, 1974, pp, 129, 142, fig. 27.

<sup>17</sup> Lushey, *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, p. 296, and in Kleiss and Clameyer, 1996, pp. 117-120.



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a rubble-concrete core faced with stone blocks. Nine piers, each pointed on both sides, are still standing, but none of the superstructure remains. Kleiss examined and measured the bridge in 1966-67 and surmised that it had been left unfinished, for no remains of arches could be found in the riverbed. The bridge is *ca.* 150 m long and 6m wide. It provided crossing for a straight road running towards the Takht-e Shirin; the course of this old road can be clearly seen, especially from the rock-cut face of Farhâd Tarâsh. These traces are evidence for the Sassanids surveying system, based on accurate reckoning of the north-south and east-west coordinates. About 500m east of the bridge's western end the road is joined at right angles by an embankment that runs south parallel to the retaining wall. Kleiss inferred that the rectangular area thus defined, with the river flowing through it, was probably a marshy pre-serve for hunting wild boars, as depicted in the Tâq-e Bostân relief. It has approximately the same dimensions as the *paradeisos* in front of Tâq-e Bostân.

**2.a.10. The Shâh-Abbâsi Caravanserai** (maps 3,4,5 and 10, pics 29-32 and slide 14): The building of this hostelry was ordered by Shâh Abbâs the Great (1588 - 1629) to replace the Il-Khânid Caravanserai destroyed in a violent earthquake which occurred under the Timurids (15<sup>th</sup> Cent.). Its construction ended years after, when Shaykh Ali Khân Zangeneh was Chancellor under king Soleymân the Safavid from 1667 to 1694. Later, in the Second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, it was repaired under Nâser-od-Din Shâh Qajar. Its plan is nearly square (83m SN x 74m EW) and measures about 6274m<sup>2</sup>. It is a classical caravanserai as it is brick built and has a central court (49 x 42m) flanked by four *eyvâns*. Its entrance looks towards the South.

## ***2.b History and Development***

According to archaeological finds, the site of Bisotun had been occupied long before the Achaemenids. The Palaeolithic caves bear testimony to the occupation of the valley and the site as early as the 10<sup>th</sup> millennium B.C. The site was a strategic point for millennia, especially during the early years of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium B.C. when the communication with Mesopotamia increased and passed by the Mountain of Bisotun. A Maddian fort was probably built there in 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C. to control the access to the road and the



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Mountain Cliff. Darius the Great had his reliefs and inscriptions carved on the rocky face of the mountain in 521 B. C. The site was regularly occupied since then down to the Middle Ages. It seems that the monuments of Darius fell in oblivion after the end of the Achaemenid Empire in 330 B.C. so that Diodorus writing two centuries later mentioned it as the work of the legendary Queen Semiramis. Twelve centuries later, Yâqut noted only the existence of an eroded relief showing a horseman and attributed to Parthian times. The first European who visited the site was the Frenchman Jean Otter in 1734. Then, Bisotun was visited by other French travellers such as Olivier (1756-1814), Jaubert (1779-1847), and Gardanne (1765-1822). J. Kinneir visited the site in 1810, but could not climb up the rock. In 1818, R. Ker Porter who had tried in vain to climb up the rocky face of the mountain wrote that the relief might be that of King Shalmanesar. Finally, in 1837-38, Major Henry Rawlinson visited the rock-reliefs and decided to copy and to decipher the cuneiform inscriptions which resulted in the final decipherment of the Old Persian script in 1847.



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### 3

## JUSTIFICATION FOR INSCRIPTION



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great

### **3. Justification for Inscription**

#### ***3.a Criteria under which inscription is proposed (and justification for inscription under these criteria)***

From what has been written above, it follows that Bisotun may meet at least the justification for criteria ii, iii and iv:

- ii. The rock-reliefs and the settlements at Bisotun, considering their location on the main east-west route, exhibit an interchange of human cultures over a very large span of time, i.e. from Prehistoric times to the modern era, with an apogee between the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. and the 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D. The reliefs are witnesses to the development of the art of rock-reliefs in Iran over a millennium.

- iii. Bisotun bear an exceptional testimony of the Symbols of Power of the civilisation of a multiethnic empire which under four dynasties (Achaemenid, Seleucid, Parthian and Sassanids) lasted more than a thousand years and ruled and shaped the destiny of South-Western Asia as well as sometimes parts of Eastern Europe and Africa.

- iv. Bisotun shows exceptional evidence in the history of decipherment of the cuneiform script which paved the way for subsequent reading of many other important cuneiform documents of human history. The inscriptions of Darius the Great were indeed the golden key to such a source of human history which had been hitherto unknown.

#### ***3.b Proposed Statement of Outstanding Universal Value***

The site of Bisotun bears a double significance for the history of ancient Iran and that of the southwest Asia in general. It is situated in a strategic location controlling the main route linking the Iranian plateau and Mesopotamia. This route has been used since ancient times, and still constitutes the principal way of trade between the eastern regions of Iran and Central Asia with Mesopotamia. From a historical point of view, the site of Bisotun has a continued archaeological sequence from Prehistoric times down to the



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20<sup>th</sup> century. Besides and above all, it includes one of the most remarkable documents of human history, i.e. the reliefs and inscriptions of Darius the Great, which was the key evidence for the decipherment of cuneiform script. It was, indeed, thanks to the inscriptions at Bisotun that Sir Henry Rawlinson began his long and painstaking work which resulted in the reading of the Old Persian cuneiform script in 1847. The inscriptions also constitute a very important document for the history of ancient Iran and the southwest Asia relating the events of the Achaemenid empire at its crisis in the years 522 and 521 B.C.

### *3.c Comparative analysis (including state of conservation of similar sites)*

The whole site comprises several distinctive monumental structures for some of them there may not be any exact comparison.

As for the rock-relief of Darius the Great, there are other monuments which can be compared with the relief.

**3.c.1. Mesopotamian Prototypes:** It is noteworthy that Babylon and Elam have yielded no prototypes for the Bisotun victory motif. Referring specifically to the Old Babylonian Period, Moortgat suggests that because of the nature of Babylonian kingship the theme of the victorious ruler was never chosen<sup>30</sup>. Lending support to the idea that the victory scene was not part of the Babylonian representational repertoire is a fragmentary wall painting from Zimrilim's palace at Mari (Syria). Here part of a scene is preserved showing a large figure grasping two foreigners by the hair in the traditional Egyptian manner. The use of an immobile support (rock) instead of a stele as was the tradition in Mesopotamia may not be considered as a point of distinction; instead, what was a necessity in Mesopotamia in absence of high mountains, was a simple tradition on the Iranian plateau where one used to choose rocky slopes and faces of mountains.

It has long been taken for granted that the Bisotun relief owes much to Mesopotamian representational traditions. E. Herzfeld first noted the striking compositional similarities of the Achaemenid scene to that depicted on a rock relief of the third millennium B. C. at Sar-e Pol-e Zohâb near the Iraqi border, on the same ancient road from Babylon to



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Ecbatana that also passes by Bisotun about 100km further east. Here Annubanini stands facing right with his left foot on the chest of a prostrate victim. The king holds a bow and an arrow in his left hand and a crooked staff in his right. The goddess Ishtar approaches him from the right, extending a ring in her right hand while dragging a bound, naked prisoner by a rope. “Behind this prisoner is another kneeling captive with the same physical characteristics. Stretching below this scene is a narrow zone, the left of which bears a representation of six small standing captives moving right. These figures are all naked and seem to have the third aspect of the Annubanini relief - the file of bound prisoners literally led by the goddess toward the king - is unique, as far as present evidence indicates, among Mesopotamian traditions of monumental victory scenes”. It is, however, remarkably similar *in concept* to the image of the god’s active participation found on the standard *Egyptian* victory scene type. Although in Egypt, as we shall see, the image of a god literally dragging prisoners to the pharaoh is not known in its classical form until Dynasty 11, the representation of Horus on Narmer’s Palette suggests that already in Dynasty 1 the visual concept had been formulated there. The representation in the funerary temple of Sahure shows that by Dynasty 5 this visual concept had already been articulated in a less symbolic form. It is, thus, tempting to speculate on the possibility that the Annubanini relief reflects in this image influence from Egypt; perhaps influence which reached Mesopotamia in the Akkadian Period indirectly through contact with Syria. But the present state of our understanding of the contacts (direct or indirect) between Egypt and Mesopotamia in the third millennium suggests, rather, that the similarity may have been purely coincidental.

**3.c.2. The Sar-e Pol Relief and Bisotun:** (pics 33-34): Attempts have been made to see the Annubanini relief at Sar-e Pol as part of a continuum extending from early Sumerian representations such as appear on the Standards of Ur and of Mari, passing through the Akkadian and Ur III traditions (as exemplified by the stele of Naramsin and then by the rock relief at Darband-e Gawr) and leading ultimately to the Bisotun relief. One does not see such a relentless continuity in the development of one type. Rather, one would see several interacting strains in the Mesopotamian tradition. The Naramsin stele, for instance, is very different from the Sar-e Pol relief, as Brentjes has observed.



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Grouping all Mesopotamian victory monuments together in an evolutionary scheme which ‘culminates’ finally with Bisotun, as P. Calmeyer has attempted to do, tends to obscure important ways in which the Bisotun relief is the product of a conscious combining of concepts from various compositional types as opposed to being an inevitable extension of one line of evolutionary development. It is probably true that the planners of the Bisotun relief derived the motif of the king placing one foot upon a prostrate enemy directly from the Sar-e Pol relief of Annubanini. The appearance of the motif at Sar-e Pol may, in turn, be due to the influence of a series of Akkadian and Ur III monuments which display the same motif of the king placing his foot on a prostrate, living, captive enemy in a symbolic gesture of supremacy. This symbolic concept is universally understood. It is the same statement of victory as finds expression also in neo-Assyrian texts. It is, of course, related to, but is very different from, the concept of standing or marching atop the corpses of enemies just killed (as we see it, for instance, on the Standard of Ur, the vulture stele of Eannatum, the victory stele of Naramsin, the rock relief of Darband-e Gawr, and also the statues of Manishtusu).

For the purposes of this study of the sources used in the planning of the Bisotun relief, it is important to note that although the concept of placing a foot on a defeated enemy is known in the art as in the literature of the neo-Assyrian Period (on which, see below), the form the motif took in the art of this period is distinctly different from that chosen for the Achaemenid relief. Doubtless the proximity of the Annubanini relief was, in a sense, responsible for the use of the Akkadian / Ur III compositional formula of the enemy on his back and underfoot. For surely Darius and his planners must have seen the Sar-e Pol relief many times as they passed from Babylonia into Media; and perhaps they were impressed by the image of the small helpless victim. But it is worth pointing out that this obvious availability of the Akkadian / Ur III tradition does not make the Achaemenids’ decision to use the Sar-e Pol relief any less a decision based upon conscious preference as opposed to a sort of thoughtless ‘copying’. Models of the neo-Assyrian images of stepping on the neck of the kneeling captive who faces the king were surely available to the Achaemenids as well; and the Assyrian formula may reflect a ceremonial act actually performed in this manner by the Assyrians. If so, the Assyrian attitude of supremacy over a condemned enemy (as used in actuality) would also have





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been well within the heritage-memory of Darius. In summary, the primary factor determining the selection of the Sar-e Pol relief as a model for the Bisotun supremacy image (rather than Assyrian prototypes, which must have been known to the Persians as well) seems to have been the Achaemenids' active preference for the Akkadian type of imagery -not simply the obvious accessibility of this particular third millennium relief. The Sar-e Pol relief may also have been the direct prototype for the pose of the bound prisoners on the Bisotun monument. On the other hand, the appearance on both monuments of nine captives (not including the later addition of Skunkha in the Bisotun relief) is more likely coincidental.

The possible relationship of the Ahuramazda figure on the Bisotun relief to the figure of Ishtar on the Sar-e Pol relief is uncertain. On the one hand, the form of Ahuramazda is directly related to neo-Assyrian prototypes. Yet there is a sense in which Ahuramazda, by facing Darius in the context of the receipt of prisoners, and by extending the ring toward him in this context, departs from neo-Assyrian models and is reminiscent instead of the third millennium prototype.

### *3.d Integrity and / or Authenticity*

The inscriptions of Darius the Great narrating the events of the years 522-521 B.C. are undeniable evidence of the Achaemenid period. Other reliefs carved during post-Achaemenid times are also genuine. As for the integrity of the site, it should be mentioned that the site being at a passage location went through different phases of construction and changes. Both the cliff and the adjacent valley were the object of constructions since Prehistoric times down to the modern era. There are also historical narratives and travellers' accounts which bear further testimony to the authenticity of the monuments at Bisotun.



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## 4

# STATE OF CONSERVATION AND FACTORS AFFECTING THE PROPERTY



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great

## 4. State of Conservation and Factors Affecting the Property

### 4.a Present state of conservation

The site of Bisotun is marked by a most majestic long cliff dominating a flat plain. The existence of springs at the foot of the cliff explains the continuous presence of men in the area and the verticality of the cliff the carving of the rock-reliefs. The springs have given birth to a pool (Sarâb). Its waters flow in a brook called Nahr-e Sohrâb which joins the Gâmâsyâb River. A shell in cement used to surround the pool and keep its waters. It was removed and replaced in 2004 by a dry stone one which is in harmony with the surrounding nature.

The road between the towns of Hamadân and Kermânshâh used to go along the cliff, passing in the narrow space between the cliff and the pool. Unfortunately that old romantic caravan track has been transformed in the last decades into a main asphalt driveway. A new road was built much further away from the cliff and the old road closed. In 2003, the destruction of the asphalt driveway was finished and by 2004 the track had regained its original level and of some of its original glamour. (map 3 and 4, pics 35-45)

**4.a.1. Prehistoric remains:** (map 3 and 4, pics 1-5): The natural rocky site in which the Palaeolithic remains are situated is well preserved. The main vestiges are the following: Mar-Kher (Round Cave wrongly translated by strangers as Donkey Cave / *khar*; i.e. donkey in Persian), Ghâr-e Shekârchiyân (Hunters' Cave), Mar-Târik (Dark Cave), Mar-Âftaw (Sunlight Cave, *âftâb*), Mar-Do-Dar (Two Doors Cave). The archaeological works carried out in these caves (see above 2.a.1) has attracted the attention of the treasure hunters and they have dug some years ago two holes in the Mar-Kher Cave. Thanks to the presence of the guards in the Bisotun area, no other damaging action has been carried out in those areas since then.



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**4.a.2. The Maddian fortress:** (map 3 and 4): Much of the vestiges of this stronghold are covered by its own debris and what has been washed down from the upper parts of the Parthian Slope. Its limits are nonetheless somehow observable. The areas where the German archaeologists were working in 1963 and 1969 as well as those excavated by the Persians archaeologists in 2003 are also visible on the slope.

**4.a.3. Achaemenid remains, Darius's Rock-Relief:** (map 3,4, 6 and 7, pics 6-12, 46-48 and slide 1-9): As the relief and its inscriptions are situated on two separate geological layers, a natural line of separation runs between them. There are also numerous cracks in the rocks. Consequently, the waters accumulated in the upper parts of the mountain run down through these fissures and damage the rock-relief and its inscriptions. It goes the same with the surface waters as the drain built by the Achaemenians on the top of the mountain to divert these surface waters is partly broken and functions no more adequately. Other factors such as the changing in the ambient temperature or worse, freezing, also cause slow but in the long run destruction. Studies undertaken during the last two years have also thrown light on a new problem. The pressure exercised by a nearby seismic fault has caused the birth of fissures on the rock-relief. There are six of them.

To facilitate the access to the rock-relief which is pitched high up on the cliff, a metallic flight of stairs has been built. It is far less for well-informed visitors than for scientists who have to study the rock-relief, be it geologists or epigraphists looking closely at its most famous tri-lingual cuneiform inscriptions. The reason for which the stairs are placed at the closed end of the V form ravine in the cliff is the existence of the remains of a Maddian Temple on its opening side. The German archaeologists, who were working in this section from 1963 to 1967, believed that they had dug out a temple with a corridor in its middle flanked by a room on each of its sides. Parts of the dry stone walls of the building are still visible.

**4.a.4. The Seleucid figure of Heracles:** (map 3,4,5,8 and 10, pics 13-14 and slide 10): It was found in 1958 during works to lower down the level of the then Kermânshâh to Hamadân highway. This road has been diverted and the statue of Heracles is safe



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within the core zone of Bisotun. The easy access to this figure makes it a most appreciable prey for predators. Its head was stolen in 1993 and broken. It was recuperated, restored and is now kept in the treasury room in Bisotun. A copy was made and fixed in March 2005 on the statue instead of the original one. The condition of Heracles's statue can now be qualified as satisfactory.

**4.a.5. Parthian Slope, Sang-e Belâsh:** (maps 3,4 and 5, pics 15-16 and slide 13):

The site includes the slope of the mountain situated in the East of Darius rock-relief and west of the Statue of Heracles. The site is rather well preserved. The trenches visible on the western side of the slope correspond to preliminary excavations undertaken in the area in 2003 which did not reveal noticeable vestiges. Due to erosions, the big rock of Sang-e Belâsh had collapsed long ago and parts of it were broken. The relief was re-erected in 2000 on a solid new foundation and its broken parts repaired. Other important monuments which can be considered as parts of this slop, such as the Maddian fortress for instance, are referred to separately (see 4.a.2, 4.a.4 and 4.a.6).

**4.a.6. Parthian remains, reliefs of Mithradates and Gotarzes II:** (maps 3,4,5, 9

and 10, pics 17-18 and slides 4 and 11), see also above, 4.a.5. Beside the Sang-e Belâsh (see 4.a.5), the remains of the Parthian period comprise reliefs of Mithradates 11(123-87 B.C.) and Gotarzes II (*ca.* 50 B.C.). Part of the Mithridates relief has been obliterated by the insertion in 1094 / 1684-85 of a *waqf* inscription by the Statesman Shaykh Ali Khân Zangeneh, the person who also built the Caravanserai on the western side of the Bisotun site. There is an ongoing historical and geological study of this rock-relief combined with some analyses to detect natural factors which may harm it.

**4.a.7. Sassanids (Palace) and the Il-Khânid remains:** (maps 3,4,5 and 10, pics

19-22 and 49): Up to 1975, there was a village in the SW side of the Sarâb (The Pond) and in front of the unfinished Farhâd-Tarâsh rock-relief. On that year, the village was removed 2kms towards the SW and the land put at the disposal of the Ministry of Culture and Art. However a section of the freed land ended up by being occupied by a rehabilitation center for drug addicts until 2002 when it was possible to recuperate that



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land and its security zone. The mapping of the area had started during these times, but unfortunately, the surveyors were not able to get access into the security zones, hence the blank on the map 3. Much cleaning has been going on since the recuperation of the lands and the present situation in the area is beginning to become normal.

As to the remains of Khosrow II's Palace as well as that of the Il-Khânid Mosque and Caravanserai on north-western section of this area, they have been partly studied as mentioned before. Considering that for centuries a village existed on the top of this site, the ruins that are still visible can be considered as substantial.

**4.a.8. Farhâd Tarâsh:** (maps 3,4,5 and 10, pics 22-24 and slide 12): This huge chiselled rock face measures approximately 200m wide and 30m high. It is provided with a retaining wall ca. 150m long situated in its front. The ensemble is the biggest such a work in Iran. There is no a total agreement on its date, but there is a nearly general consensus on the idea that it is probably Sassanids (Khosrow II ?, 590-628 A.D.). The colossal chiselled work is in a rather well stat of preservation. Previously, mountain climbers used its vertical surface for exercising themselves. For that purpose, they used to push nails into the rock. The practice of nailing was forbidden in 2000, but some mountain climbers still practise the sport using the old nails. The practice is harmless.

**4.a.9. The Gâmâsyâb retaining wall and the Pol-e Khosrow:** (maps 3,4,5 and 10, pics 26-28): As reported previously, due to the distance, these remains fall within the landscape limits of Bisotun, but not in its core or buffer zones; however, as mentioned before, this fact does not lower down the level of their protection as they are inscribed on the list of Iranian National Monuments. They are presented here because of their importance and also because they may be included in a future extension of the limits of the site of Bisotun.

Previous investigators had missed the vestiges of the Gâmâsyâb retaining wall; they were pointed out to the authorities in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century by the local people. The remains of the wall are to be seen along the river forming a right angle with the



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Sassanids bridge known as Pol-e Khosrow. On the land side, the wall reaches a height of about 5m.<sup>18</sup> Its course can be followed for approximately 1,000m on the right bank of the Gâmâsyâb (Gamasâb), which flows directly south at that point. The rest of the wall has been either destroyed or is still buried under the cultivated surface. In the 1930s, according to Qâzizâdeh, the former village headman, many of the stone blocks of the wall were removed and used in a new bridge, which was built towards the south 4km downstream on the road to Harsin; they can still be recognized there.

As for the Pol-e Khosrow remains, they mainly consist of seven cut stone pillars. Presently only the lower part of the bridge is in sight.

**4.a.10. The Shâh-Abbâsi Caravanserai:** (map 3,4,5 and 10, pics 29-32 and 50-53 and slide 14): With the collapse of the old caravan system transport, the building was transformed into a grain silo. Recuperated, it was repaired by the Ministry of Art and Culture in 1975. However, due to the special situation created in western Iran during the Iraqi invasion, the caravanserai was transformed in a Rehabilitation Centre for drug addicts. It was in fact a prison with a large security zone. In 2002, ICHTO was at last able to recuperate the building and its security zone. By that time, the mapping of the Bisotun project had already started and that is why the caravanserai as well as a big section of the lands to its North-West appears blank on map 3. The gaps will be filled up soon.

The Caravanserai is destined to keep its original function, i.e. to receive guests and travellers; only it will do so for scholars, archaeological and technical teams in charge of ICHTO's projects in Bisotun. Presently, the workers are busy rehabilitating the building.

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<sup>18</sup> Lushey, *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, p. 296, and in Kleiss and Clameyer, 1996, pp. 117-120.



