Old Persian is the name applied to the Persian language used in the cuneiform inscriptions of the Achaemenian dynasty; it can be localized as the langauge of southwestern Persia, or Persis in the narrower sense, and was the vernacular speech of the Achaemenian rulers.
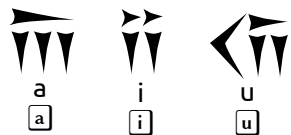
The Old Persian inscriptions are commonly accompanied also by translations into Elamite and Akkadian. Linguistically, Old Persian belongs to the Iranian branch of Indo-Iranian or Aryan, which is one of the main divisions of the Indo-European family of languages.
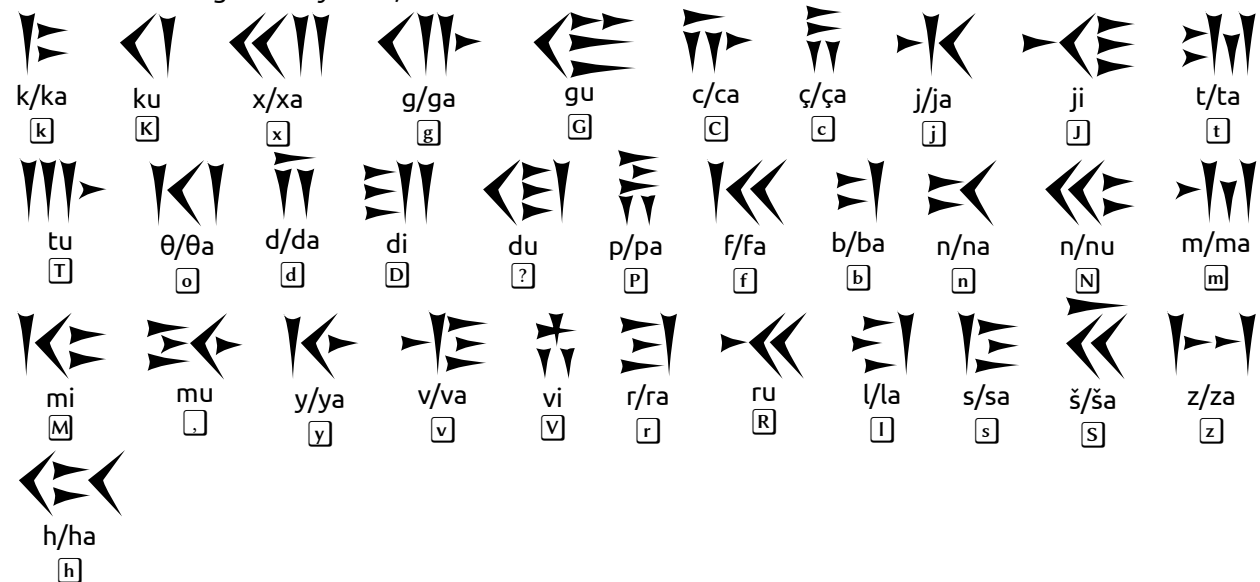
1   Writing System

[3],[5]

Old Persian is written in a cuneiform script, but with only a small number of signs compared to languages such as Akkadian. There are 3 vowel signs and 33 consonant signs

1.1   Vowel Signs (3)

a	i	u
a	i	u

1.2   Consonant Signs (33)

The consonant signs are syllabic, i.e.

k/ka	ku	x/xa	g/ga	gu	c/ca	ç/ça	j/ja	ji	t/ta
k	K	x	g	G	C	c	j	J	t

tu	θ/θa	d/da	di	du	p/pa	f/fa	b/ba	n/na	n/nu	m/ma
T	o	d	D	?	P	f	b	n	N	m

mi	mu	y/ya	v/va	vi	r/ra	ru	l/la	s/sa	š/ša	z/za
M	,	y	v	V	r	R	l	s	S	z

h/ha
h

> **!** Note that 𒊑 and 𒇷 are different.
> r/ra   l/la
> r   l
> For example, "Darius" is 𒁕𒀪𒐘𒊑𒑐𒀀𒌑𒐖 not 𒁕𒀪𒐘𒊑𒑐𒀀𒌑𒐖

1.3 Logograms (Signs That Stand for a Whole Word)

king	earth	country	god	Ahuramazada	Ahuramazada (genitive)
Q	e	4 3	6	W q	q

2 Behistun Inscription

Figure 1: Behistun Inscription, Column i, lines 1-8[2]

1. (cuneiform text)
   (Pronoun) I[6]   Darius [4, p185][8]   Alternative form of (sign)[7]   great[9]
   (cuneiform text)

1. I am Darius, the great king, king of kings, the king of Persia, the king of countries, the son of Hystaspes, the grandson of Arsames, the Achaemenid.

2. King Darius says: My father is Hystaspes; the father of Hystaspes was Arsames; the father of Arsames was Ariaramnes; the father of Ariaramnes was Teispes; the father of Teispes was Achaemenes.

3. King Darius says: That is why we are called Achaemenids; from antiquity we have been noble; from antiquity has our dynasty been royal.

3 Typing Old Persian

[1]

!		-		9		E	
"		.		:		F	
#		/		;		G	
$		0		<		H	
%		1		=		I	
&		2		>		J	
'		3		?		K	
(		4		@		L	
)		5		A		M	
*		6		B		N	
+		7		C		O	
,		8		D		P	

Q 𒍝	] 𒐈	i 𒐊	u 𒌋
R 𒌝	^	j 𒅀	v 𒉌
S 𒑖	_ 𒅍	k 𒆠	w 𒉿
T 𒁹	' 𒍝	l 𒇷	x 𒆥
U 𒌋	a 𒀀	m 𒈠	y 𒅀
V 𒑊	b 𒁀	n 𒉈	z 𒍗
W 𒍩	c 𒍵	o 𒌋	{ □
X 𒆥	d 𒁲	p 𒊏	| 𒅗
Y 𒅀	e 𒂊	q 𒆠	} 𒀉
Z 𒍗	f 𒉺	r 𒊏	
[𒐈	g 𒂵	s 𒊩	
\ 𒀹	h 𒄷	t 𒋾	

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[2] Livius. Column I, lines 1-8.

[3] Omniglot. Old Persian Cuneiform.

[4] H. Rawlinson. *Memoir on Cuneiform Inscription*. 1849.

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[6] Wiktionary. 𒀀 𒀀 𒈠.

[7] Wiktionary. 𒆥 𒊩 𒀀 𒅀 𒅗 𒐊 𒅀.

[8] Wiktionary. 𒐊 𒀀 𒅀 𒅀 𒉌 𒌋 𒊩.

[9] Wiktionary. 𒉌 𒍗 𒅀 𒊩.