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#### ***4.b Factors affecting the property***

##### ***(i) Development pressures (e.g., encroachment, adaptation, agriculture, mining)***

There is only limited agriculture pressure and on the site of Bisotun, but population encroachment and the increase of traffic on the road is a factor to be taken into account in the coming years. (map 10, pics 29-30, 35, 38, 43 and 45)

##### ***(ii) Environmental pressures (e.g., pollution, climate change, desertification)***

One of the most problematic issues in Bisotun is the rapid industrial development of the surrounding valley including biochemical installations. The valley as whole is, in fact, the heart of industrial activity and the agricultural centre of the region. Some of the factories are old and are going to put an end to their activity and will be removed (the nearby sugar factory for instance). The new ones, if they are polluting, will be subject to regular and strict controls.

##### ***(iii) Natural disasters and risk preparedness (earthquakes, floods, fires, etc.)***

In spite of the fact that some earthquakes have been recorded during the past centuries in the region, there is no record of any recent earthquake from the early 20th century up to now.

##### ***(iv) Visitor/tourism pressures***

No important tourism/visitor pressure exists for the being.

##### ***(v) Number of inhabitants within site, buffer zone***

Estimated population located within:

Area nominated property: less than 100

Buffer zone: less than 100

Total: less than 100

Year: 2004





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Number of inhabitants within the buffer zone is now less than 100. No pressure is noted for the moment. In future, the economical activities will surely increase the number of inhabitants beyond the buffer zone.



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## **5 MANAGEMENT OF THE PROPERTY**



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great

## **5. Management of the Property**

### ***5.a Ownership***

The government of the Islamic Republic of Iran through the Iranian Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization, Avenue Azadi, Tehran, Iran.

### ***5.b Protective designation***

The Iranian Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization (ICHTO) is in charge and responsible for the protection off all historical monuments in Iran.

The protection of all historical monuments of Iran is ensured by ICHTO. According to the Law of Conservation of National Monuments approved on November the 3<sup>rd</sup> 1930, all the registered monuments in the National Heritage List are under the State's protection and supervision. In addition, a number of other protection laws, such as the Law of Foundation of National Council of City construction and Architecture, Law of City Construction and Architecture, Law of City Properties approved in September the 12<sup>th</sup>, 1982, Law of Purchase of historical properties, buildings and archaeological monuments as well as some chapters of the Law of City Halls force the government or private administrations to respect registered monuments in the National Heritage List.

Some preventive laws have also been approved to guaranty the physical maintenance of National Monuments of Iran and preserve their cultural-historical values. Among these laws, one may mention parliamentary record prohibiting illegal excavations, paragraphs of the Law of Islamic Punishments or the chapter 127 of the Annex to the General Punishment Law in Iran.

Core, buffer and landscape protection buffer zones of the Bisotun are as follows:

#### **I. The corn zone is subjected to the following rules:**

1. No allocation is permitted, construction, digging wells or subterranean canals, tree plantations, excavations, earth filling or civil engineering operations are prohibited unless they are done by The ICHTO or permitted under its strict guidance.



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2. The Iranian Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization (ICHTO) leads restoration works, archaeological excavations and investigations. It may proceed to the establishment of the necessary installations for these purposes within the core zone.

## **II. The buffer zone is subjected to the following rules:**

1. It is permitted to carry out traditional farming in existing farm and on agricultural land within their boundaries at surface level.
2. In the event of need to set up installations such as electricity posts, etc. along the roads which cross the buffer zone, ICHTO's permission must be requested.

## **III. The landscape buffer zone is subjected to the following rules:**

1. It is permitted to continue to carry out agricultural or gardening activities.
2. Industrial installations causing environmental pollution, mining or any activities altering the structure of the mountains or damaging the general landscape is forbidden.

## **IV. The expansion zones of the villages are subjected to the following rules:**

1. Enclaves are allocated to future expansion of villages.
2. It is highly recommended that all constructions in the expansion areas be carried out in respect to local traditional architecture.

### ***5.c Means of implementing protective measures***

Bisotun was inscribed on the National Heritage List of Iran as follows:

<b>Registration Date</b>	<b>Registration No</b>	<b>Date/Age</b>	<b>Monument Name</b>
1931	70	Achamenid	Darius Inscription
1974	974	Safavid	Shâh Abbâsi Caravanserai
2000	5020	Prehistoric	Sarâb (Pool) Bisotun
2001	4880	Sassanids	Sassanids Monument with Cultural – Historical Values



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2001	4881	Historical - Islamic	Mehrdad-Goudarz Relief & Sheikh Ali-Khân Inscription
2001	4482	Seleucid	Heracles Statue
2001	4883	Historic	Maddian Temple
2001	4884	Parthian	Sang-e Belâsh (Stone)
2001	4886	Sassanids	Scraped Stone
2001	4887	Sassanids	Farhâd Tarâsh
2001	4889	Prehistoric (Palaeolithic)	Caves
2001	6463	Prehistoric-Qajaried	Cultural-Historical site of Bisotun

The site can thus benefit from a special programme devoted to important historical sites known as “National Heritage”. The guardians of the site maintain a permanent control. 3 guardians employed by the local office of the ICHTO are present on the site. They are responsible for the inspections and for the protection of the site.

Besides these guards who are permanently staying at Bisotun, Bisotun’s Police force also co-operates for the protection of the site.

***5.d Existing plans related to municipality and region in which the proposed property is located (e.g., regional or local plan, conservation plan, tourism development plan)***

Currently the main plans and programmes for Bisotun site are:

- Master Plan of Harsin city approved by governorships commissions.
- Master plan for Sahneh city approved by governorships commissions.
- Drainage system for Chamchamal Plain approved by Ministry of Jihad and Agriculture.
- Projects on Irrigation of agricultural lands approved by Ministry of Jihad and Agriculture.
- Plan of Emergency Conservation of Darius Inscription.
- Designing and reorganization of Bisotun Site.



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### *5.e Property management plan or other management system*

#### **General Strategies set by the Iranian Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization for all national projects and Research Bases:**

- Collection of cultural, technical and scientific data and implementation of necessary surveys and investigations on research, conservation, rehabilitation, presentation and education within the project, classification of the information and data, establishment of priorities, proposing annual, mid-term (five years) and long-term programs based on policies set for the Base by Higher Steering Committee for Research Bases of Iranian Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization.
- Implementing programs and projects approved by the Steering Committee consisting of:
  - a) Theoretical studies
  - b) Field works in following disciplines:
    - Archaeology
    - Anthropology
    - Linguistics
    - Traditional Arts
    - Conservation and Restoration
    - Architecture and Town Planning
- Studies and preparation of master plans of reorganization, management and rehabilitation of sites and proposing the resulted programs to the relevant departments in the ICHTO for their review and final approval.
- Implementation of programs and projects approved by the Steering Committee within the scopes of the Base including: Studies and preparation of conservation, restoration and rehabilitation projects with regards to historic buildings, monuments and sites and their Implementation.
- Preparing technical, research, and implementing reports.



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- Identifying movable and immovable cultural prosperities within the limits of the sites, preparation of the relevant files for later inscription in the National List.
- Studying and preparing the plan for inscription of buffer zones of the sites, monuments and fabrics within the limits of the Research Base.
- Setting up and development of research laboratories for conservation.
- Setting of libraries and archive departments.
- Establishing and appropriate structure for physical protection within the Base for further protection of the site and other historic remains in the limits of the site.
- Continuous communication and cooperation with other Research Bases and departments of ICHTO in order to benefit from each other's experiences.
- Continuous activates for promotion of Research Base within international level.
- Studies and research for preparation of dossiers of the related sites for inscription in the World Heritage List.
- Continuous cultural and scientific communication and cooperation with governmental (Cultural Heritage and Tourism Offices, Governorships, etc.), public (Municipalities, etc.), private, and civic foundations and institutions.
- Giving and receiving advice in cultural, research, and implementation fields related to the duties of the Bases to and from Cultural Heritage and Tourism offices in provinces and other public and private institutions.
- Cooperate with all related development, cultural and scientific activities carried out in the Province and giving advice on rural and town planning and development projects within the periphery of the concerned site.
- Proposing different programs on presentation and education based on the specifications of the Project to the Steering Committees. These project which will be implemented after approval of the Committee can include:
  - Making the site more comprehensible



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- Presentation services
- Public services
- Information services
- Cultural products
- Cultural events
- Education

### **General Objectives for Management of Bisotun Cultural- Historical Site:**

The comprehensive management of the site was approved in 2004, however the plan is still under consideration for further improvement. With regard to the general strategies of the Iranian Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization, which are mentioned above, there have been several programmes for improvement the important site of Bisotun. These programmes have been proposed by the research base of the site and approval of the advisory committees. Furthermore the mentioned programmes either has already been implemented or will be executed under the guidance of the advisory committees. Future short, mid and long term programmed are described below. As it will be observed these activities are divided in research, conservation, restoration, rehabilitation, documentation, presentation and training, reordering and tourism, mobilization and monitoring.

#### **I- Implemented programmes:**

##### ***I-1- Research programmes:***

##### ***I-1-a- Archaeology:***

There have been several archaeological surveys, identification and excavations in relation with mounds, monuments and also the discovered artifacts from archaeological excavations of which all of the reports are kept in the Bisotun Research Base and also Iranian Cultural Heritage Organization and Tourism (ICHTO), and they are easily accessible. Here only the titles, the year of implementation and also the responsible persons of these projects are mentioned:





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No	Title	Date	Responsible person or organization
1	Archaeological survey, identification, sample digging and excavations by German team in Bisotun	1963-1967	Prof. Lushey
2	Archaeological excavation Il-Khânid - Sassanids monument	1975	Mehdi Rahbar
3	Sample digging of the old road on the fringe of Sarâb-e Bisotun and excavation in the North-West of Il-Khânid -Sassanids monuments	1999	Abbas Motarjem
4	Sample digging at Northern part beside Heracles statue on the asphalt road in front of the Darius relief	2000	Abbas Motarjem
5	Continuation of excavation at the North-west part of Il-Khânid - Sassanids monument and also Northwest of old Sarâb Bisotun road	2000	Shahin Kermajani
6	Excavation at Southern part and also Southwestern corner of Il-Khânid - Sassanids monument in front of Farhâd Tarâsh cliff	2000	Mehdi Rahbar
7	First season of archaeological excavation at the Bisotun bridge, famous as Safavid bridge	2000	Yusef Moradi
8	Survey, identification and presentation of Mar-Do-Dar, Mar-Târik and Mar-Mar-Âftaw caves	2000	Freidoon Biglari & Saman Heidari
9	Second season of archaeological excavation at the Bisotun bridge which is famous as Safavid bridge	2001	Yusef Moradi
10	Survey and identification of historic monuments in Harsin and Sahneh cities	2001-2002	Abbas Motarjem & Yaqub Mohammadi far
11	Excavation at the Parthian Slope	2002	Mehrdad Malekzadeh
12	Sample digging, core zone and buffer zone identification of Western part of histo-cultural complex of Bisotun	2002	Hasan Rezvani
13	Investigation and study on discovered potteries from excavation in Parthian Slope	2002	Karim Alizadeh
14	Sample digging in Mar-Târik and Mar-Do-Dar caves	2003	Joint Iran French campaign
15	Photogrametric documentation and scientific examinations of designs and inscriptions of Darius, Mithradetes and Heracles reliefs	2003	Naser Norouzzadeh Chegini Badr-al zaman Qarib
16	Studies on Bisotun Cultural zone and preparation of distribution map of historical mounds	2003	Malih Mehdiabadi



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17	Identification of ancient engineering in Bisotun plain	2003-2004	Seyyed Abdolazim Amir Shahkarami
18	Ancient restorations in Bisotun inscription	2005	Malih Mehdiabadi
19	Sample digging in historic mound of Gargavand and Bisotun plain	2005	Ali Sajadi
20	Survey on ancient and historic roads in Bisotun area	2005	Malih Mehdiabadi Seyyed Abdolazim Amir Shahkarami

### I-1-b- Anthropology:

No	Title	Date	Responsible person or organization
1	Entographical studies on Bisotun town	1997	Roshanak Rahoo
2	The word of "Bisotun" in Iranian literature	1999	Farideh Mehdiabadi
3	Collecting stories of Farhâd Tarâsh	2000	Malihe Mehdiabadi
4	Collecting folkloric believes about Bisotun monuments	2001	Malihe Mehdiabadi

### I-1-c- Linguistic:

Linguistic studies on Darius were first started by Sir Henry Rawlinson from 1830 to 1834 resulting in first coping of the inscription. In 1903, William Jackson visited the inscription and corrected some parts of Rawlinson's work. In 1904, first picture were taken from the monument by Ling and Tompson, from British museum and later a book was published. In 1952 George Cameron made a reproduction of the inscription using Latex and also studied the Elamite inscriptions on the right side. Based on the documents made by Cameron, the book written by Kent was published. In 1963, Professor Luschey and his team who were engaged in archaeological studies in Bisotun took several photographs from the monuments. In 1991 Smith published his book based on Prof. Luschey photographs. In 2001, Dr Saeed Oryan translated the Kent book. In 2004, Dr Badral zaman Qarib made the latest corrections on the Old Persian inscription based on photogrametric documents. The result has yet to be published.

### I-1-d- Geographical and Geological Studies:

No	Title	Date	Responsible person or organization
1	Geological report on Bisotun inscription	1999	Bisotun Research Base with cooperation of Bouali university



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2	Investigation on "Karsti" water spring of Bisotun	1999	The water company of Western part of Iran
3	Identification of alluvium Bisotun plain	2001	The water company of Western part of Iran
4	Collecting and interpretation of geological, geotechnique and structural studies of Darius inscription	2002-2003	Khak-payee Consulting Engineers
5	Collecting the results of water springs of Bisotun area and preparations of the related map	2003	Bisotun Research Base
6	Geophysical studies of part of Bisotun plain	2004	Saharakav Consulting Engineers
7	Geological studies on Bisotun area	2005	Khak-payee Consulting Engineers
8	Hydrological structures and natural factors of Bisotun plain	2005	Khak-payee Consulting Engineers
9	Natural history and engineering of Bisotun plain	2005	Khak-payee Consulting Engineers
10	Geological studies of Gargvand historic mound	2005	Saharakav Consulting Engineers
11	Geophysical studies of Pol-e Khosrow (historic bridge)	2005	Saharakav Consulting Engineers

### I-1-e- Environmental and Ecological Studies:

No	Title	Date	Responsible person or organization
1	Ecological and environmental data collection	1993	Malihe Mehdiabadi
2	Testing of rain water in Bisotun relief area for identification of PH	2000	Bisotun Research Base
3	Collecting climatological data of last 40 year in Kermâshâh	2000	Bisotun Research Base with cooperation of Kermâshâh climatology office
4	Studies on waste water of Milk and Sugar industries in Gamâsyâb river	2001	Kermâshâh organization for protection of environment
5	Studies on the effects of pollutants from industrial centers on historic monuments of Bisotun	2003	Bisotun Research Base with cooperation of oil research center
6	Survey on rivers and water springs of Bisotun plain	1999 to 2005	Kermâshâh office of water
7	Studies on soil, environment, irrigating waters, agricultural potentials of Chamchamal plain	2001-2005	Consulting engineer of Ab va khak with cooperation of Kermâshâh Jahad office
8	Investigations on flora and fauna species	2002	Organization of protection of environment
9	Identification of species of plants and shrubs and their biological pests	2005	Goudarzi



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### **I-1-f- Conservation and Restoration Research:**

<b>No</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Responsible Person or Organization</b>
1	Pathology of Darius inscription in Bisotun	1993	Malihe Mehdiabadi
2	Pathology of main stone reliefs in Kermâshâh Province	1997	Malihe Mehdiabadi
3	Pathology of Mithradates and Sang-e Belâsh reliefs	2000	Committee for safeguarding of rock reliefs
4	Pathology of Safavid bridge in Bisotun	2001	Malihe Mehdiabadi
5	Pathology and restoration of Safavid caravanserai	2002-2003	Cultural and Tourism Organization of Kermâshâh with cooperation of Hegmataneh Company
6	Pathology of Heracles statue	2003	Fathollah Niyazi
7	Pathology and rehabilitation plan of Safavid caravanserai	2003-2004	Cultural and Tourism Organization of Kermâshâh with cooperation of Parse Company

### **I-2- Conservation and Rehabilitation Programmes:**

#### **I-2-a- Conservation:**

<b>No</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Responsible Person or Organization</b>
1	Supervision on ongoing development projects in Bisotun area	Since 1998	Bisotun Research Base
2	Establishment of cultural heritage guards base for protection of historical monuments	Since 1998	Bisotun Research Base
3	Studies on emergency conservation of part of Babylonian inscription of Darius inscription	2000	Bisotun Research Base with cooperation of the Committee of safeguarding of cultural properties
4	Changing of the root of Hamedan- Kermâshâh road between Darius – Heracles inscriptions and Sarâb Bisotun	2001	Bisotun Research Base with cooperation of governorship of Kermâshâh
5	Land purchase in core zone and buffer zone of Bisotun area	Since 2001	Bisotun Research Base
6	Studies and designing of geo textile water channels and access steps to the Darius inscription	2003	Deputy of research, ICHTO with cooperation of consulting engineers of Khak-payé
7	Inscription of existing historical properties within core and buffer zones of Bisotun in the National List	2001-2005	Bisotun Research Base



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### I-2-b- Conservation:

No	Title	Year	Responsible Person or Organization
1	Emergency restoration of Babylonian inscription of Bisotun inscription Darius - Heracles inscription	2000	Bisotun Research Base
2	Restoration of Sang-e Belâsh	2000	Bisotun Research Base with cooperation of Parse-persepolis Research Base
3	Restoration of Bisotun Caravanserai	Since 2003	Cultural and Tourism Organization of Kermânshâh with cooperation of governorship of Kermânshâh
4	Restoration of the head of Heracles's statue and reproduction from the main head	2004	Bisotun Research Base

### I-2-c- Rehabilitation:

No	Title	Year	Responsible Person or Organization
1	Removal of debris of old Bisotun village from the Sassanids remains and rehabilitation its environments to the earlier state	2002	Bisotun Research Base
2	Restoration and rehabilitation of the use of Bisotun Caravanserai	Since 2002	Cultural and Tourism Organization of Kermânshâh with cooperation of governorship of Kermânshâh
3	Blockage of Hamedan – Kermânshâh road, removal of remains of walls and its rehabilitation	2003-2004	Bisotun Research Base

### I-3- Documentation Programmes:

No	Title	Year	Responsible Person or Organization
1	Provision of photogrametric maps from Bisotun inscription, Mithradates and Heracles on scale of 1:5	2001-2005	Bisotun Research Base with cooperation of Tehran University
2	Collection of reports on soils, rivers and development infrastructures	Since 2001	Bisotun Research Base



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3	Collection of environmental, climatological and population data	Since 2001	Bisotun Research Base
4	Provision of terrestrial maps in scale of 1:50, 1:100, 1:200 from part of Bisotun cultural area and its related cultural properties	2001-2005	Bisotun Research Base with cooperation of Tehran University
5	Provision of Core and Buffer zones maps for inscription of the site in the National Heritage List	2003-2004	Bisotun Research Base
6	Provision of existing land use maps in core zone and buffer zone including the natural resources, agricultural lands, constructed factories and factories in the process of construction, historic queries	2003-2004	Bisotun Research Base with cooperation of Organization of Natural Resources
7	Preparing conservation and restoration reports	Ongoing	Bisotun Research Base
8	Taking photographs, slides, and videos from various phases of projects on conservation, restoration, research and presentation	Ongoing	Bisotun Research Base
9	Production of videos from natural, cultural, historical and public environments and different stages of works	Ongoing	Bisotun Research Base
10	Setting up of archive center and its updating (Documents, negatives and CDs)	Ongoing	Bisotun Research Base
11	Creation of website	2003	Bisotun Research Base
12	Documenting the demolition and damages inflicted on cultural properties resulted from development projects	Ongoing	Bisotun Research Base
13	Preparation of documentation reports by university students	Ongoing	Bisotun Research Base

#### ***1-4- Presentation and Education Programmes:***

<b>No</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Responsible Person or Organization</b>
1	Organization of a temporary exhibition of prehistoric finds	2001	With cooperation of Education Bureau of Bisotun
2	Organization of an exhibition on activities implemented in Bisotun	2002	Bisotun Research Base
3	Utilization of guiding personnel within the archaeological site	Since 2003	Bisotun Research Base
4	Setting up the guiding signs within the visiting roots	2003	Bisotun Research Base
5	Organization of an exhibition on recent archaeological discoveries in Bisotun	2003	Bisotun Research Base
6	Preparation of guiding brochures, posters and postcards	2004	Bisotun Research Base with cooperation of ICHTO



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### *I-5- Reordering and Tourism Programmes:*

<b>No</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Responsible Person or Organization</b>
1	Preparation of master plan for re-organizing of part of Bisotun area	1995	Cultural and Tourism Organization of Kermâshâh
2	Preparation of Sarâb Bisotun elaborative plan	1995	Cultural and Tourism Organization of Kermâshâh
3	Illumination of the site	1999 -2003	Governorship of Kermâshâh
4	Construction of bath-rooms	2000	Governorship of Kermâshâh
5	Designing and creation of green area and its protection	2000 – 2001	Governorship of Kermâshâh
6	Blocking Hamadan- Kermâshâh road and rehabilitation of its ancient environment	2001-2004	Bisotun Research Base with cooperation to Governorship of Kermâshâh
7	Preparation of reorganization plan for Bisotun Caravanserai	2003	Cultural and Tourism Organization of Kermâshâh
8	Removal of debris and remains of Bisotun village from over the Sassanids building	2003	Bisotun Research Base
9	Preparation of master plan for reorganization of histo-cultural core zone of Bisotun with view to reorganization of tourism in the region	Under process	Bisotun Research Base
10	Designing and implementing the plan on visitors' route for the Inscription and Bisotun relief	Under process	Bisotun Research Base
11	Planning and creation of Tourism and comfort facilities	Under process	Bisotun Research Base

### *I-6- Cooperation with universities and other institutions:*

<b>No</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Responsible Person or Organization</b>
1	Preparation of photogrametric maps of Bisotun	2001-2005	ICHTO, Bisotun Research Base and Tehran university
2	Training of conservation students from Art University- Isfahan	2003-2004	Bisotun Research Base
3	Geological investigation Bisotun area including identification of faults, minerals, etc.	2003-2005	Bisotun Research Base with cooperation of Bouali University and Regional Water Bureau of West of Country



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4	Advising final thesis of university students on Bisotun from Amirkabir University, Free University of Tabriz, Art University of Isfahan	2003-2005	Bisotun Research Base
5	Presentation of Bisotun cultural properties in local, regional, provincial and national levels for example through lecturing in various gatherings with regards to the values of the cultural heritage in Bisotun for different villages in Bisotun area	2004	Bisotun Research Base and Governorship of Harsin
6	Training of experts from other related governmental offices	Ongoing	Bisotun Research Base
7	Cooperation of various visiting groups comprising of students and ordinary people in national and international levels	Ongoing	Bisotun Research Base
8	Participation in different official governmental meetings, giving advice on preparation of master and comprehensive plans	Ongoing	Bisotun Research Base
9	Cooperation and giving advice all ongoing development projects or future plans	Ongoing	Bisotun Research Base
10	Cooperation with broadcast of Iran in production of scientific and news report	Ongoing	Bisotun Research Base
11	Cooperation with other national and international media in production of news	Ongoing	Bisotun Research Base

### ***I-7- Management and Supervision:***

#### **I-7-a- Conservation Management and Supervision:**

- Supervising all master, elaborative and comprehensive plans.
- Supervising all development projects.
- Supervising ICHTO's conservation and restoration projects within the site.

#### **I-7-b Research and Scientific Supervision:**

- Creation of a National Steering Committee for Bisotun project. Organizing several meetings of this committee regarding different programs and implementation plans, joint visits to site.





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### ***I-8 Mobilization:***

<b>No</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Responsible Person or Organization</b>
1	- Equipping conservation and restoration workshops, including: A) Setting up of scaffoldings to access Bisotun relief for pathological investigations and documentations B) Setting up of scaffoldings for accessibility to Mithradates and Heracles reliefs	1996-2003  2000 - 2004	Bisotun Research Base
2	Establishment and equipping Bisotun Research Base	2001-2005	Bisotun Research Base with cooperation of Governorship of Kermânsâh
3	Purchasing cars and tractors	2001 – 2002	ICHTO
4	Hardware and software equipping of Document Centre	Since 2001	Bisotun Research Base with cooperation of ICHTO
5	Creation of facilities for experts and protecting guards	ongoing	Bisotun Research Base

## **II- Current and Future Programmes:**

Based on already implemented projects, identification of current situation of the site, fundamental needs and priorities following programmes have been envisaged for the Bisotun Research Base:

### ***i- Short-term Programmes:***

#### ***i-1- Research:***

- Continuing studies on and identification of historical mounds and remains in Chamchamal Plain within core zone and buffer zone.
- Geophysical prospecting in Pol-e Khosrow (Old bridge).
- Preparing pathological program for Bisotun Safavid bridge.
- Further studies for preparation of restoration program and reorganization plan for architectural remains discovered within Sassanids building.
- Archaeological diggings.
- Identification of flora covering in historic zone of Bisotun and biodeterioration of Sarâb trees.



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### **i-2- Conservation, Restoration and Rehabilitation:**

- Continuing the construction of accessing steps, geotextile channel and water canals approved by Technical Committee of ICHTO.
- Restoration and reorganization of architectural remains discovered within Sassanids building.
- Restoration of Bisotun Safavid Bridge.
- Purchase of related properties in buffer zone based on existing possibilities, leasing of agricultural lands adjacent to Safavid Bridge for continuation of excavations.
- Rehabilitation of surrounding wall of Bistoun Sarâb by *khoshke chini*.
- Testing experiments on parts adjacent to the Darius stone relief in order to find best methods of conservation and restoration.

### **i-3- Documentation:**

- Preparing 1/100 map of Farhâd Tarâsh.
- Photography, reporting and filming of conservation activities.

### **i-4- Presentation:**

- Studying, designing and producing bilingual brochure of Bisotun's historical properties.
- Up-dating of Bisotun website.
- Employment of guides.
- Translation and publication of Bisotun book.
- Holding a seminar about the works, studies and other items related to the Bisotun Project and its future.
- Organizing a seminar on results of Bisotun Project since 1996.

### **i-5- Training and Education:**

- Training of craftsmen and skilled personnel for restoration works
- Training of university graduates for administrative research conservation and restoration purposes.



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- Holding of informative sessions for head of the villages located within the core and buffer zones for protection of historic mounds in the villages.
- Holding of educative sessions for training of local people for the purpose of presentation of sites in the touristic seasons.

#### **i-6- Reordering and Tourism:**

- Studying and carrying out the lightening plan of the site (Darius's Rock-Relief and its inscriptions as well as several other important remains.
- Continuation of works on the site as defined in the master plan which will be by then finalized. The plan will include:
  - o The creation of parking.
  - o Construction of access paths for visitors.
  - o Creation of stop points appropriate for panorama or perspectives views.
  - o Establishment of tourism facilities.
  - o Landscaping: gardens, water management.
  - o Light resting places for the tourists in connection with landscaping.
  - o Providing guidance boards for visitors.
  - o Preparing and publishing books and leaflets in Persian and in English, shooting educational and promotional films or TV programmes and providing videos on local, national and international levels.

#### **i-7- Mobilization and Equipping:**

- Restoration and equipping Bisotun Research Base.
- Reorganizing the House of Experts and its fencing.
- Supply and payment of salaries to six contracted personnel.
- Purchase of technical and welfare tools and facilities.

#### **ii- Mid-term Programmes:**

##### **ii-1- Research:**

- Continuing archaeological investigations on caves and research on their relation with other prehistoric sites within the landscape zone.



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- Identification of fauna and flora ecosystem and continuous removal of harmful algae.
- Identifying old tributaries of Sarâb, their restructuring by *khoshke chini* (dry setting), and their further connections with surrounding green areas.
- Identifying local trees and vegetations and their multiplication in the areas in which the trees has dies due to pestilence.
- Biological studies on surrounding trees and green areas.
- Studies on the remains of Maddian fortress and its construction.
- Further research on identification of Maddian fortress.
- Studies for further recognition of Parthian monuments through archeological surveys and investigations.
- Continuing research on identification of rocks, water penetration, cracks and fissures in Darius inscription.
- Mineralogical and petrological studies.
- Studies on method of fabrication of the inscription and its different stages.
- Further linguistics studies on Darius inscription.
- Anthropological studies on the inscription.
- Further studies on the petroglyphs and their differences with other Achaemenid reliefs.
- Comparative studies of Bisotun with other sites such as Anubanini or cave-graves of Eshaghvand, from which the designs may have been inspired and their cultural relations with Darius relief.
- Further studies on Maddian Temple, re-reading of the site.
- Further studies on Heracles Statue.
- Further archaeological studies.
- Further studies on water penetration routes, prevention methods, conservation techniques for Mithradates and Victory of Gotarzes II and endowment of Shaykh Ali Khân Zangeneh.
- Pathological and conservation studies on Sassanids and Il-Khânid monuments.
- Studies on remaining slums from Bisotun village and if secure planning for their renovation to temporary or permanent exhibition halls.



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- Continuing geophysical studies on Khosrow Bridge and its surrounding wall.
- Hydrological and geohydrological studies of the bridge.
- Pathological studies of the bridge.
- Research on landscape zone consisting of:
  - o Preparation of research project.
  - o Studies and provision of research data.
  - o Modeling

Ten following specialized teams will work in the research project:

- o Mapping.
- o Geophysics.
- o Environment and environmental geography.
- o Sociology and town planning.
- o Cultural, education, and hygiene.
- o Archaeology.
- o Water, soil, agriculture and pasture.
- o Geology and geotechnics.
- o Hydrology and hydraulics.
- o Technology, construction, control, security and protection.

#### **ii-2- Conservation and rehabilitation:**

- Implementation of conservation and restoration programs on Darius inscription.
- Offering conservation measures on prevention of the damaging effects of pollutants which can be achieved in two following ways:
  - o Implementation of conservation measures on the inscription itself.
  - o Proposing special rules and regulations for industries and firms and their approval by relevant authorities and institutions.
- Removing surface waters from the inscription, cleaning of incrustations and prevention the growth of vegetations.
- Regular inspections of the inscription and recording of changes on monthly and yearly cycles.
- Multiplication of trees and local vegetations



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- Conservation and restoration of Heracles statue.
- Provision of an appropriate sunshade in order to prevent inscription from sunlight and rainfalls.
- Preparation of conservation and rehabilitation plan.
- Implementing conservation and rehabilitation programs.
- Access to Sang-e Belâsh (Belâsh stone)
- Rehabilitation of old medical office of Bisotun built on Sassanids monument and preparation of its re-usage project.
- Implementation of conservation and restoration programs on Sassanids and Il-Khânid buildings.

### **ii-3- Documentation:**

- Photogrammetry of Sang-e Belâsh (Belâsh stone).
- Continuing photogrammetry of Heracles statue.
- Photogrammetry documentation of Pol-e Khosrow (bridge) and its surroundings.
- Geophysical and photogrammetrical documentation of Safavid Bridge.

### **ii-4- Presentation and Education:**

- Preparation of guiding signs.
- Preparation of photographs, slides, posters, videos and catalogues for tourists
- Guiding of visitors in the core zone.
- Organizing exhibitions on archeological finds and the Project's activities.
- Up-grading of Bisotun's website, building it up with other languages than Farsi.
- Employing skilled guides.
- Organizing informative and educative sessions for students living in core and buffer zones.

### **ii-5- Reordering and Tourism:**

- Setting up of a special pathway to the inscription without interfering with the Temple.
- Illumination of all monuments within the site.



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- Continuing restructuring and reorganizing of Sarâb wall with *khoshke chini* harmonizing it with its natural environment.
- Further definition and clarification of the side road of Saran inspiring from old stone floored roads or similar roads in Bisotun.
- Establishment of easier access pathways for visitors due to the location of caves at a high altitude. Definition of these pathways with signs.
- Illumination of the caves' interiors after the approval of relevant plans.
- Training of local guides for guiding of visitors to the caves.
- Preparation of catalogues, brochures, videos, photographs and printed archeological reports for visitors.

#### **ii-6- Management and Supervision:**

- All the management programs defined for short-term plans will also be implemented here.

#### **ii-7- Mobilization:**

- Renovation of Bisotun Research Base.
- Construction of a second building for the Base.
- Software and hardware development and improvement of the Base.

#### **iii Long- term programmes (Fifteen years):**

- Reorganizing the natural/historical surrounding of Core and Buffer zones.
- Rehabilitation of natural environment and also histo-cultural basis of Bisotun's area.
- Tourism reorganization, providing necessary facilities and informative materials for all visitors.
- Development of research/scientific basis of the site in order to meet the scientific demands of the project and also answering the needs of scholars.
- Cleaning of core and buffer zones of the site from environmental pollutants such as gaseous and industrial waste-water.



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- Protection of the site's core and buffer zones against any physical threats resulting from development projects.
- Studies and definition of actual role of the site in multifaceted development of the region.
- Protection of natural life within core and buffer zones.
- Protection of human life and creation of balanced condition between people, nature and the historic site.
- Planning and implementing different research projects in archaeology, ethnology, linguistics, architecture, and traditional arts.
- Planning and implementing necessary programs in the fields of conservation, restoration and rehabilitation of historic properties.
- Studies and defining the role of the site in education of local people and development and promotion of tourism.
- Development of Documents Centre through using latest methods for documentation and information.
- Reordering of telephone lines crossing the core and buffer zones of the site and their relocation in a way that landscape of site is not damaged.
- Preventing the establishment and construction of any industrial firma which may result in emission of pollutants and therefore damage the site and unsettling of the site's landscape. All environmental issues such as pollutants resulting from those industries constructed before preparation of this Plan will be carefully monitored. In case any irregularities are observed between international norms and these pollutants all legal tools will be used in order to put pressure on offenders and implement national and international environmental regulations. In general particular attention will be made on those pollutants which may directly effect and damage Darius relief and if necessary the concerned firms will be obliged to filter their fumes and smokes.
- Protection and safeguarding of natural environment of Gamâsyâb River, Dinvarâb, and water springs as the main artery of the site's environmental life.
- Protecting the flow of traditional life of local people through latest technologies and facilities.





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- Preventive conservation, conservation and restoration of Bisotun's inscription and stone relief as the main historic property in the site and indeed the most important Iranian national documents.

It will basically enhance all the aspects considered in the mid-term plan. In particular, it will see the end of restoration and consolidation of Darius's Rock-Relief and the end of landscaping program. The extension of the site, including the Pol-e Khosrow, may be considered. If the number of visitors increases greatly and if there is a demand, the construction of a hotel which would be out of sight might be envisaged

### ***5.f Sources and levels of finance***

There are two types of governmental funds (8000 Rls= \$ 1):

- Current budget \$ 250 000 = 2000000000 Rls (from ICHTO)
- Current budget \$1 000 000 = 8000000000 Rls (from provincial budget)

### ***5.g Sources of expertise and training in conservation and management techniques***

The main source of expertise is the expert unit of the Iranian Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization, but other sources of expertise are also used, such as:

- National Iranian Cartographic Centre (NCC).
- National Iranian Geological Organization.
- Tehran University, Functional Studies Section.
- Amir Kabir Technical University.
- Khak-e Pâyeh Engineers Company for:
  - o Urgent measures for the conservation of Darius's Inscription.
  - o Studying of the Bisotun Plain.
- Tarh va Naghsheye Bakhtar Engineering Company for mapping.
- Sahrâ Kâv Engineering Company for geophysical studies.
- Kermânshâh Oil Study Centre for the study of the effects on environmental pollution of the site.



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### *5.h Visitor facilities and statistics*

- Public Toilets and Hygienic Services.
- English and Persian Language guides in the site.
- Cultural products Shop.
- Due to the short distance between Bisotun and Kermânshâh and the limited numbers of tourists, presently there is no need for a restaurant at the site.
- Based on the existence of the suitable hotels and accommodation centres in Kermânshâh, presently there is no need for the construction of a hotel for the tourists on the site. However, as mentioned before, the Shâh Abbâsi Caravanserai will probably be transformed in a guest house for scientists, archaeologists and technical staff.
- A Medical clinic and emergency centre exists in the Bisotun town.
- There is also a Red Crescent centre 5 kms away from the site.
- Shopping facilities are located in Kermânshâh.

Statistics on the number of visitors in Bisotun from 1997 up are as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Iranian</b>	<b>International</b>	<b>Total</b>
1997	12540	1330	13840
1998	18900	2366	21266
1999	20500	3678	24178
2000	34087	5014	39101
2001	35012	4336	39348
2002	20147	2933	23080
2003	12647	1176	13823
2004	21356	2033	23389

- The decrease in the number of the visitors in 2002 and 2003 is due to the invasion of Iraq by the US and British Forces.
- The best season for visiting the Bisotun area is in Spring and Summer times. 80% of the tourists come in those times. In winter, the number drops significant way.



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### *5.i Policies and programs relayed to the presentation and promotion of the property*

One of the objectives of the recent and still ongoing merging of the Iranian Cultural Heritage Organisation with the Tourism Organization is precisely to promote sites not only without harming them, but to use the occasion to enhance the quality of their restoration and presentation. For that purpose, the previous space management plans of Bisotun are being reevaluated. A sketch of a General Space Management Mapping has already been submitted by the contractor's office in charge of the study, but their final plan is due shortly, during 2006. After its submission, it shall have certainly to be amended by the Bisotun's Steering Committee (Râhbordi) and the direction of Research Organization for Cultural Heritage and Tourism as well as the Technical Committee of the Vice-Directorate for Conservation and Protection of Monuments and Sites; only then the final version of the General Space Management Mapping will be applied (for the objectives see the management plan). However, without waiting for this final GSMP, some of the obvious items which were approved in the previous plans are being executed (such as the transformation of the Safavid Caravanserai into a modern Guest House for scientists in general or the technical staff of ICHTO) and others items will be pursued consequently. A harmonious and well executed GSMP will be in it self the master trump card of the presentation, hence the promotion of the site. A decision to take, concerns hotel facilities for the tourists. Decision on this matter is not that easy because of the respect due to the landscape zone. As Kermânshah is close, the final decision on this issue can wait. Guided daily tours can easily handle the matter for the time being. The future evolution of tourist number will greatly help. The possible inscription of the site on World Heritage List will no doubt influence that matter in proportions that cannot be appropriately foreseen now. The issue will naturally greatly also influence the production of films, videos, TV programs, leaflets, tourist maps and books. Permanent and seasonal exhibitions are also envisaged. The permanent exhibition can be seen as a small museum.



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### ***5.j Staffing levels (professional, technical, maintenance)***

- Professionals for punctual controls of the state of conservation, archaeology, etc.
- Professional expert for touristic programmes.
- Technical personnel for restoration work.
- Local workers for daily maintenance and protection.

The following table shows the staffing level:

<b>Task</b>	<b>Number</b>
Director	1
Financial Administrator	2
Secretary	1
Technical Experts	5
Computer Expert	1
Conservator	1
Tourism expert	1
Guide	1
Driver	1
Guards	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>

Other non permanent staffs accomplish different tasks such as archaeological researches, conservation, geological, mapping etc.



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## **6 MONITORING**



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great

## 6. Monitoring

### 6.a Key indicators for measuring state of conservation

The records left both by travellers' accounts and restoration programs constitute the main bulk of document for measuring the state of conservation of the site. The major key indicators, drawings and photographs dating back for some of them to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, show that the Darius's relief and its inscriptions have gone through a very slow process of natural degradation mainly caused by water and humidity.

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Periodicity</i>	<i>Location of Records</i>
Photography	On 6 months cycle	Bisotun Research Base and ICHTO archives
Photography	During rainy and snowy seasons on a yearly bases	Bisotun Research Base and ICHTO archives
Photogrametry	On 10 years cycles	Bisotun Research Base and ICHTO archives
Monitoring of cracks and fissures	On a yearly cycles	Bisotun Research Base and ICHTO archives
Measurement of the amount of water exiting from cracks and fissures	During rainy seasons	Bisotun Research Base and ICHTO archives
Measurement of acidity and chemical components of rains	During rainy seasons	Bisotun Research Base and ICHTO archives
Measurment of the rate of deterioration of stone surface based on detail documentation	On a yearly cycles	Bisotun Research Base and ICHTO archives
Qualitatvie and quantitative measurement of salts due to cristalization	On a yearly cycles	Bisotun Research Base and ICHTO archives

### 6.b Administrative arrangements for monitoring property

Regular inspections are carried out by the staff of the local office of the ICHTO at Bisotun. A brief report on the state of conservation of the site is sent regularly to ICHTO's Central Office in Tehran



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### 6.c Results of previous reporting exercises

The restoration / monitoring activities recorded since 1996 are as follows:

<i>Preparer/Author</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Location of Records</i>	<i>Date</i>
- Jackson, A .V	" <i>The Great Behistun Rock</i> "	Journal of American Oriental Society	1903
- King, L. W. and R. C. Thompson	" <i>The Sculptures and Inscriptions of Darius the Great at Behistun in Persia</i> ",	Brithis Museum London	1907
Seifollah Kambakhsh	<i>Report on Waters in Darius Inscription</i>	ICHTO's Archive Center	1975
Malihe Mehdiabadi	<i>Conservation and Restoration and Pathology of Darius Inscription in Bisotun, Final BA thesis</i>	ICHTO's Archive Center, Art Uiniversity of Isfahan, Bistoun Research Base, RCCCR	1993
Asghar Moradi	<i>Master Plan for Reorganization of Historical Cultural Site of Bisotun</i>	ICHTO's Archive Center	1995
Malihe Mehdiabadi	<i>Pathology of Major Stone Reliefs in Kermanshah, Final MA thesis</i>	ICHTO's Archive Center, Art Uiniversity of Isfahan, Bistoun Research Base, RCCCR	1997
Malihe Mediabadi	<i>Pathology of Large Inscription of Darius in Bisotun</i>	Journal of Athar, Vol 28	1997
Geology groups, Bouali University in Hamedan	<i>Geological &amp; Pathological Studies of Darius Inscription</i>	Bouali University & Bistoun Research Base	1999
Committee for Safeguarding of Stone Monument	<i>Emergency Restoration Works on Darius Inscription and Sang-e Belash</i>	Archive Center of Conservation and Rehabilitation Office, Bisotun Research Base	2000
Khak-payee Company	<i>Technical and Structural Studies on Darius Inscription in Bisotun</i>	Bisotun Research Base	2001
Hegmataneh Company	<i>Conservation and Restoration Programme for Bisotun Caravanserai</i>	Archive Center of Cultural Heritage of Kermanshah	2001
Parseh- barmand Company	<i>Restoration &amp; Rehabilitation Project on Bisotun Caravanserai</i>	Archive Center of Cultural Heritage of Kermanshah, Bisotun Research Base	2002-2003



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## **7** **DOCUMENTATION**





The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great

## 7. Documentation

### 7.a Photographs, slides, image inventory and authorization table and other audiovisual materials

<b>Id. No</b>	<b>Format (slide/print/video)</b>	<b>Caption</b>	<b>Date of Photo (mo/yr)</b>	<b>Photographer/Director of the video</b>	<b>Copyright owner (if different than photographer/director of video)</b>	<b>Contact details of copyright owner (Name, address, tel/fax and e-mail)</b>	<b>Non exclusive cession of rights</b>
1	Digital photo	Hunters' cave	2004	F. Biglari	ICHTO	-----	-----
2	Digital photo	Mar- Kher Cave	2003	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	-----	-----
3	Digital photo	Mar- Târik Cave	2005	F. Biglari	ICHTO	-----	-----
4	Digital photo	Mar-Âftaw Cave	2005	F. Biglari	ICHTO	-----	-----
5	Digital photo	Mar-Do-Dar Cave	2005	F. Biglari	ICHTO	-----	-----
6	Negative	Darius Inscription	1991	Malihe Mehdiabadi	ICHTO	-----	-----
7	Negative	Darius Inscription	1991	Malihe Mehdiabadi	ICHTO	-----	-----
8	Digital photo	Darius Inscription	2005	Ali Mousavi	ICHTO	-----	-----
9	Digital photo	Darius Inscription, Scythian Skunkha	2005	Ali Mousavi	ICHTO	-----	-----
10	Negative	Head of Darius	1997	Malihe Mehdiabadi	ICHTO	-----	-----
11	Negative	ancient restorations, Darius Inscription	1997	Malihe Mehdiabadi	ICHTO	-----	-----
12	Drawing	Different stages, construction of the Inscription	1998 Translated in Persian	Haidemarie	Published	-----	-----
13	Digital photo	Seleucid statue of Heracles	2005	Mojdeh Momenzadeh	ICHTO	-----	-----
14	Digital photo	Seleucid statue of Heracles holding a lion	2005	Mojdeh Momenzadeh	ICHTO	-----	-----
15	Digital photo	General view of the Parthian Slope and the Sang-e Belâsh	2005	Ali Mousavi	ICHTO	-----	-----
16	Digital photo	Sang-e Belâsh on the Parthian Slope	2005	Ali Mousavi	ICHTO	-----	-----
17	Digital photo	Stone reliefs of Mithradates Gotarzes II, Shaykh Ali Khân	2005	Ali Mousavi	ICHTO	-----	-----
18	Drawing	Shaykh ali khan Inscription	1978	Masoud Golzari	ICHTO	-----	-----
19	Digital photo	Sassanids and Il-Khânid historic remains	2004	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	-----	-----
20	Digital photo	Remains of Sassanids palace attributed to Khosrow II	2005	Ali Mousavi	ICHTO	-----	-----



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21	Digital photo	Remains of Il-Khânid building constructed over the Sassanids palace	2005	Ali Mousavi	ICHTO	----	-----
22	Digital photo	Il-Khânid remains and Farhâd-Tarâsh at the background	2005	Ali Mousavi	ICHTO	----	-----
23	Digital photo	Farhâd-Tarâsh	2005	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	----	-----
24	Digital photo	Side view of Farhâd-Tarâsh	2005	A. Shahkarami	ICHTO	----	-----
25	Digital photo	Sassanids dressed stone	2005	A. Shahkarami	ICHTO	----	-----
26	Digital photo	Pol-e Khosrow	2005	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	----	-----
27	Digital photo	Pol-e Khosrow	2005	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	----	-----
28	Digital photo	Remains of Gamâsyâb retaining wall	2005	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	----	-----
29	Digital photo	Shâh-Abbâsi Caravanserai	2004	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	----	-----
30	Digital photo	Shâh-Abbâsi Caravanserai	2004	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	----	-----
31	Digital photo	Shâh-Abbâsi Caravanserai	2004	Parse-Barmand	ICHTO	----	-----
32	Digital photo	Plan of Shah-abbasi caravanserai	2004	Parse-Barmand	ICHTO	----	-----
33	Digital photo	Anubanini	2005	Malihe Mehdiabadi	ICHTO	----	-----
34	Drawing	Anubanini	1920	Hertzfeld	Published	----	-----
35	Digital photo	Bisotun Mountain	2005	A. Shahkarami	ICHTO	----	-----
36	Digital photo	Bisotun Mountain	2005	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	----	-----
37	Digital photo	Bisotun Mountain	2005	A. Shahkarami	ICHTO	----	-----
38	Digital photo	Sarâb-e Bisotun and its landscape	2005	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	----	-----
39	Digital photo	Sarâb-e Bisotun and reflection of mountain	2004	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	----	-----
40	Digital photo	Bisotun Research Base	2004	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	----	-----
41	Digital photo	Part of the site	2004	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	----	-----
42	Digital photo	Part of the site	2004	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	----	-----
43	Digital photo	General view of sites	2004	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	----	-----
44	Digital photo	Sarâb	2004	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	----	-----
45	Digital photo	Agricultural lands within the site	2004	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	----	-----
46	Negative	Darius rock relief in a rainy day	1997	Malihe Mehdiabadi	ICHTO	----	-----
47	Digital photo	Access steps to the Darius relief	2005	A. Shahkarami	ICHTO	----	-----
48	Digital photo	Maddian Temple	1993	Malihe Mehdiabadi	ICHTO	----	-----
49	Digital photo	Il-Khânid monuments over the Sassanids remains	2005	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	----	-----



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50	Digital photo	Shâh-Abbâsi Caravanserai	2002	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	----	-----
51	Digital photo	Shâh-Abbâsi Caravanserai under restoration	2003	Parse-Barmand	ICHTO	----	-----
52	Digital photo	Shâh-Abbâsi Caravanserai under restoration	2003	Parse-Barmand	ICHTO	----	-----
53	Digital photo	The gated of Shâh-Abbâsi Caravanserai at present	2003	Parse-Barmand	ICHTO	----	-----

### Table of Annex (Cultural Landscape)

<b>Id. No</b>	<b>Format (slide/print/video)</b>	<b>Caption</b>	<b>Date of Photo (mo/yr)</b>	<b>Photographer/Director of the video</b>	<b>Copyright owner (if different than photographer/director of video)</b>	<b>Contact details of copyright owner (Name, address, tel/fax and e-mail)</b>	<b>Non exclusive cession of rights</b>
1	Digital photo	Bistun Landscape	2005	A. Shahkaramai	ICHTO	----	-----
2	Digital photo	Bistun Landscape	2005	A. Shahkaramai	ICHTO	----	-----
3	Digital photo	Bistun Landscape	2005	A. Shahkaramai	ICHTO	----	-----
4	Digital photo	Bistun Landscape	2004	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	----	-----
5	Digital photo	Bistun Landscape	2004	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	----	-----
6	Digital photo	Bistun Landscape	2004	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	----	-----
7	Digital photo	Bistun Landscape	2004	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	----	-----
8	Digital photo	Bistun Landscape	2004	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	----	-----
9	Digital photo	Bistun Landscape	2003	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	----	-----
10	Digital photo	Bistun Landscape	2005	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	----	-----
11	Digital photo	Bistun Landscape	2005	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	----	-----
12	Digital photo	Historical monuments	2003	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	----	-----
13	Digital photo	Historical monuments	2004	A. Shahkaramai	ICHTO	----	-----
14	Digital photo	Historical monuments	2005	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	----	-----
15	Digital photo	Historical monuments	2004	A. Shahkaramai	ICHTO	----	-----
16	Digital photo	Historical monuments	2004	A. Shahkaramai	ICHTO	----	-----
17	Digital photo	Historic entry root to the Bisotun Plain	2005	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	----	-----
18	Digital photo	Historic entry root to the Bisotun Plain	2005	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	----	-----
19	Digital photo	Daily life in villages	2005	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	----	-----
20	Digital photo	Daily life in villages	2005	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	----	-----
21	Digital photo	Daily life in villages	2005	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	----	-----
22	Digital photo	Daily life in villages	2005	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	----	-----
23	Digital photo	Daily life in villages	2004	A. Shahkaramai	ICHTO	----	-----
24	Digital photo	Daily life in villages	2004	A. Shahkaramai	ICHTO	----	-----
25	Digital photo	Daily life in villages	2004	A. Shahkaramai	ICHTO	----	-----
26	Digital photo	Daily life in villages	2005	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	----	-----



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27	Digital photo	Sugar Firm, Industrial units	2005	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	----	-----
28	Digital photo	Burlap making factory, Industrial units	2005	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	----	-----
29	Digital photo	Petrochemistry, Industrial units	2005	Mojdeh Momenzadeh	ICHTO	----	-----
30	Digital photo	Stone queries	2005	A. Shahkaramai	ICHTO	----	-----
31	Digital photo	Small town of Bisotun	2005	Bisotun Research Base	ICHTO	----	-----

- In addition 14 slides have already been submitted to the World Heritage Centre, attached to the initial nomination file provided.
- See the list of pictures and the slides at the end of the dossier.

***7.b Texts relating to protective designation, copies of property management plans or documented management systems and extracts of other plans relevant to the property***

- See the attached book titled "Laws, regulations, guidelines, agreements of Iranian cultural heritage, Younes Samadi, 2004.
- See the attached maps.
- Management Plan is included in the file.

***7.c Form and date of most recent records or inventory of property***

No	Title	Year	Responsible Person or Organization
1	Provision of photogrametric maps from Bisotun inscription, Mithradates and Heracles on scale of 1:5	2001-2005	Bisotun Research Base with cooperation of Tehran University
2	Collection of reports on soils, rivers and development infrastructures	Since 2001	Bisotun Research Base
3	Collection of environmental, climatological and population data	Since 2001	Bisotun Research Base
4	Provision of terrestrial maps in scale of 1:50, 1:100, 1:200 from part of Bisotun cultural area and its related cultural properties	2001-2005	Bisotun Research Base with cooperation of Tehran University
5	Provision of Core and Buffer zones maps for inscription of the site in the National Heritage List	2003-2004	Bisotun Research Base



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6	Provision of existing land use maps in core zone and buffer zone including the natural resources, agricultural lands, constructed factories and factories in the process of construction, historic queries	2003-2004	Bisotun Research Base with cooperation of Organization of Natural Resources
7	Preparing conservation and restoration reports	Ongoing	Bisotun Research Base
8	Taking photographs, slides, and videos from various phases of projects on conservation, restoration, research and presentation	Ongoing	Bisotun Research Base
9	Production of videos from natural, cultural, historical and public environments and different stages of works	Ongoing	Bisotun Research Base
10	Setting up of archive center and its updating (Documents, negatives and CDs)	Ongoing	Bisotun Research Base
11	Creation of website	2003	Bisotun Research Base
12	Documenting the demolition and damages inflicted on cultural properties resulted from development projects	Ongoing	Bisotun Research Base
13	Preparation of documentation reports by university students	Ongoing	Bisotun Research Base

Apart from above mentioned documents, the records concerning the site of Bisotun fall into two groups, one restoration and conservation reports, the other archaeological excavation reports (see bibliography). Regular reports concerning restorations which have been carried out after 1979 have been kept in the archive centre of the Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization of Iran. Archaeological investigations undertaken by German Archaeological Institute between 1963 and 1967 were fully published. Reports of further explorations, especially those led by M. Rahbar, are available in the form of preliminary reports and are deposited in the Archaeological Archives of ICHTO. All the excavations reports in Persian are also kept in the Archive Centre of the Iranian Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization and Bisotun Research Base.



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#### ***7.d Address where inventory, records and archives are held***

- Archives Centre, Iranian Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization (ICHTO), Azadi Avenue, Tehran, Iran.
- Bisotun Research Base.



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## 7.e Bibliography

- Biglari, F,  
“Recent finds of Paleolithic period from Bisotun, Central Western Zagros Mountains”, *Iranian Journal of Archaeology and History*, Serial n° 28, Vol. 14, n° 2, pp. 4-5 (English abstract) & pp. 50-60 (en Farsi).
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“The Middle Palaeolithic occupation of Mar-Tarik, a new Zagros Mousterian site in Bisotun massif (Kermânshâh, Iran)”. *Archaeology, Ethnology & Anthropology of Eurasia*
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“Research in the Prehistory of Central Western Iran”, *Science*, No. 153,  
1966, pp. 386-391.





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## **8**

# **CONTACT INFORMATION OF RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITIES**



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great

## 8. Contact Information of responsible authorities

### 8.a Preparers

**Name:** Malihe Mehdiabadi  
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**Address:** Bisotun Research Base,  
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**Dossier prepared in the Bureau for International Activities and World Heritage,  
Iranian Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization (ICHTO), Tehran**

**With cooperation of:**

Mr C. Adle

Mr Ali Mousavi

Ms Shirin Darvish Rohani

Mr N. Norouzzadeh Chegini



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## **8.b Official Local Institution / Agency**

Bureau for International Activities and World Heritage, Research Center for Conservation of Cultural Relics (RCCCR)

Iranian Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization

**Address:** 15, Imam Khomeini Ave.,

Tehran 11365, IRAN

**City, Province / State, Country:** Tehran, IRAN

**Tel :** (+98 21) 66 73 65 17-20

**Fax :** (+98 21) 66 73 65 22

**E-mail:** whc@rcccr.org

## **8.c Other Local Institutions**

Bisotun Research Base,

Near Sarâb, Bisotun,

Kermânshâh, IRAN

## **8.d Official Web address**

**http://** [www.ichto.ir](http://www.ichto.ir), [www.iranmiras.ir](http://www.iranmiras.ir)

**Contact name:** Rasool Vatandoust

**E-mail:** arv@rcccr.org

## **9. Signature on behalf of the State Party**

**Seyyed Taha Hashemi**

Deputy Chairman, ICHTO and  
Head, Research Organization for Cultural Heritage and Tourism  
Iranian Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization



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## PICTURES



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



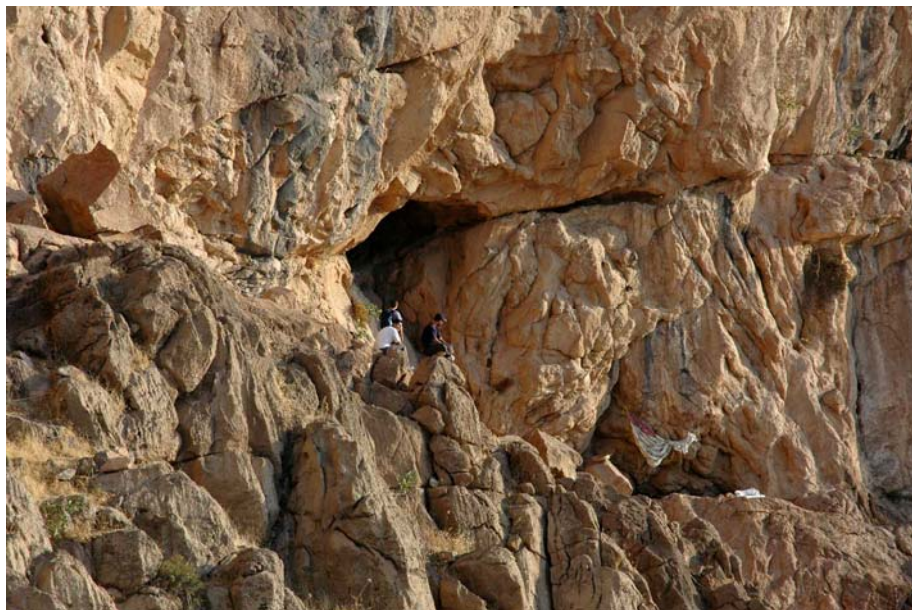
Picture 1. General view of Shekârchiyân Cave (Hunters' cave)



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



Picture 2. Mar- Kher Cave (Donkey cave)



Picture 3. Mar- Târik Cave (Dark cave)



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



Picture 4. Mar-Âftaw Cave (Sun cave)



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



Picture 5. Mar-Do-Dar Cave (Two doors cave)





The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



Picture 6. Darius the Great inscription



Picture7. Darius the Great inscription



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



Picture 8. Darius rock relief



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



Picture 9. The Scythian Skunkha, added to the Darius's Rock-Relief around 518 B.C.



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



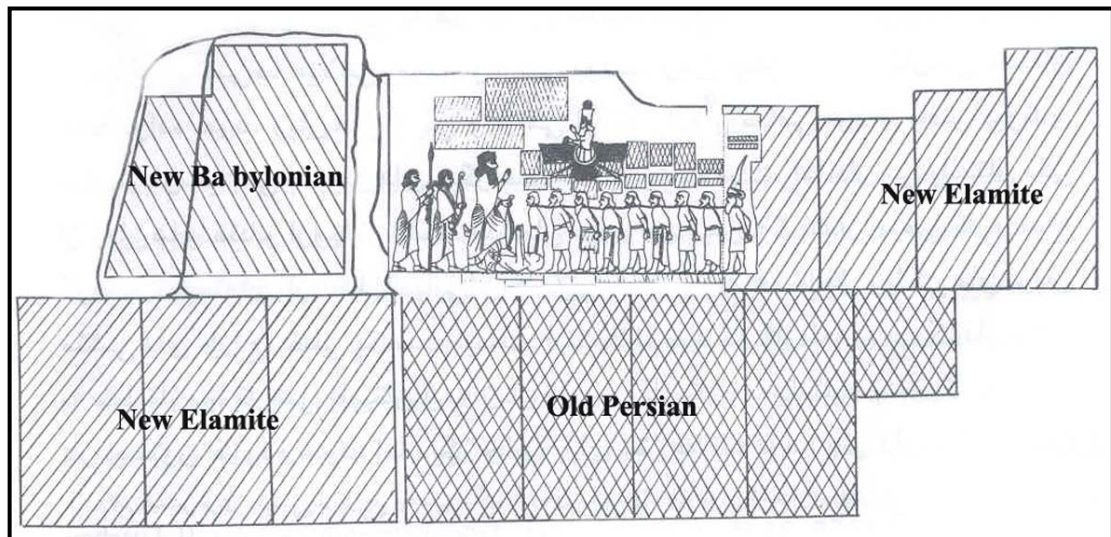
Picture 10. Head of Darius, Darius inscription



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



Picture 11. Detail of ancient restorations, Darius inscription



Picture 12. Different stages of the construction of the Darius inscription



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



Picture 13. Seleucid statue of Heracles



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



Picture 14. Seleucid statue of Heracles holding a lion



Picture 15. General view of the Parthian Slope and the Sang-e Belâsh



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



Picture 16. Sang-e Belâsh on the Parthian Slope

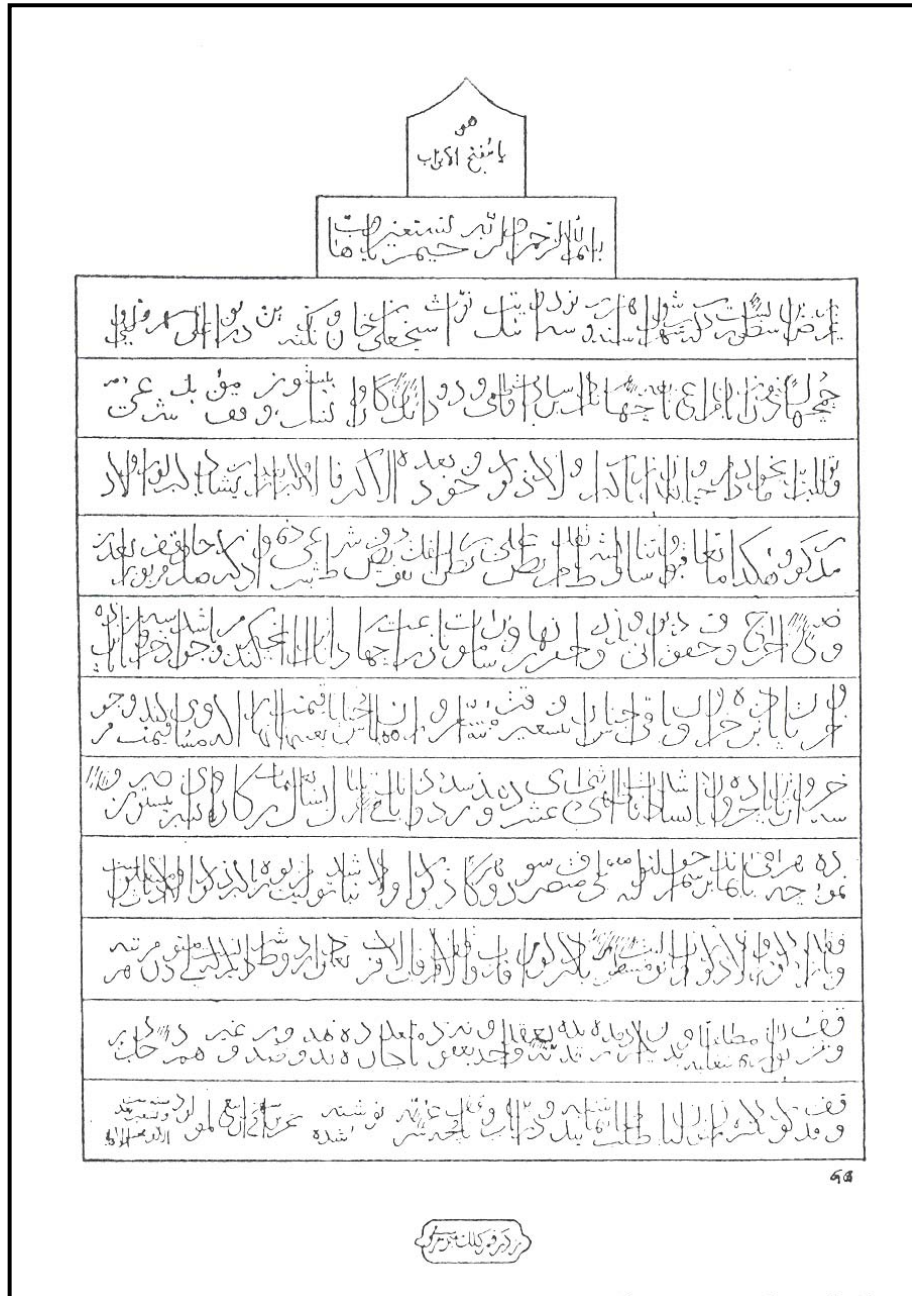


Picture 17. Stone reliefs of Mithradates and Gotarzes II with the inscription of Shaykh Ali Khân in the middle, Parthian remains





The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



Picture 18. Shaykh Ali Khân inscription



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



Picture 19. Sassanids and Il-Khânid historic remains



Picture 20. Remains of Sassanids palace attributed to Khosrow II



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



Picture 21. Remains of Il-Khânid building constructed over the Sassanids palace



Picture 22. Il-Khânid remains and Farhâd-Tarâsh at the background



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



Picture 23. Farhâd-Tarâsh



Picture 24. Side view of Farhâd-Tarâsh



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



Picture 25. Sassanids dressed stone



Picture 26. Pol-e Khosrow



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



Picture 27. Pol-e Khosrow



Picture 28. Remains of Gamâsyâb retaining wall



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



Picture 29. Shâh-Abbâsi Caravanserai



Picture 30. Shâh-Abbâsi Caravanserai



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great

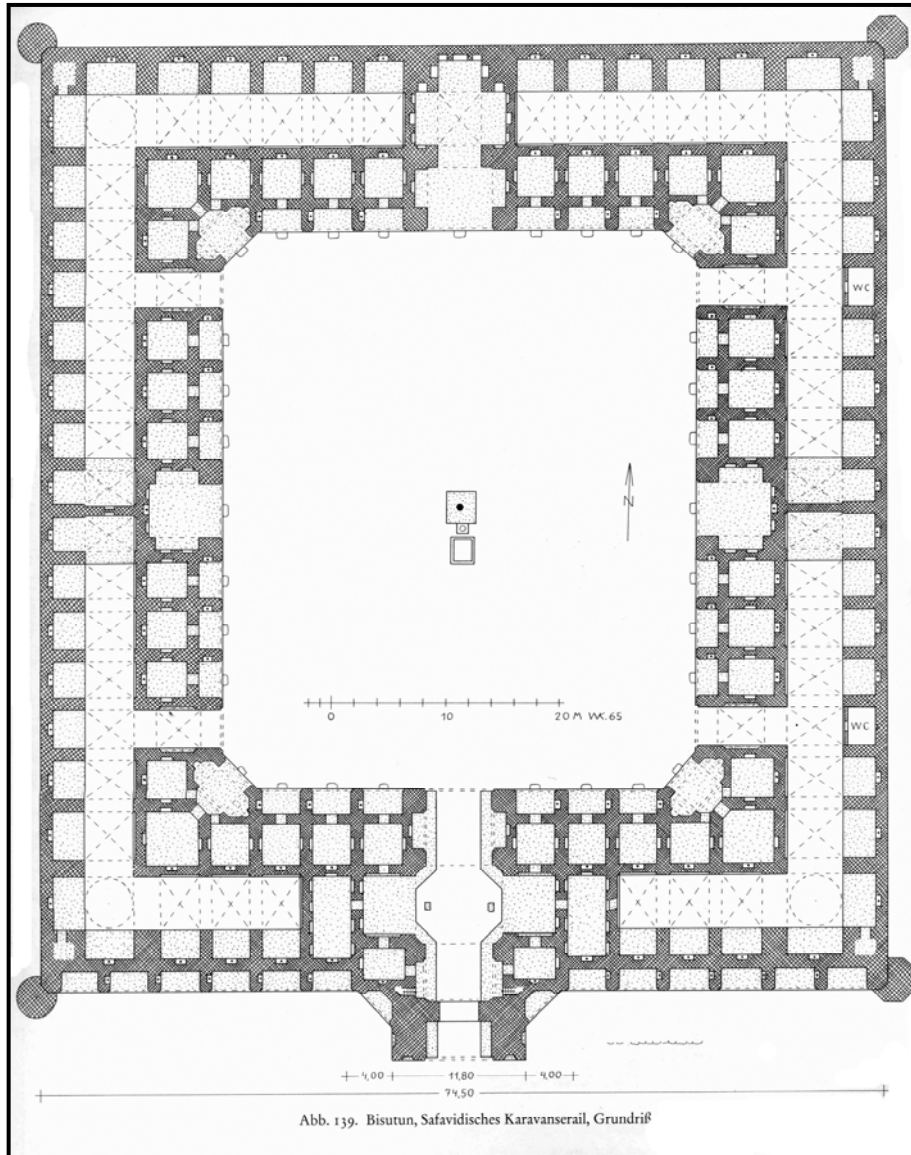


Picture 31. Shâh-Abbâsi Caravanserai





The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



Picture 32. Plan of Shâh-Abbâsi Caravanserai



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



Picture 33. Anubanini



Picture 34. Anubanini



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



Picture 35. Bisotun Mountain



Picture 36. Bisotun Mountain



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



Picture 37. Bisotun Mountain



Picture 38. Sarâb-e Bisotun and its landscape



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



Picture 39. Sarâb-e Bisotun and reflection of mountain



Picture 40. Bisotun Research Base



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



Picture 41. Part of the site



Picture 42. Part of the site



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



Picture 43. General view of sites



Picture 44. Sarâb



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great

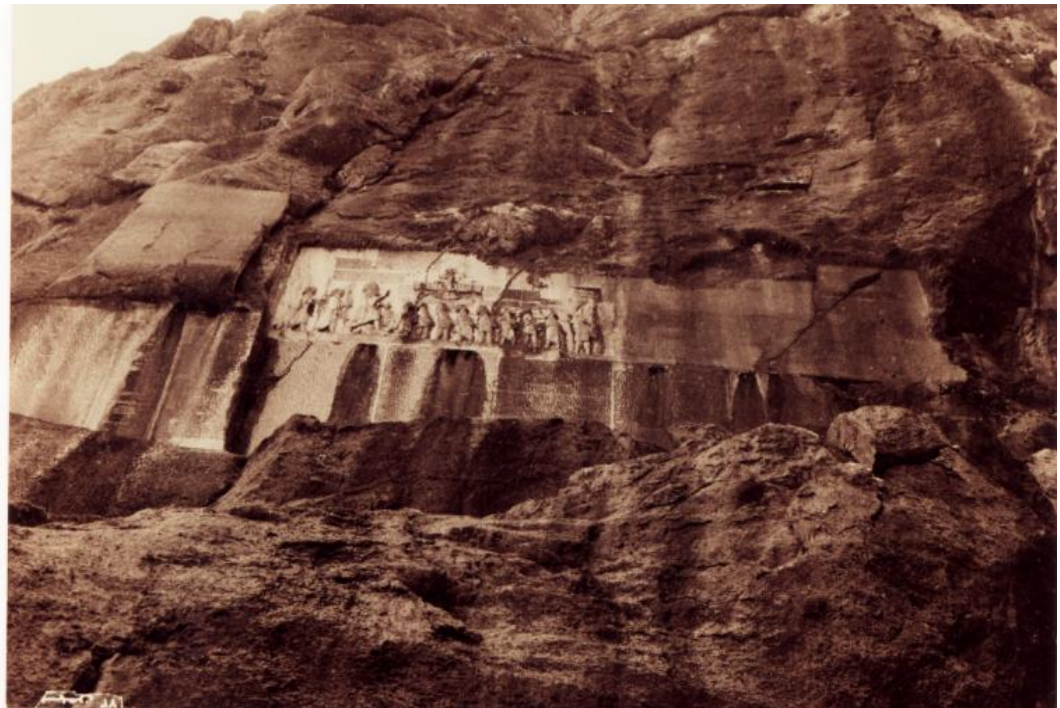


Picture 45. Agricultural lands within the site





The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



Picture 46. Darius rock relief in a rainy day



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



Picture 47. Access steps to the Darius relief



Picture 48. Maddian Temple



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



Picture 49. Il-Khânid monuments over the Sassanids remains



Picture 50. Shâh-Abbâsi Caravanserai when handed over to ICHTO by "Rehabilitation Center"



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



Picture 51. Shâh-Abbâsi Caravanserai under restoration



Picture 52. Shâh-Abbâsi Caravanserai under restoration



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



Picture 53. The Gate of Shâh-Abbâsi Caravanserai at present



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great

## MAPS



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great

## Maps

- 1- Geographical position of IRAN.
- 2- Province of Kermânshâh and location of nominated property.
- 3- Core and buffer zones of the nominated property.
- 4- Cultural landscape zone.
- 5- GPS information.
- 6-Photogrametry of the Darius the Great Inscription.
- 7- Photogrametry of the Darius the Great Inscription (more details).
- 8- Photogrametry of Heracles statue.
- 9- Photogrametry of Mithradates.
- 10- Land use.



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great

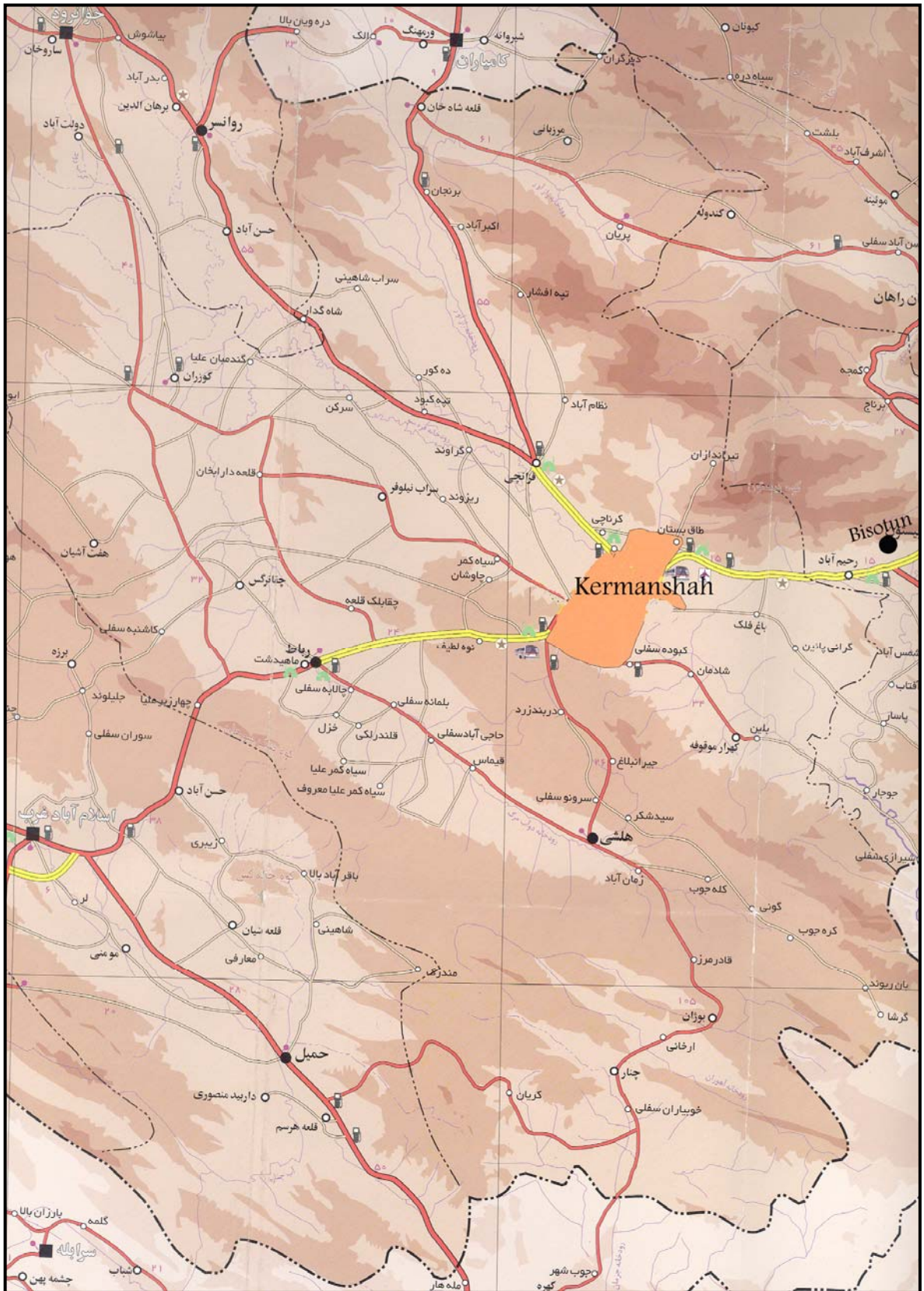


Map 1: Geographical position of IRAN

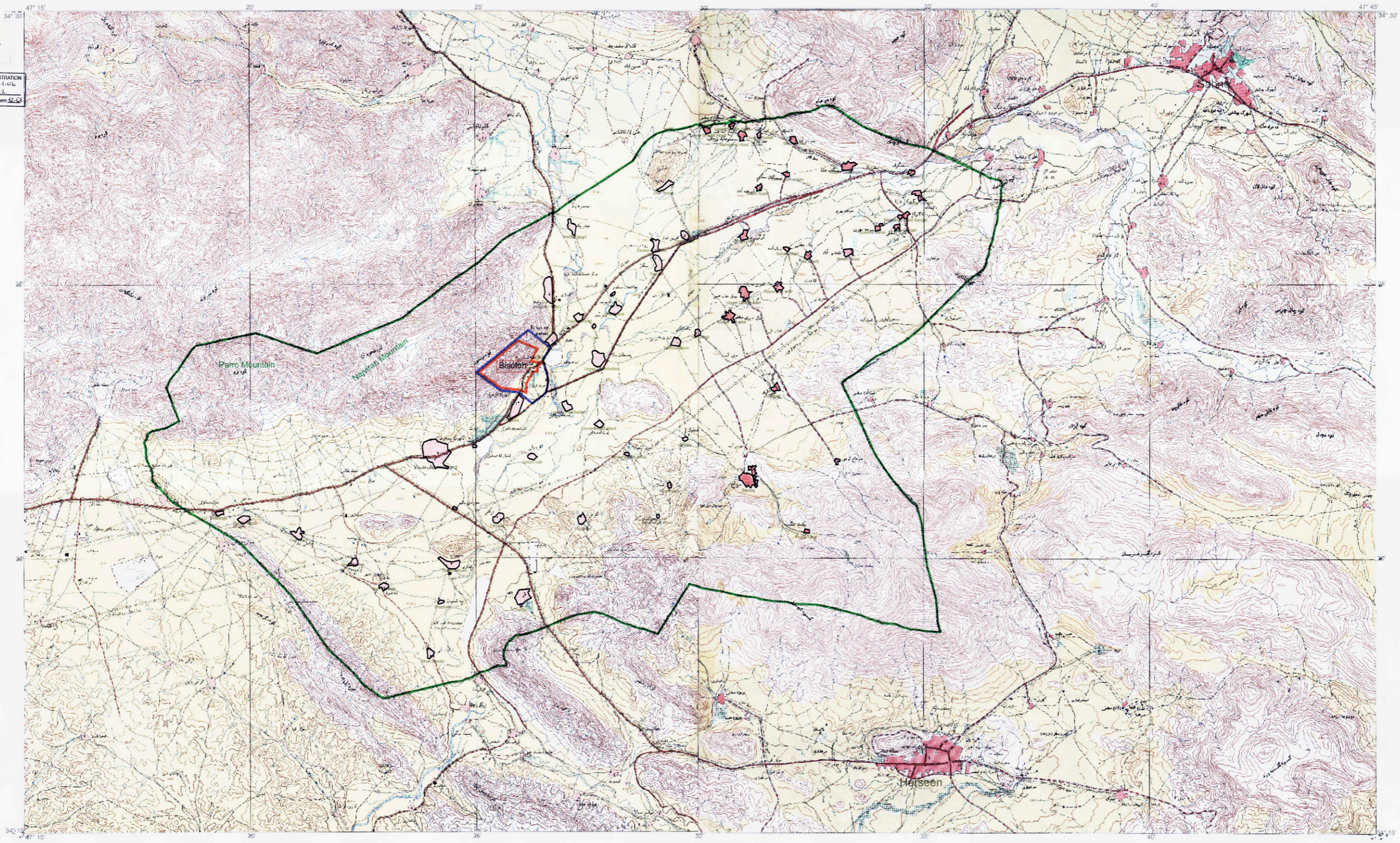




The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



Map 2: Province of Kermanshah and the nominated property



**I. The core zone is subjected to the following rules:**

1. No allocation is permitted, constructions, digging wells or subterranean canals, tree plantations, excavations, earth filling or civil engineering operations are strictly prohibited.
2. The Iranian Cultural Heritage and Tourism organization (ICHTD) leads restoration works, archaeological excavations and investigations. It may proceed to the establishment of the necessary installations for these purposes within the core zone.

**II. The buffer zone is subject to the following rules:**

1. It is permitted to carry out traditional farming in existing farms and agricultural lands within their boundaries at surface level.
2. In the event of need to set up installations such as electricity posts, etc. along the roads which cross the buffer zone, ICHTD's permission must be requested.

**III. The landscape buffer zone is subject to the following rules:**

1. It is permitted to continue to carry out agricultural or gardening activities.
2. Industrial installations causing environmental pollution, mining, or any activities altering the structure of the mountains or damaging the general landscape is forbidden.

**IV. The expansion zones of the villages are subjected to the following rules:**

1. Enclaves are allocated to future expansions of villages.
2. It is highly recommended that all constructions in the expansion areas be carried out in respect to local traditional architecture.

I.C.H.T.O

Iranian cultural Heritage and Tourism  
Organization

Fig.3  
BISOTUN

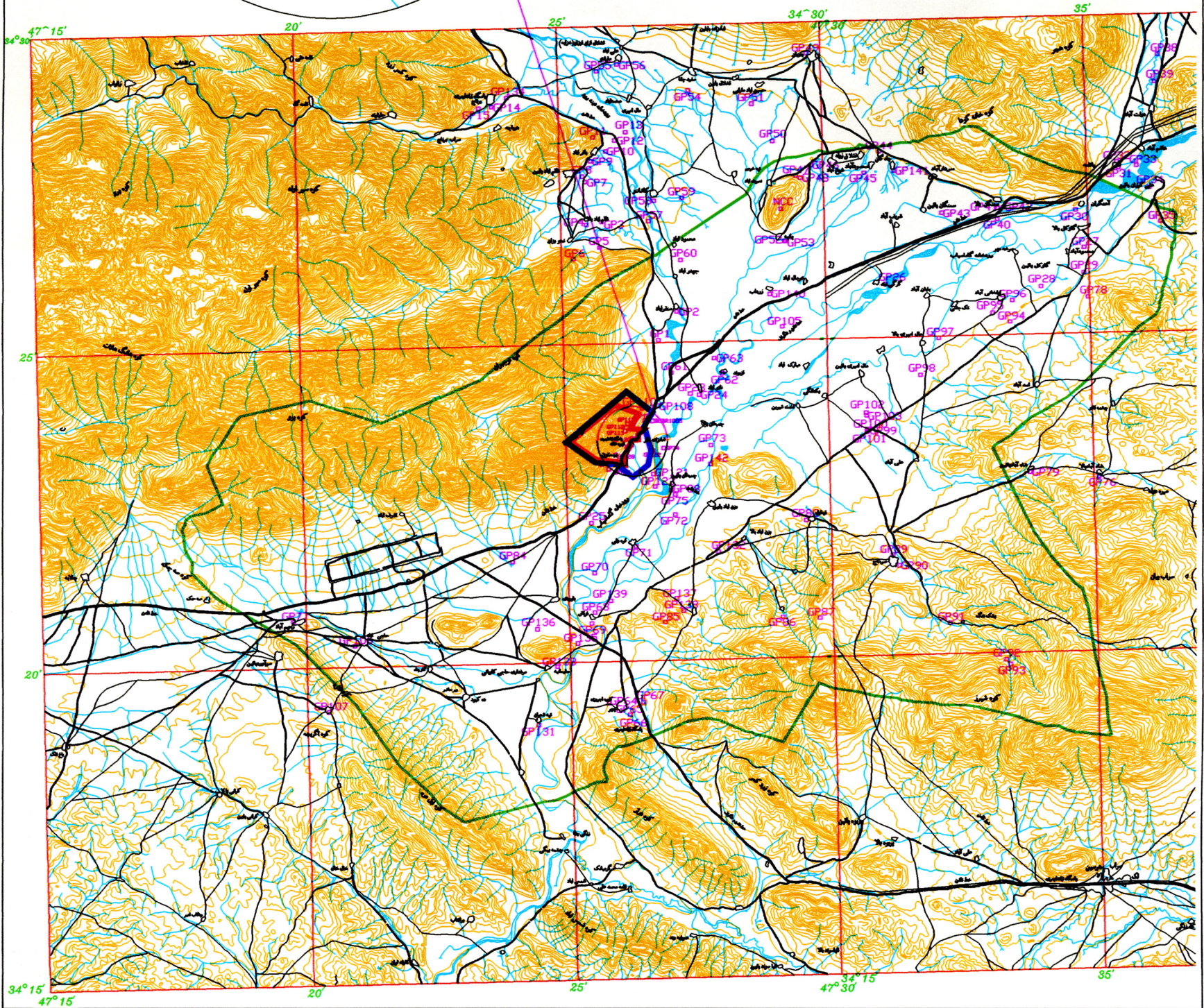
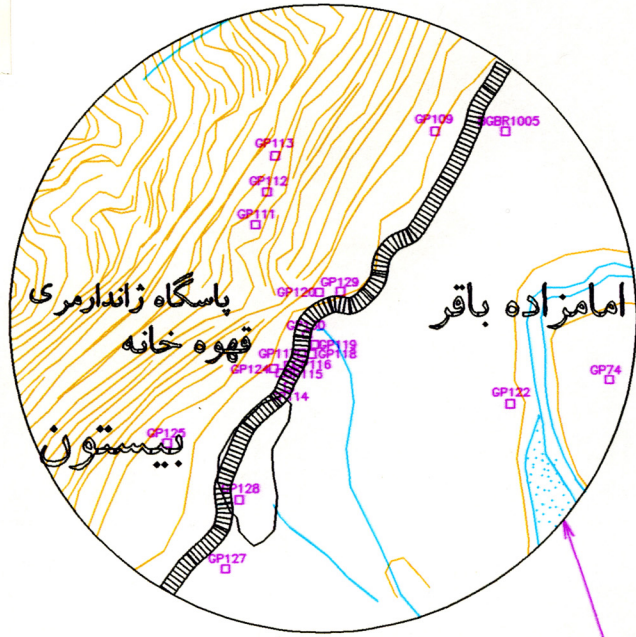
Core, Buffer and Landscape Zones

- Core zone
- Buffer zone
- Landscape buffer zone
- Villages and their future restricted expansion

LEGEND

Corzon Land Scape	GP122	نقاط GPS
Buffer zone	□	حرم منظری
Core zone	—	حرم
	—	عرصه

Scale : 1/130000





The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great

## **ANNEX**

# **VIEWS OF CULTURAL LANDSCAPE**



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great

## **Views of Cultural Landscapes**

(1- 11): Bistoun Landscape

(12-16): Historical monuments within Landscape Zone

(17-18): Historic entry root to the Bisotun Plain, currently asphalted

(19-26): Examples of villages within the Cultural Landscape Zone, daily life,  
Agriculture and animals breeding

Industrial units within the Landscape zone,

(27): Sugar Firm

(28): Burlap making factory

(29): Petrochemistry,

(30): Stone queries

(31): Small town of Bisotun, located in Landscape Zone



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



(1)



(2)



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



(3)



(4)



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



(5)



(6)





The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



(7)



(8)



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



(9)



(10)



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



(11)



(12)



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



(13)



(14)



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



(15)



(16)



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



(17)



(18)



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



(19)



(20)



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



(21)



(22)





The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



(23)



(24)



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



(25)



(26)



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



(27)



(28)



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



(29)



(30)



The Site of Bisotun and the Rock Relief of Darius the Great



(31)

## Bisotun (Iran)

No 1222

### 1. BASIC DATA

*State Party:* Islamic Republic of Iran

*Name of property:* Bisotun

*Location:* Province of Kermanshah

*Date received by the World Heritage Centre:* 28 January 2005

*Included in the Tentative List:* 22 May 1997

*International Assistance from the World Heritage Fund for preparing the nomination* No

*Category of property:*

In terms of the categories of cultural property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is an archaeological *site*.

*Brief description:*

The monument of Bisotun is located along the ancient trade route linking the Iranian high plateau with Mesopotamia. The site has remains from the prehistoric times to the Median, Achaemenid, Sassanian, and Ilkhanid periods. The principal monument is the bas-relief and cuneiform inscription ordered by Darius I The Great in 521 BC. The monument is in a strategic position some 100m above ground on the rock surface of a sacred mountain. The message in three languages declares the justification for his taking the rule for the Persian Empire and punishing the rebels.

### 2. ACTIONS

*Background:* This is a new nomination. A revised nomination sent by the State Party has been received on 2 February 2006.

*Date of the Technical Evaluation Mission:* 27 September-1<sup>st</sup> October 2005

*Dates of request for additional information and of receipt from State Party:* ICOMOS has sent a letter to the State Party on 30 January 2006 and the State Party has provided information on 28 February 2006.

*Consultations:* ICOMOS has consulted its International Scientific Committee on Archaeological Heritage Management.

*Literature:* The Bisotun monument is referred to in numerous works on ancient Iran, e.g. by H.C. Rawlinson (1846-47), A.V. Jackson (1903), W. Kleiss (1970), R. Schmitt (Encyclopedia Iranica); E. Herzfeld, *Iran in the Ancient East* (London, 1941); R. Ghishman, *Perse – Proto-Iraniens, Mèdes, Achéménides* (Paris, 1963).

*Date of ICOMOS approval of this report:* 10 April 2006

### 3. THE PROPERTY

#### *Description*

The nominated site is located on the main trade route leading from Kurdistan and the Mesopotamian region to the Iranian Central Plateau. It is some 30km north-east of the city of Kermanshah. The core zone (ca 1200 x 500m) of the site covers the heart of the archaeological site, containing remains dating from pre-historic times through the history of ancient Persia, associated with the sacred mountain of Bisotun and the renown relief and inscription by the Achaemenid king of Persia, Darius I The Great. The site has a 'specific buffer zone' extending ca 500m from the core zone on the plain side. On the mountain side, the core zone and the buffer zone coincide with the top of the mountain. The whole area, including the visible part of the mountain and a large area of the plain are covered by a landscape buffer zone with planning control.

The prehistoric remains within the nominated site include Paleolithic cave finds, the earliest evidence of human presence at the spring-fed pool of Bisotun (*Sarâb*), on the plain under the rock. These finds provide testimony to a highly developed industry datable to the Middle Palaeolithic era, indicating that Bisotun was inhabited during the Wurm glaciation. In addition there are remains from the Median period (8<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C.) as well as from the Achaemenid (6<sup>th</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C.) and post-Achaemenid periods. There are excavated remains of Sassanian and Ilkhanid palaces in the western section of the core zone. On the ancient caravan route, there is a Safavid caravanserai, which has recently been restored as a guest house.

The central feature on the site is the *Bisotun Monument*, i.e. the inscription and bas-relief by Darius I The Great, dating from the time when he rose to the throne of the Persian Empire (521 B.C.). The monument is carved in a shallow recess in the cliff, ca. 100m above the plain, impossible to access without scaffolding. The bas-relief portrays Darius standing and facing right. He wears a Persian garment, the 'royal' shoes, a bracelet and a crenellated crown of a specially elaborate design. In his left hand he holds a bow as a sign of sovereignty. His right hand is raised at face level. With his left foot Darius is treading on the chest of a figure who lies on his back before him and, according to the legends, represents Gaumata, the Median Magus and pretender to the throne whose assassination led to Darius's reign. Gaumata, also dressed in Persian attire, is raising his arms as a sign of submission. On the right, a group of rebel leaders is walking towards the king. Their hands are tied behind their backs and a long rope is bound around their necks. Each one of them can be identified both by his legend, and by his specific ethnic costume. Below and around the bas-reliefs, there are ca. 1,200 lines of inscriptions telling the story of the battles Darius had to wage in 521-520 BC against the governors who attempted to take apart the Empire founded by Cyrus. The decisive battle took place on this site.

The inscription is written in three languages. The oldest is an Elamite text referring to legends describing the king and the rebellions. This is followed by a Babylonian version of similar legends. The last phase of the inscription is particularly important, as it is here that Darius introduced for the first time the Old Persian version of his *res gestae*,

placed in four columns below the relief. In this inscription, Darius refers to the origins of the Achaemenid dynasty:

*I am Darius, the great king, king of kings, king in Persia, king of all nations, the son of Hystaspes, the grandson of Arsames, the Achaemenid. ...*

Later, he states that he had the Old Persian cuneiform script specifically made for the purpose of composing this inscription:

*“By the favour of Ahura Mazda, this [is] the form of writing which I have made, besides, in Aryan. ... And it was written down and was read aloud before me. Afterwards I have sent this form of writing everywhere into the countries. The people strove [to use it].”*

This cuneiform writing referred to the ancient Mesopotamian system. However, in Bisotun, it was partly alphabetic partly syllabic, and each word was separated by a special symbol. The Old Persian language was revived on purpose as part of this policy. Due to the articulation of the text, also its modern interpretation, from the 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, was facilitated. In addition to Bisotun, the Achaemenid writing was used for other royal monumental inscriptions, such as those in Persepolis and Susa.

The Median fortress, just under the Darius monument, refers to a structure on the mountain slope dated to the 8<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> century B.C., probably where Darius and his companions killed Gaumata, as reported in his inscription. Of the post-Achaemenid remains, the Seleucid figure of a resting Heracles dates from 148 B.C. Though not of high standard technically, it is important because of its datable Greek inscription. The Parthian remains comprise reliefs of Mithradates (123-87 B.C.) and Gotarzes II (ca. 50 B.C.) and the Parthian stone, which were among the earliest discoveries at Bisotun. The Parthian stone bears a crude carving of a sacrificial victim on an altar. The Sassanian remains consist of several smaller monuments and objects. They include three large sculptured capitals, which are important documents for the history of Sassanian art. On each capital the king is portrayed on one side and the goddess Anahid on the opposite side.

### **History**

The original Old Persian form of the name *Bisotun* can be recovered from the Greek rendering *Bagistanon*, ‘Mt. Bagistanon’ in Diodorus Siculus, as *Bagastana* “place or stand of the god(s)”. According to archaeological finds, the site of Bisotun had been occupied long before the Achaemenids. The Paleolithic caves bear testimony to the occupation of the valley and the site as early as the 10<sup>th</sup> millennium B.C. The site was a strategic point for millennia, especially during the early years of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium B.C. when the communication with Mesopotamia increased and passed by the Mountain of Bisotun. A Median fort was probably built there in 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C. to control the access. Darius I The Great had his reliefs and inscriptions carved on the rocky face of the mountain in 521 B.C. The site was regularly occupied up to the Middle Ages.

Nevertheless, it seems that the origins of the monument of Darius fell into oblivion after the end of the Achaemenid Empire in 330 B.C. so that Diodorus writing two centuries later mentioned it as the work of the legendary Queen

Semiramis. Twelve centuries later, Yaqut noted the eroded relief of the horseman attributed to Parthian times. The site was visited by Europeans from the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In 1734, it was visited by the Frenchman Jean Otter and subsequently by other French travellers such as Olivier (1756-1814), Jaubert (1779-1847), and Gardanne (1765-1822). J. Kinneir visited the site in 1810, but could not climb up the rock. In 1818, R. Ker Porter who had tried in vain to climb up the rocky face of the mountain wrote that the reliefs might be that of King Shalmanesar. Finally, in 1837-38, Major Henry Rawlinson visited the rock-reliefs and decided to copy and to decipher the cuneiform inscriptions which resulted in the final decipherment of the Old Persian script in 1847. Another person who significantly contributed to the decipherment of the text was Rawlinson’s rival, Edward Hincks, an Irish priest and explorer.

### **Protection and Management**

#### *Legal provision:*

The nominated property is state owned through the *Iranian Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization* (ICHTO).

The property is protected as a national monument on the basis of the *Iranian Law on the Conservation of National Monuments* (1982), the *Law of Purchase of historical properties*, and the *Law of City Halls*.

#### *Management structure:*

The principal management authority of the nominated property is ICHTO, and the Local office of the Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization at Bisotun, Kermanshah.

The general management plan for the site was approved in 2004. It consists of short term (1 year) and mid term (5 years) programmes, referring to equipment, research, conservation work and repairs, as well as educational activities.

#### *Resources:*

The resources for the conservation and management of the site are provided from the annual budget of ICHTO (250,000\$), and from the provincial budget (1,000,000\$).

### **Justification of the Outstanding Universal Value by the State Party (summary)**

The site of Bisotun bears a double significance for the history of ancient Iran and that of the southwest Asia in general. It is situated in a strategic location controlling the main route linking the Iranian plateau and Mesopotamia. This route was used since ancient times, and still constitutes the principal trade road between the eastern regions of Iran and Central Asia with Mesopotamia. From a historical point of view, the site of Bisotun has a continued archaeological sequence from Prehistoric times down to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Besides and above all, it includes one of the most remarkable documents of human history, i.e. the reliefs and inscriptions of Darius I The Great, which was the key evidence for the decipherment of cuneiform script. It was, indeed, thanks to the inscriptions at Bisotun that Sir Henry Rawlinson began his long and

painstaking work which resulted in the reading of the Old Persian cuneiform script in 1847. The inscriptions also constitute a very important document for the history of ancient Iran and the southwest Asia relating the events of the Achaemenid Empire at its crisis in the years 522 and 521 B.C.

*Criterion ii:* The rock-reliefs and the settlements at Bisotun, considering their location on the main east-west route, exhibit an interchange of human cultures over a very large span of time, i.e. from Prehistoric times to the modern era, with an apogee between the 6th century B.C. and the 6th century A.D. The reliefs are witnesses to the development of the art of rock-reliefs in Iran over a millennium.

*Criterion iii:* Bisotun bears an exceptional testimony of the Symbols of Power of the civilisation of a multiethnic empire which under four dynasties (Achaemenid, Seleucid, Parthian and Sassanids) lasted more than a thousand years and ruled and shaped the destiny of South-Western Asia as well as sometimes parts of Eastern Europe and Africa.

*Criterion iv:* Bisotun shows exceptional evidence in the history of decipherment of the cuneiform script which paved the way for subsequent reading of many other important cuneiform documents of human history. The inscriptions of Darius I The Great were indeed the golden key to such a source of human history which had been hitherto unknown.

#### 4. EVALUATION

##### *Conservation*

###### *Conservation history:*

Over the centuries, the Darius inscription has been subject to weathering and erosion by water. The site has been subject to systematic research and protection from the 1960s. It is fully documented, and the study and work for the protection and conservation of the site continue.

In 2004, the earlier concrete wall surrounding the sacred pool (Sarâb) has been removed, and replaced by a dry stone facing in harmony with the site. The modern road that was at the foot of the cliff has been closed and dismantled, and a new road has been built further away, outside the buffer zone. The head of the Heracles statue was stolen in 1993, but was later recovered and restored. It is now in museum, while a replica has been placed in situ.

The remains of the Sassanid and Ilkhanid buildings were earlier part of a village, which has since been removed. The ancient remains are now surveyed for conservation. Since the caravan route was no more in use, the Shah-Abbas Caravanserai was used for various purposes, e.g. as a prison. In 2002, it was acquired by the ICHTO, and has been restored to receive guests and scholars involved with the Bisotun project.

###### *State of conservation:*

After several years of conservation work, the current state of conservation of the Bisotun site is satisfactory. The Darius inscription itself has survived well, though some parts have suffered from water seepage through the rock, and water running over the surface. The other remains of ancient monument and buildings are in a satisfactory state,

though some conservation work still continues, for example of the Sassanian and Ilkhanid palace ruins. The caravanserai is in a good state of conservation and is being rehabilitated as a guest house.

###### *Protection and Management:*

The principal management authority of the Site of Bisotun is the Iranian Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organisation, ICHTO. It has close contacts with other relevant government bodies responsible for agriculture and environmental protection, as well as the National Resource Organisation, Housing and Town Planning Organisation. The management plan for Bisotun was approved in 2004, and its objectives have been integrated in the general territorial planning.

The core zone and the immediate surroundings are well protected under national legislation. The nomination also defines a relatively extensive landscape buffer zone in order to control any extension of residential areas and small industrial plants, which is important in order to guarantee a control of the surrounding landscape.

The site of Bisotun is under a competent management team. The recent change in the ICHTO to include tourism will give an incentive to improve the visitor reception and the presentation of the site in the future. These aspects have already been included in the site management plan.

###### *Risk analysis:*

Various types of threats affect the site and its surroundings.

###### - Erosion

The Darius monument is carved directly on the rock and is subject to erosion and freezing. The causes of decay have been identified, and measures are being taken to mitigate decay, for example by canalising waters.

###### - Earthquakes

The site is in a seismic region, though no strong earthquakes have been recorded over a century. From the past, the rock has some cracks caused by earthquakes, which are monitored.

###### - Urban and industrial development

The plain of Bisotun is agricultural land with some villages and small industry. The current industries are old and are expected to be removed in the future. The current master plan establishes regulations, which include pollution control. A power plant has been built recently at the far end of the valley, but it is not expected to cause problems to the nominated site.

###### - Visitor facilities

There have been relatively few visitors visiting the site, ca 23,000 in 2004. The presentation of the site will require attention though no major works are necessary. Nevertheless, care is needed in the design and management of any new facilities such as a permanent access for visitors.



### ***Authenticity and integrity***

#### *Authenticity:*

The authenticity of the Darius inscription has been ascertained, and also the rest of the site has been dated. Research on the site is continuing.

#### *Integrity:*

The site is located at the foot of a sacred mountain, which has certainly been yet another reason for Darius I The Great to place the monumental inscription exactly here. The current definition of the core zone covers a reasonable area enclosing the most important monuments of the site as well as part of the mountain.

### ***Comparative evaluation***

The Darius relief and inscription should be seen in the context of bas-reliefs in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, Assyria (e.g. Nineveh), and Urartu. There are compositional similarities with the bas-reliefs at Sar-e Pol-e Zohab, near the Iraqi border (3<sup>rd</sup> millennium B.C.), which may have been influenced by Akkadian and Ur III monuments, showing the symbolic gesture of supremacy of king over enemy. The Darius iconography was thus following existing traditions.

The monument of Darius I The Great acquires a particular meaning due to its political and cultural message, documenting the re-establishment of the Persian empire. It is also the first and most important inscription in Ancient Persian language, introduced by Darius I The Great for monumental purposes in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC.

### ***Outstanding universal value***

#### *General statement:*

The outstanding universal value of Bisotun can be referred to especially being an exceptional and even unique testimony to an ancient civilisation. It has also been subject to an important exchange of influences.

The site of Bisotun is in a strategic location, controlling the main route that connected the Iranian Plateau and Mesopotamia, Ecbatana to Babylon, in the antiquity. It gains additional significance being located at the sacred mountain. In fact, its name derives from *Bagastana*, meaning 'the place of gods'. The inscription and the bas-relief have great historical significance, documenting the events that led to King Darius taking over power in the Empire and punishing the rebellion rulers, in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. The models for the symbolic representation of such scenes can be searched in the ancient Egypt and Middle East.

The Bisotun monument was a dynastic declaration of great significance for the whole Persian Empire, and its message was copied and widely diffused. A copy of the monument has been found, for example, at the Ishtar Gate in Babylon, then one of the capital cities of the Persian Empire. Darius I The Great decided here to introduce symbolically the Old Persian language, subsequently used in public inscriptions throughout the Achaemenid Empire. The idea of cuneiform writing was adopted from Mesopotamia, but the Old Persian writing differed from the previous, being

alphabetic and using word dividers. In modern times, this multi-lingual inscription can be compared to Rosetta stone in Egypt in the sense as it was the key to the decipherment of cuneiform writing in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

#### *Evaluation of criteria:*

The property has been nominated by the State Party on the basis of criteria ii, iii and iv:

*Criterion ii:* The monument created by Darius I The Great in Bisotun in 521 BC exhibits important interchange of influences in the development monumental art and writing in the region of the Persian Empire. The symbolic representation of the Achaemenid king in relation to his enemy reflects traditions in monumental bas-reliefs that date from ancient Egypt and the Middle East, and which were subsequently further developed during the Achaemenid and later empires. ICOMOS considers that the property meets this criterion.

*Criterion iii:* The Bisotun monument bears unique testimony to the Persian Empire, being the only known monumental text of the Achaemenids to document a specific historic event, that of the re-establishment of the Empire by Darius I The Great. It was the first cuneiform writing to be deciphered in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The site is located along one of the main routes linking Persia with Mesopotamia and is associated with a sacred mountain. There is evidence of human settlements that range from the prehistoric times to the Achaemenid, Parthian, Sassanian, Ilkhanid and Safavid periods. ICOMOS considers that the property meets this criterion.

*Criterion iv:* The State Party proposes this criterion referring to the history of cuneiform writing. However, ICOMOS considers that this justification does not correspond to the requirement of being an outstanding example of a type of an ensemble or landscape. The issue of bearing testimony to a civilisation is well covered under criterion iii. ICOMOS considers that the property does not meet this criterion.

The *criterion vi* has not been proposed by the State Party, but is mentioned due to association with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. While recognizing the importance of Darius' inscription, ICOMOS nevertheless considers that criterion iii sufficiently covers also this aspect. ICOMOS considers that the property does not meet this criterion.

## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### ***Recommendation with respect to inscription***

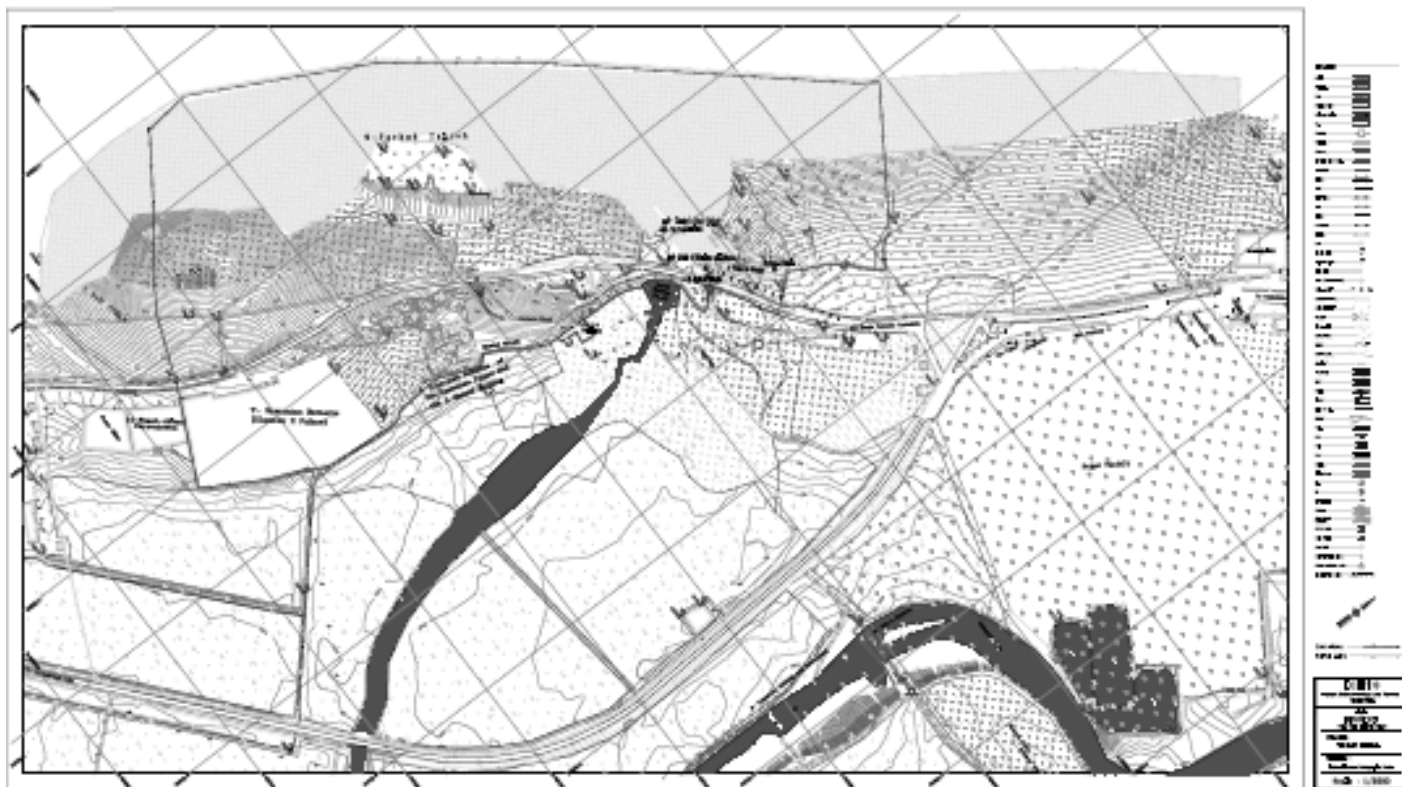
ICOMOS recommends that Bisotun, Islamic Republic of Iran, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of *criteria ii and iii*:

*Criterion ii:* The monument created by Darius I The Great in Bisotun in 521 BC is an outstanding testimony to the important interchange of human values on the development monumental art and writing. The symbolic representation of the Achaemenid king in relation to his enemy reflects traditions in monumental bas-reliefs that date from ancient Egypt and the Middle East, and which were subsequently further developed during the Achaemenid and later empires.

**Criterion iii:** The site of Bisotun is located along one of the main routes linking Persia with Mesopotamia and associated with the sacred Bisotun mountain. There is archaeological evidence of human settlements that date from the prehistoric times, while the most significant period was from 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. to AD 6<sup>th</sup> century. The Bisotun inscription is unique being the only known monumental text of the Achaemenids to document a specific historic event, that of the re-establishment of the Empire by Darius I The Great. It was the first cuneiform writing to be deciphered in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

ICOMOS requests the State Party to report to the World Heritage Committee on the design and construction of access routes to the site and the development and design of eventual visitor facilities, before such works are undertaken.

ICOMOS, April 2006



Map showing the boundaries of the property



**Inscription and bas-relief by Darius The Great**



**The Seleucid figure of Heracles**

## Behistun (Iran)

No 1222

### 1. IDENTIFICATION

*État partie :* République islamique d'Iran

*Bien proposé :* Behistun

*Lieu :* Province de Kermanshah

*Date de réception par le*

*Centre du patrimoine mondial :* 28 janvier 2005

*Inclus dans la liste indicative :* 22 mai 1997

*Assistance internationale au titre du Fonds du patrimoine mondial pour la préparation de la proposition d'inscription :* Non

*Catégorie de bien :*

En termes de catégories de biens culturels, telles qu'elles sont définies à l'article premier de la Convention du Patrimoine mondial de 1972, il s'agit d'un *site* archéologique.

*Brève description :*

Le monument de Behistun se trouve le long de l'ancienne route marchande reliant le haut plateau iranien et la Mésopotamie. Le site possède des vestiges de l'époque préhistorique aux périodes mède, achéménide, sassanide et ilkhanide. Le monument principal se compose du bas-relief et de l'inscription cunéiforme commandés par Darius I<sup>er</sup> le Grand en 521 avant J.-C. Ce monument occupe un emplacement stratégique, à une centaine de mètres au-dessus du sol, sur la façade rocheuse d'une montagne sacrée. Le message, en trois langues, expose les motifs de sa prise de pouvoir sur l'Empire perse et de la punition des rebelles.

### 2. ACTIONS

*Antécédents :* Il s'agit d'une nouvelle proposition d'inscription. Une proposition d'inscription révisée envoyée par l'État partie a été reçue le 2 février 2006.

*Date de la mission d'évaluation technique :* 27 septembre - 1<sup>er</sup> octobre 2005

*Dates de demande d'information complémentaire et d'envoi par l'État partie :* L'ICOMOS a envoyé une lettre le 30 janvier 2006 et l'État partie a fourni des informations le 28 février 2006.

*Consultations :* L'ICOMOS a consulté son Comité scientifique international sur la gestion du patrimoine archéologique.

*Littérature :* Le monument de Behistun est mentionné dans de nombreux ouvrages sur l'Iran antique, par exemple : H.C. Rawlinson (1846-47), A.V. Jackson (1903), W. Kleiss (1970), R. Schmitt (*Encyclopedia Iranica*); E. Herzfeld, *Iran in the Ancient East* (London, 1941); R. Ghishman, *Perse – Proto-Iraniens, Mèdes, Achéménides* (Paris, 1963).

*Date d'approbation de l'évaluation par l'ICOMOS :* 10 avril 2006

### 3. LE BIEN

#### *Description*

Le site proposé pour inscription est situé sur la principale route marchande conduisant du Kurdistan et de la région mésopotamienne au plateau central iranien, à une trentaine de kilomètres au nord-est de la ville de Kermanshah. La zone principale (environ 1200 x 500 m) du site comprend le cœur du site archéologique, qui abrite des vestiges qui vont de la Préhistoire à l'histoire de la Perse ancienne, associés à la montagne sacrée de Behistun et au célèbre bas-relief et à l'inscription du roi achéménide de Perse, Darius I<sup>er</sup> le Grand. Le site possède une zone tampon spécifique, s'étendant sur environ 500 m à partir de la zone principale, du côté de la plaine. Du côté de la montagne, la zone principale et la zone tampon coïncident avec le sommet de celle-ci. L'ensemble de la zone, y compris la partie visible de la montagne et une grande partie de la plaine, est couvert par une zone tampon de protection du paysage dotée de mécanismes de contrôle de l'urbanisme.

On a trouvé parmi les vestiges préhistoriques sur le site proposé pour inscription des grottes du Paléolithique abritant les premières traces de présence humaine à l'étang de Behistun, alimenté par une source (*Sarâb*), sous les roches de la plaine. Ceux-ci attestent d'une industrie hautement développée datable du Paléolithique moyen, indiquant que Behistun était habité à l'époque de la glaciation de Würm. On trouve en outre des vestiges de la période mède (VIII<sup>e</sup> ou VII<sup>e</sup> siècle av. J.-C.) ainsi que de l'époque achéménide (VI<sup>e</sup> au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle av. J.-C.) et post-achéménide. La section occidentale de la zone principale abrite des vestiges mis au jour de palais sassanides et ilkhanides. Sur l'ancienne route caravanière se dresse un caravansérail safavide, récemment restauré et devenu une maison d'hôtes.

L'élément central du site est le *monument de Behistun*, c'est-à-dire l'inscription et le bas-relief de Darius I<sup>er</sup> le Grand, datant de l'époque de son accession au trône, à la tête de l'Empire perse (521 av. J.-C.). Ce monument est taillé dans un renforcement peu profond de la falaise, à une centaine de mètres en surplomb de la plaine et d'accès impossible sans échafaudages. Le bas-relief représente Darius debout, tourné de profil vers la droite. Il porte une tenue perse, les chaussures « royales », un bracelet et une couronne crénelée au dessin particulièrement élaboré. Dans sa main gauche, il tient un arc, symbole de sa souveraineté. Sa main droite est levée au niveau de son visage. Darius écrase du pied gauche le torse d'un homme allongé sur le dos devant lui qui, selon la légende, représente le mage mède Gaumata, prétendant au trône dont l'assassinat conduisit au règne de Darius. Gaumata,

lui aussi habillé en tenue perse, a les bras levés dans un geste de soumission. À droite, un groupe de chefs rebelles marche en direction du roi. Leurs mains sont attachées derrière leur dos, une longue corde autour de leur cou. Chacun d'eux est identifiable grâce à la légende qui l'accompagne et à sa tenue vestimentaire, illustrant ses origines ethniques. Sous le bas-relief et autour, quelque 1 200 lignes d'inscription retracent l'histoire des batailles que Darius a dû livrer en 521-520 av. J.-C. contre les gouverneurs qui tentèrent de diviser l'empire fondé par Cyrus. La bataille décisive eut lieu sur ce site même.

L'inscription est rédigée en trois langues. La plus ancienne est un texte élamite faisant référence aux légendes qui décrivent le roi et les rébellions. Elle est suivie par une version babylonienne de légendes similaires. La dernière phase de l'inscription est particulièrement importante, car c'est là que Darius introduisit pour la première fois la version en vieux perse de ses *res gestae*, occupant quatre colonnes sous le bas-relief. Dans cette inscription, Darius fait référence aux origines de la dynastie achéménide :

*Je suis Darius, le grand roi, roi des rois, roi de Perse et de toutes les nations, fils d'Hystaspe, petit-fils d'Arsamès, l'Achéménide. ...*

Il déclare ensuite avoir spécialement fait faire l'écriture cunéiforme du vieux-perse pour composer cette inscription :

*« Par la faveur d'Ahura Mazda, voici la forme d'écriture que j'ai faite, à côté, en arien. ... Et elle a été écrite et a été lue à haute voix devant moi. J'ai ensuite envoyé cette écriture partout dans les pays. Les peuples se sont efforcés [de l'utiliser]. »*

L'écriture cunéiforme faisait référence à l'ancien système mésopotamien. Cependant, elle était à Behistun en partie alphabétique et en partie syllabique, et les mots étaient séparés entre eux par un symbole spécial. Le vieux perse fut volontairement réinstauré dans le cadre de cette politique. L'articulation du texte facilita son interprétation moderne, entre le XVIIIe et le XIXe siècle. L'écriture achéménide fut utilisée non seulement à Behistun, mais aussi dans d'autres inscriptions monumentales royales, par exemple à Persépolis et à Suse.

La forteresse mède, en contrebas du monument de Darius, fait référence à une structure, sur le versant montagneux, remontant au VIIIe/VIIe siècle avant J.-C., probablement à l'endroit où Darius et ses compagnons tuèrent Gaumata, comme le narre son inscription. Parmi les vestiges post-achéménides, le haut-relief séleucide d'un Héraclès se reposant date de 148 av. J.-C. S'il n'est pas d'une très grande qualité technique, il est important à cause de son inscription en grec datable. Les vestiges parthes comprennent des bas-reliefs de Mithridate (123-87 avant J.-C.) et Gotarzés II (environ. 50 av. J.-C.) et la roche parthe, qui furent parmi les premières découvertes faites à Behistun. La roche parthe porte l'image, grossièrement gravée, d'une victime sacrificielle sur un autel. Les vestiges sassanides, pour leur part, se composent de plusieurs petits monuments et objets. Ils comprennent trois grands chapiteaux sculptés, qui sont des documents importants pour l'histoire de l'art sassanide. Sur chaque

chapiteau, le roi est représenté d'un côté et la déesse Anahide de l'autre côté.

## **Histoire**

On peut déduire de la traduction grecque *Bagistanon*, le « mont Bagistanon » dans Diodore de Sicile, que la forme originale en vieux-perse du nom Behistun était *Bagistana*, le « siège des dieux ». D'après les découvertes archéologiques, le site de Behistun était occupé bien avant l'époque des Achéménides. Les grottes du paléolithique attestent en effet de l'occupation de la vallée et du site dès le Xe millénaire av. J.-C. Le site fut un point stratégique pendant des milliers d'années et tout particulièrement au début du Ier millénaire av. J.-C., quand la communication avec la Mésopotamie s'accrut, passant par le mont de Behistun. Une forteresse mède fut probablement édifée ici au VIIe siècle av. J.-C. pour contrôler l'accès. Darius I<sup>er</sup> le Grand fit sculpter ses bas-reliefs et ses inscriptions sur la face rocheuse de la montagne en 521 av. J.-C. Le site fut régulièrement occupé depuis cette époque jusqu'au Moyen Âge.

Il semble cependant que les origines du monument de Darius tombèrent dans l'oubli après la fin de l'Empire achéménide en 330 av. J.-C., de sorte que Diodore, écrivant sur le sujet deux siècles après, l'attribua à la légendaire reine Sémiramis. Douze siècles plus tard, Yaqut nota le bas-relief érodé du cavalier, attribué à l'époque parthe. Les Européens commencèrent à visiter le site à partir du XVIe siècle. En 1734, il reçut la visite du Français Jean Otter, puis d'autres voyageurs français comme Olivier (1756-1814), Jaubert (1779-1847) et Gardanne (1765-1822). J. Kinneir visita le site en 1810, mais ne put escalader la falaise. En 1818, R. Ker Porter, qui avait en vain tenté d'escalader la façade rocheuse de la montagne, écrivit que les bas-reliefs devaient être l'oeuvre du roi Salmanazar. Enfin, en 1837-1838, le major Henry Rawlinson décida de copier les inscriptions cunéiformes des bas-reliefs et de les déchiffrer : en 1847, le vieux perse était entièrement décrypté. Edward Hincks, prêtre et explorateur irlandais rival de Rawlinson, apporta lui aussi une contribution non négligeable au déchiffrement du texte.

## **Protection et gestion**

### *Dispositions légales :*

Le bien proposé pour inscription appartient à l'État, par l'intermédiaire de l'*Organisation iranienne du patrimoine culturel et du tourisme* (ICHTO).

Le bien est protégé en tant que monument national aux termes de la *Loi iranienne sur la conservation des monuments nationaux* (1982), de la *Loi relative à l'achat des biens historiques* et de la *Loi sur les administrations municipales*.

### *Structure de la gestion :*

Les principales autorités de gestion du bien proposé pour inscription sont l'ICHTO et l'office local de l'Organisation pour le patrimoine culturel et le tourisme à Behistun, Kermanshah.

Le plan de gestion général du site a été ratifié en 2004. Il comprend des programmes à court terme (1 an) et à moyen terme (5 ans), portant sur l'équipement, la recherche, les travaux de conservation et de réparation ainsi que les activités éducatives.

*Ressources :*

Les ressources de conservation et de gestion du site proviennent du budget annuel de l'ICHTO (250 000 \$) et du budget provincial (1 000 000 \$).

***Justification de la valeur universelle exceptionnelle émanant de l'État partie (résumé)***

Le site de Behistun est important à deux titres : pour l'histoire de l'Iran ancien et pour celle de l'Asie du sud-ouest en général. Il est situé à un endroit stratégique, qui contrôle la route principale reliant le plateau iranien et la Mésopotamie. Cette route utilisée depuis des temps immémoriaux demeure aujourd'hui la principale route marchande entre l'est de l'Iran, l'Asie centrale et la Mésopotamie. D'un point de vue historique, le site de Behistun présente une séquence archéologique ininterrompue depuis la préhistoire jusqu'au XXe siècle. Qui plus est, il abrite l'un des plus remarquables documents dans l'histoire de l'humanité, les bas-reliefs et inscriptions de Darius I<sup>er</sup> le Grand, la clé qui permet de déchiffrer l'écriture cunéiforme. C'est en effet grâce aux inscriptions de Behistun que Sir Henry Rawlinson commença le long et dur labeur qui devait permettre la lecture du vieux-perse cunéiforme en 1847. Les inscriptions constituent en outre un très important document pour l'histoire de l'Iran ancien et de l'Asie du sud-ouest, relatant les événements qui survinrent en 522 et 521 av. J.-C. dans un empire achéménide alors en crise.

*Critère ii :* Les bas-reliefs et les peuplements de Behistun, compte tenu leur place sur la route principale entre l'Orient et l'Occident, témoignent d'échanges culturels s'étendant sur une très longue période, de la Préhistoire à l'époque moderne et qui furent à leur apogée entre le VI<sup>e</sup> siècle av. J.-C. et le VI<sup>e</sup> siècle apr. J.-C. Les bas-reliefs témoignent du développement de l'art des reliefs rupestres sur un millénaire en Iran.

*Critère iii :* Behistun représente un témoignage exceptionnel des symboles du pouvoir de la civilisation d'un empire multiethnique qui, sous la houlette de quatre dynasties (les Achéménides, les Séleucides, les Parthes et les Sassanides) dura plus d'un millier d'années et façonna la destinée de l'Asie du Sud-ouest et parfois aussi de certaines régions d'Europe de l'est et d'Afrique.

*Critère iv :* Behistun apporte un témoignage exceptionnel sur l'histoire du déchiffrement de l'écriture cunéiforme, qui ouvrit la voie à la lecture de nombreux autres documents cunéiformes précieux pour l'histoire de l'humanité. Les inscriptions de Darius I<sup>er</sup> le Grand furent en effet la clé de sources historiques jusqu'alors inconnues.

#### **4. ÉVALUATION**

##### ***Conservation***

*Historique de la conservation :*

Au fil des siècles, l'inscription de Darius a subi les affres des intempéries et de l'érosion par l'eau. Le site a fait l'objet d'études systématiques et d'une protection stricte depuis les années 1960. Il est entièrement documenté ; par ailleurs, l'étude et les travaux de protection et de conservation du site se poursuivent.

En 2004, le mur de béton entourant l'étang sacré (Sarâb) a été abattu et remplacé par un parement en pierre sèche s'accordant harmonieusement avec le site. La route moderne qui se trouvait au pied de la falaise a été fermée et démantelée, et une nouvelle construite plus loin, à l'extérieur des limites de la zone tampon. La tête de la statue d'Héraclès, volée en 1993, a été retrouvée et restaurée. Elle se trouve maintenant à l'abri dans un musée, tandis qu'une réplique a été placée in situ.

Les vestiges des édifices sassanides et ilkhanides faisaient anciennement partie d'un village, qui a depuis disparu. Les anciens vestiges font maintenant l'objet d'une étude, dans une optique de conservation. La route caravanière n'étant plus en usage, le caravansérail de Shah-Abbas a rempli divers usages, dont celui de prison. En 2002, il a été racheté par l'ICHTO, et a été restauré pour accueillir invités et érudits parties prenantes du projet de Behistun.

*État de conservation :*

Après plusieurs années de travaux de conservation, l'état de conservation du site de Behistun est aujourd'hui satisfaisant. L'inscription de Darius elle-même a bien survécu, bien que certaines parties aient souffert d'infiltrations d'eau dans la roche et d'écoulements d'eau sur la surface. Les autres vestiges du monument et des anciens édifices sont dans un état satisfaisant, bien que certains travaux de conservation se poursuivent, par exemple sur les ruines des palais sassanides et ilkhanides. Le caravansérail est dans un bon état, et il a été réhabilité pour servir de maison d'hôtes.

*Protection et gestion :*

La principale autorité de gestion du site de Behistun est l'Organisation iranienne du patrimoine culturel et du tourisme, l'ICHTO. Elle entretient d'étroits contacts avec d'autres organes du gouvernement responsables de l'agriculture et de la protection de l'environnement, ainsi qu'avec l'Organisation des ressources nationales et avec l'Organisation du logement et de l'urbanisme. Le plan de gestion de Behistun a été approuvé en 2004, et ses objectifs ont été incorporés au plan général de planification du territoire.

La zone principale et ses environs immédiats sont protégés par la législation nationale. La proposition d'inscription définit également une zone tampon de protection du paysage relativement vaste, afin de juguler l'extension des quartiers résidentiels et des petits sites industriels, ce qui est important pour garantir le contrôle du paysage environnant.

Le site de Behistun a été confié à une équipe de gestion compétente. Le récent changement intervenu au sein de l'ICHTO, désormais également chargé du tourisme, favorisera l'amélioration à l'avenir de l'accueil des visiteurs et de la présentation du site. Ces aspects figurent d'ores et déjà dans le plan de gestion du site.

#### *Analyse des risques :*

Diverses menaces pèsent sur le site et sur ses alentours.

##### - Érosion

Le monument de Darius est directement taillé dans la roche, et il est donc sujet à l'érosion et au gel. Les causes de la détérioration ont été identifiées, et des mesures sont prises pour l'atténuer, par exemple en canalisant les eaux.

##### - Tremblements de terre

Le site se trouve dans une région sismique, mais aucun tremblement de terre d'importance n'a été enregistré sur le siècle écoulé. Dans le passé, les tremblements de terre ont causé quelques fissures dans la roche qui sont sous surveillance.

##### - Développement urbain et industriel

La plaine de Behistun est une terre agricole, avec quelques villages et une petite industrie. Les sites industriels actuels sont vieux et l'on prévoit leur démantèlement futur. Le plan directeur actuel établit les réglementations, parmi lesquelles le contrôle de la pollution. Une centrale électrique a récemment été bâtie à l'extrémité de la vallée, mais elle ne devrait pas causer de problèmes sur le site proposé pour inscription.

##### - Aménagements pour les visiteurs

Les visiteurs du site sont relativement peu nombreux (environ 23 000 en 2004). La présentation du site exigera de l'attention, mais pas de travaux majeurs. Cependant, il faudra concevoir et gérer avec grand soin les nouveaux aménagements tels que l'accès permanent pour les visiteurs.

### ***Authenticité et intégrité***

#### *Authenticité :*

L'authenticité de l'inscription de Darius a été vérifiée, et le reste du site a également été daté. Les recherches se poursuivent.

#### *Intégrité :*

Le site se trouve au pied d'une montagne sacrée ; c'est d'ailleurs très certainement une des raisons qui a incité Darius I<sup>er</sup> le Grand à choisir ce lieu pour placer son inscription monumentale. La définition actuelle de la zone principale couvre une étendue raisonnable, encerclant les monuments les plus importants du site ainsi qu'une partie de la montagne.

### ***Évaluation comparative***

Le bas-relief et l'inscription de Darius devraient être considérés dans le contexte des bas-reliefs de l'ancienne Égypte et de la Mésopotamie, de l'Assyrie (Nineve par exemple) et de l'Urartu. On observe des similitudes de composition par rapport aux bas-reliefs de Sar-e Pol-e Zohab, près de la frontière irakienne (III<sup>e</sup> millénaire av. J.-C.), qui pourraient avoir été influencés par les monuments akkadiens et ceux d'Ur III, montrant le geste symbolique de la suprématie du roi sur son ennemi. L'iconographie de Darius était donc conforme à des traditions existantes.

Le monument de Darius I<sup>er</sup> le Grand acquiert cependant un sens particulier du fait de son message politique et culturel, en ce qu'il documente le rétablissement de l'Empire perse. C'est aussi la première et la plus importante des inscriptions en vieux perse, que Darius I<sup>er</sup> le Grand introduisit dans une optique monumentale au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle av. J.-C.

### ***Valeur universelle exceptionnelle***

#### *Déclaration générale :*

La valeur universelle exceptionnelle de Behistun réside dans le témoignage remarquable et même unique sur une ancienne civilisation qu'il représente. Il a aussi été le site d'un important échange d'influences.

Le site de Behistun occupe une place stratégique, contrôlant la principale route reliant le plateau iranien et la Mésopotamie, Ecbatane et Babylone, dans l'Antiquité. Son emplacement sur une montagne sacrée lui confère encore plus d'importance. En fait, son nom vient de *Bagistana*, le « siège des dieux ». L'inscription et le bas-relief possèdent une immense importance historique en ce qu'ils documentent les événements qui conduisirent à la prise de pouvoir de Darius I<sup>er</sup> le Grand et au châtement des chefs rebelles au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle av. J.-C. On peut retrouver les modèles de la représentation symbolique de ces scènes dans l'ancienne Égypte et au Moyen-Orient.

Le monument de Behistun fut une déclaration dynastique d'une grande importance pour tout l'Empire perse, et son message fut reproduit et diffusé à grande échelle. On a par exemple trouvé une copie du monument à la porte d'Ishtar, à Babylone, qui était alors l'une des capitales de l'Empire perse. Darius I<sup>er</sup> le Grand décida d'introduire ici symboliquement le vieux-perse, qui fut par la suite repris pour rédiger les inscriptions publiques dans tout l'Empire achéménide. L'idée d'une écriture cunéiforme fut empruntée à la Mésopotamie, mais le vieux perse diffère de l'écriture mésopotamienne en ce qu'il était alphabétique et recourait à des séparateurs de mots. À l'époque moderne, on peut comparer l'inscription multilingue de Darius à la pierre de Rosette en Égypte, en ce sens qu'elle fut la clé du déchiffrement de l'écriture cunéiforme au début du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle.

#### *Évaluation des critères :*

L'État partie a proposé le bien pour inscription sur la base des critères ii, iii et iv :



*Critère ii* : Le monument créé par Darius I<sup>er</sup> le Grand à Behistun en 521 av. J.-C. illustre un important échange d'influences dans le développement des arts monumentaux et de l'écriture dans la région de l'Empire perse. La représentation symbolique du roi achéménide dans sa relation avec son ennemi reflète les traditions des bas-reliefs monumentaux de l'ancienne Égypte et du Moyen-Orient, qui furent par la suite développées sous l'Empire achéménide et les empires qui succédèrent. L'ICOMOS considère que le bien répond à ce critère.

*Critère iii* : Le monument de Behistun représente un témoignage unique de l'Empire perse, en ce qu'il est le seul texte monumental achéménide connu qui documente un événement historique précis, le rétablissement de l'empire par Darius I<sup>er</sup> le Grand. Ce fut la première écriture cunéiforme déchiffrée au XIXe siècle. Le site se trouve le long d'une des routes principales reliant la Perse et la Mésopotamie, et il est de surcroît associé à une montagne sacrée. On trouve des traces de peuplements humains allant de la préhistoire aux périodes achéménide, parthe, sassanide, ilkhanide et safavide. L'ICOMOS considère que le bien répond à ce critère.

*Critère iv* : L'État partie propose ce critère en référence à l'histoire de l'écriture cunéiforme. Néanmoins, l'ICOMOS considère que cette justification ne correspond pas au critère, à savoir être un exemple exceptionnel d'un type d'ensemble ou de paysage. Le statut de témoignage d'une civilisation est bien couvert par le critère iii. L'ICOMOS considère que le bien ne répond pas à ce critère.

Le *critère vi* n'a pas été envisagé par l'État partie, mais il est mentionné du fait de l'association avec des œuvres artistiques et littéraires d'une valeur universelle exceptionnelle. Tout en reconnaissant l'importance de l'inscription de Darius, l'ICOMOS considère néanmoins que le critère iii couvre suffisamment cet aspect lui aussi. L'ICOMOS considère que le bien ne répond pas à ce critère.

## 5. RECOMMANDATIONS

### *Recommandation concernant l'inscription*

L'ICOMOS recommande que Behistun, République islamique d'Iran, soit inscrit sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial sur la base des *critères ii et iii* :

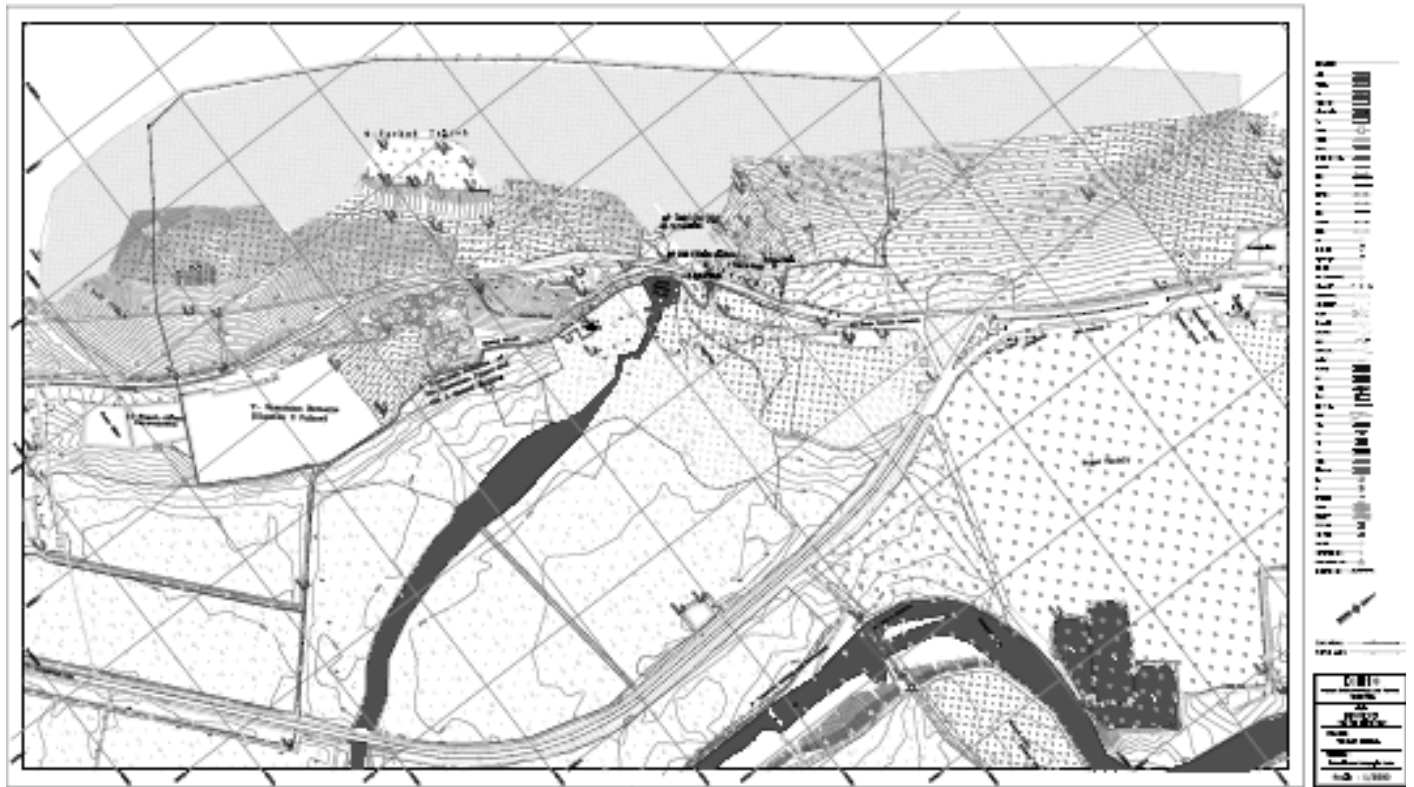
*Critère ii* : Le monument créé par Darius I<sup>er</sup> le Grand à Behistun en 521 av. J.-C. est le témoignage exceptionnel d'un échange de valeurs humaines qui eurent une influence considérable sur le développement des arts monumentaux et de l'écriture. La représentation symbolique du roi achéménide dans sa relation avec son ennemi reflète les traditions des bas-reliefs monumentaux de l'ancienne Égypte et du Moyen-Orient, qui furent par la suite développées sous l'Empire achéménide et les empires qui succédèrent.

*Critère iii* : Le site de Behistun se trouve le long d'une des routes principales reliant la Perse et la Mésopotamie, et il est de surcroît associé à la montagne sacrée de Behistun. On y trouve des traces archéologiques de peuplements humains remontant à la préhistoire, la période la plus

notable s'étendant du VIe siècle av. J.-C. au VIe siècle apr. J.-C. L'inscription de Behistun est unique en ce qu'elle est le seul texte monumental achéménide connu qui documente un événement historique précis, le rétablissement de l'empire par Darius I<sup>er</sup> le Grand. Elle fut la première écriture cunéiforme déchiffrée au XIXe siècle.

L'ICOMOS demande à l'État partie de rendre compte au Comité du patrimoine mondial de la conception et de la construction des voies d'accès au site et du développement et de la conception des aménagements éventuels pour les visiteurs avant que ces travaux ne soient entrepris.

ICOMOS, avril 2006



Plan indiquant les délimitations du bien



**Inscription et bas-relief de Darius Ier le Grand**



**Haut-relief séleucide représentant Héraclès**



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Организация  
Объединенных Наций по  
вопросам образования,  
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة  
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、  
科学及文化组织

CULTURE SECTOR / SECTEUR DE LA CULTURE  
WORLD HERITAGE CENTRE / CENTRE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL

H.E. Mr. Ahmad Jalali  
Ambassador, Permanent Delegate  
Permanent Delegation of the  
Islamic Republic of Iran to UNESCO

UNESCO House  
Fax: 01 42 73 17 91

WHC/74/410/1.8.1/06/TI/40

28 August 2006

**Nomination of properties for inscription on the World Heritage List**

**Bisotun (C 1222), Iran (Islamic Republic of )**

Dear Ambassador,

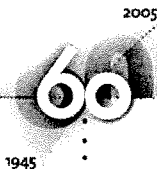
I have the pleasure to inform you that the World Heritage Committee, at its 30th session (Vilnius, Lithuania, 8 - 16 July 2006), examined the nomination of *Bisotun* and decided to **inscribe** the property on the World Heritage List. Please find enclosed the decision **30 COM 8B.41** of the Committee concerning the inscription.

I am confident that your government will continue to take the necessary measures for the proper conservation of this new World Heritage property. The World Heritage Committee and its Secretariat, the World Heritage Centre, will do everything possible to collaborate with you in these efforts.

The *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (paragraph 168)*, request the Secretariat to send to each State Party with a newly inscribed property a map of the area(s) inscribed. Please examine the attached map, as well as the notification of the characteristics of the property, and inform us of any discrepancies in the information by **15 October 2006**.

The inscription of the property on the World Heritage List is an excellent opportunity to draw the attention of visitors to, and remind local residents of, the *World Heritage Convention* and the outstanding universal value of the property. To this effect, you may wish to place a plaque displaying the World heritage and the UNESCO emblems at the property. You will find suggestions on this subject in paragraphs 127-128 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*.

In many cases States Parties decide to hold a ceremony to commemorate the inscription of a property on the World Heritage List. Upon request to the World



Heritage Centre by the State Party, World Heritage Certificate can be prepared for such an occasion.

I would be grateful if you could provide us with the name, address, telephone and fax numbers and e-mail address of the person or institution responsible for the management of the property so that we may send them World Heritage publications.

Please find attached the brief descriptions of your site, prepared by ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre, in both English and French. As these brief descriptions will be used in later publications, as well as on the World Heritage web site, we would like to have your full concurrence with their wording. Please examine these descriptions and inform us, by **15 October 2006** at the latest, if there are changes that should be made. If we do not hear from you by this date, we will assume that you are in agreement with the text as prepared.

Furthermore, as you may know, the World Heritage Centre maintains a web site at <http://whc.unesco.org/>, where standard information about each property on the World Heritage List can be found. Since we can only provide a limited amount of information about each property, we try to link our pages to those maintained by your World Heritage property or office, so as to provide the public with the most reliable and up-to-date information. If there is a web site for the newly inscribed property, please send us its web address.

A copy of the *Decisions of the World Heritage Committee* will be sent to you shortly.

Please accept, dear Ambassador, the assurances of my highest consideration.

  
Francesco Bandarin  
Director

cc: Iranian Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization (ICHTO)  
Fax +(98 21) 66 01 34 98  
Iranian National Commission for UNESCO Fax +(98-21) 22 25 25 36  
ICOMOS

**Decision 30 COM 8B.41**

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents *WHC-06/30.COM/8B* and *WHC-06/30.COM/INF.8B.1*,

2. Inscribes **Bisotun, Islamic Republic of Iran**, on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (ii) and (iii):

**Criterion (ii):** The monument created by Darius I The Great in Bisotun in 521 BC is an outstanding testimony to the important interchange of human values on the development monumental art and writing. The symbolic representation of the Achaemenid king in relation to his enemy reflects traditions in monumental bas-reliefs that date from ancient Egypt and the Middle East, and which were subsequently further developed during the Achaemenid and later empires.

**Criterion (iii):** The site of Bisotun is located along one of the main routes linking Persia with Mesopotamia and associated with the sacred Bisotun mountain. There is archaeological evidence of human settlements that date from the prehistoric times, while the most significant period was from 6th century BC to AD 6th century. The Bisotun inscription is unique being the only known monumental text of the Achaemenids to document a specific historic event, that of the re-establishment of the Empire by Darius I The Great. It was the first cuneiform writing to be deciphered in the 19th century.

3. Requests the State Party to report on the design and construction of access routes to the site and the development and design of eventual visitor facilities, before such works are undertaken.

**Surface and coordinates of the property inscribed on the World Heritage List by the 30th session of the World Heritage Committee (Vilnius, Lithuania, 2006) in accordance with the Operational Guidelines.<sup>1</sup>**

Iran (Islamic Republic of)				
Serial ID	Name	Area	Buffer zone	Centre point coordinates
C 1222	Bisotun	187 ha	361 ha	N34 23 18 E47 26 12

The following map (see next page) submitted by the authorities represents the site as inscribed by the 3th session of the World Heritage Committee.

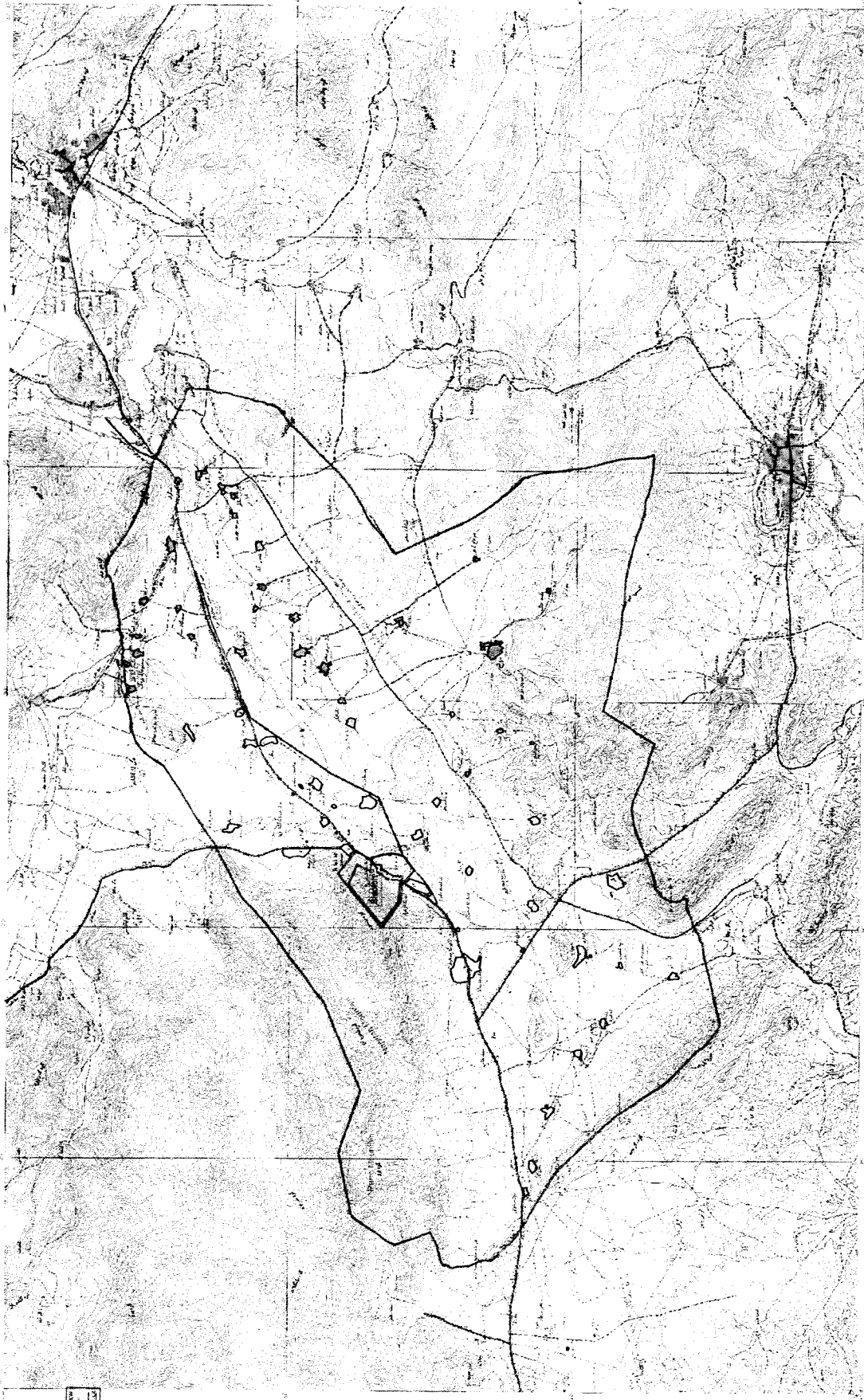
<sup>1</sup> Information abstracted from document WHC-06/30.COM/8B presented to the 30th session of the World Heritage Committee (Vilnius, Lithuania, 2006).

### **Brief Description**

Bisotun is located along the ancient trade route linking the Iranian high plateau with Mesopotamia and features remains from the prehistoric times to the Median, Achaemenid, Sassanian, and Ilkhanid periods. The principal monument of this archaeological site is the bas-relief and cuneiform inscription ordered by Darius I, The Great, when he rose to the throne of the Persian Empire, 521 BC. The bas-relief portrays Darius holding a bow, as a sign of sovereignty, and treading on the chest of a figure who lies on his back before him. According to legend, the figure represents Gaumata, the Median Magus and pretender to the throne whose assassination led to Darius's rise to power. Below and around the bas-reliefs, there are ca. 1,200 lines of inscriptions telling the story of the battles Darius waged in 521-520 BC against the governors who attempted to take apart the Empire founded by Cyrus. The inscription is written in three languages. The oldest is an Elamite text referring to legends describing the king and the rebellions. This is followed by a Babylonian version of similar legends. The last phase of the inscription is particularly important, as it is here that Darius introduced for the first time the Old Persian version of his *res gestae* (things done). This is the only known monumental text of the Achaemenids to document the re-establishment of the Empire by Darius I. It also bears witness to the interchange of influences in the development of monumental art and writing in the region of the Persian Empire. There are also remains from the Median period (8th to 7th centuries B.C.) as well as from the Achaemenid (6th to 4th centuries B.C.) and post-Achaemenid periods.

### **Brief description in French**

Behistun se trouve sur l'ancienne route marchande reliant le haut plateau iranien à la Mésopotamie et possède des vestiges de l'époque préhistorique aux périodes mède, achéménide, sassanide et ilkhanide. Le monument principal de ce site archéologique est un bas-relief et une inscription cunéiforme commandés par Darius I le Grand, quand il monta sur le trône de l'Empire perse, en 521 avant JC. Ce bas-relief représente Darius tenant un arc, symbole de sa souveraineté, et écrasant le torse d'un homme allongé sur le dos devant lui. Selon la légende, ce personnage serait Gaumata, le mage mède prétendant au trône dont l'assassinat permit à Darius la conquête du pouvoir. Sous le bas-relief et autour, quelque 1 200 lignes d'inscriptions retracent l'histoire des batailles que Darius a dû livrer en 521 - 520 avant JC contre les gouverneurs qui tentèrent de diviser l'empire fondé par Cyrus. L'inscription est rédigée en trois langues. La plus ancienne est un texte élamite faisant référence aux légendes qui décrivent le roi et les rébellions. Elle est suivie par une version babylonienne de légendes similaires. La dernière partie de l'inscription est particulièrement importante, car c'est là que Darius introduisit pour la première fois la version en vieux perse de ses *res gestae* (ce qu'il a accompli). C'est l'unique inscription monumentale achéménide connu sur la re-fondation de l'Empire par Darius I. Elle constitue également un témoignage sur les influences mutuelles dans le développement de l'art monumental et de l'écriture dans la région de l'Empire perse. On trouve aussi à Behistun des vestiges de la période mède (8e au 7e siècle avant JC) ainsi que des périodes achéménide (6e au 4e siècles) et post-achéménide.



**I. The core zone is subjected to the following rules:**

1. No allocation is permitted, constructions, digging wells or subterranean canals, tree plantations, excavations, earth filling or civil engineering operations are strictly prohibited.
2. The Iran Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization (ICHTO) leads restoration works, archaeological excavations and investigations. It may proceed to the establishment of the necessary stipulations for these purposes within the core zone.

**II. The buffer zone is subject to the following rules:**

1. It is permitted to carry out traditional farming in existing farms and agricultural lands within their boundaries of surface level.
2. In the event of need to set up installations such as electricity posts, etc. along the roads which cross the buffer zone, ICHTO's permission must be requested.

**III. The landscape buffer zone is subject to the following rules:**

1. It is permitted to continue to carry out agricultural or gardening activities.
2. Industrial installations causing environmental pollution, mining, or any activities altering the structure of the mountains or changing the general landscape is forbidden.

**IV. The expansion zones of the villages are subjected to the following rules:**

1. Encaves are allocated to future expansions of villages.
2. It is highly recommended that all constructions in the expansion areas be carried out in respect to local traditional architecture.

ICH.T.O  
 Iran Cultural Heritage and Tourism  
 Organization

Fig.3  
 BISOTUN

Core, Buffer and Landscape Zones

- Core zone
- Buffer zone
- Landscape buffer zone
- Villages and their future expansion





*Délégation permanente  
de la République Islamique d'Iran  
auprès de l'Unesco*

Dir WHC  
rec d 13/10/2006  
3003

FC  
A. Balsano

Paris, October 12, 2006  
N°: 97/119-39

Dear Sir,

Based on the letter of Iranian Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization (ICHTO) N°: 852/2/3944 of October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2006, I have the pleasure to inform you that the map of Bisotun prepared by ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre, attached in your letter of 28<sup>th</sup> August 2006 is the exact one and there is no change in the area and buffer zone of that site as inscribed by the 30<sup>th</sup> Session of the World Heritage Committee.

Please accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Ahmad Jalali  
Ambassador and Permanent Delegate

Mr. Francesco Bandarin  
Director  
World Heritage Centre  
UNESCO HOUSE