From Persepolis to Jerusalem: A Reevaluation of Old Persian-Hebrew Contact in the Achaemenid Period

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Abstract

This paper examines the effects and mechanisms of Old Persian contact on Biblical Hebrew. I first reevaluate the number and distribution of Old Persian loanwords in the Hebrew Bible. Then I demonstrate that there was direct contact between speakers of Old Persian and speakers of Hebrew in the Achaemenid period beginning under Artaxerxes I, before proposing the existence of two Old Persian calques in Biblical Hebrew. The distribution of these Old Persian loanwords and calques strengthens the case for distinguishing between Late Biblical Hebrew and Classical Biblical Hebrew on linguistic grounds. With one exception, these features cluster in well-known Late Biblical Hebrew texts.

Keywords

The administration of the Persian Empire (529-333 B.C.E.) was a multilingual affair. Members of the Achaemenid Court centered in Southeastern Iran and

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its representatives in the provinces spoke Old Persian, a Southwestern member of the Indo-Aryan family. At the international level, however, they communicated with their subjects in Aramaic, a Northwest Semitic language. Their subjects, in turn, spoke a wide array of local languages, belonging to several different families. Some of these languages were used for local administrative purposes, often building on established, indigenous systems of administration (e.g., Akkadian in Mesopotamia). To negotiate the linguistic diversity of the empire, the Persian administration employed a large number of translators, interpreters, and 'cultural experts'.[1] These individuals facilitated communication between the different parts of the empire and ensured that the edicts of the king were available to "every province in its own script and to every people in its own language" (Esth 1:22).

The Achaemenid period also saw an increase in both general mobility and long distance travel. Royal highways stretched across the Near East, conveying people and goods from one corner of the empire to another. An Elamite receipt from the Persepolis Fortification Archive mentions that: "1 woman went from Susa (to) Kandahar. She carried a sealed document of the king, and she received [wine]. Zishandush (is) her 'elite guide'. Year 22, month 11" (PF 1550).[2] Similar documents record trips from India to Susa (PF 1318) and Persepolis to Egypt (PF 1544). What these documents do not mention is the large distances involved: the distance between Susa and Kandahar is 1600 miles; the distances between India and Susa and Persepolis and Egypt are even greater. The speed of travel also increased in the Achaemenid period. With the establishment of way stations and royal stables, Persian express couriers could deliver a letter anywhere in the empire within twelve days (*Cyropaedia* VIII, 6.17-18; see also Herodotus, *The Histories* VIII:98l).

The multilingual nature of Achaemenid administration, coupled with increased mobility, fostered language contact on a grand scale. In this paper, I will investigate the outcome of one form of language contact in the Achaemenid period: Old Persian lexical and syntactic influence on Biblical Hebrew. In particular, I argue that the Old Persian loanwords and calques in the Hebrew Bible resulted from increased Persian military and administrative presence in the province of Yehud under Artaxerxes I and his successors and not, as previously thought, from an Aramaic intermediary. Bilingual translators, who facilitated communication between the Judeans and the Persians, were the most likely agents of contact; bilingual scribes may have played a part

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1   See for example P. Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of Persian Empire* (Winona Lake, 2002), p. 509 and A. Kuhrt, *The Persian Empire: A Corpus of Sources from the Achaemenid Period* (London, 2007), pp. 844-48.

2   Kuhrt, *The Persian Empire*, p. 734.

as well. The distribution of these features strengthens the case for distinguishing between Late Biblical Hebrew (LBH) and Classical Biblical Hebrew (CBH) on linguistic grounds. With one exception, the Persian loanwords and calques cluster in well-known LBH texts.

1 Lexical Influence

The number and distribution of Old Persian loanwords in the Hebrew Bible is disputed. In their recent book, I. Young, R. Rezetko, and M. Ehrensvärd provide a list of every word in the Hebrew Bible that has been identified as Iranian.[3] They do not, however, evaluate the strength of these proposed loans, which leads to uncertainty about the distribution of Iranian words in the Bible. Ten of the twenty-six words they mention are problematic. Most of these less probable loans occur in texts identified as CBH. *ʾăgarṭāl* 'bowl', *karmîl* 'crimson', *selâ* 'a musical term', *pĕlādôt*[4] 'steel?', and *šûʿāl* 'fox' are unlikely to be Persian because they contain the phoneme /l/, which merged with /r/ in Proto-Indo-Iranian. Although this phoneme remerged as a distinct phoneme in Middle Iranian as the result of dissimilation, it would be quite a coincidence for these loanwords to accommodate in the direction of Persian development, especially when Hebrew /r/ consistently represents Old Persian /r/ in secure loanwords.[5] Moreover, the Iranian etymologies proposed for some of these words often do not make sense in context. *ʾăgarṭāl* refers to a bowl used in temple service (Ezra 1:9), but the proposed Farsi etymon *gartāl* means 'leather purse'.[6] Likewise Hebrew *selâ* is an exclamation appearing in hymnic refrains; it does not refer to song more generally like Farsi *salā*. A second set of suggested loans have Semitic cognates in language that were not in contact with Old Persian. *yāšpê* 'jasper' is cognate with Old Babylonian *yašpu*, which is attested a full 1200 years before the rise of the Achaemenid empire, while *ʾāzēn* 'tool' is cognate with Ethiopic *māʾzen* 'angle, point', which was spoken outside of Achaemenid

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3　I. Young, R. Rezetko, and M. Ehrensvärd, *Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts: An Introduction to Approaches and Problems* (2 vols.; New York, 2008), pp. 291, 303-9.

4　*pĕlādôt*, written <pldwt> in the consonantal text of the Bible, may be a scribal error for *lapīdôt* 'torches' written <lpdwt>. This meaning better fits the context of heavenly warfare in Nahum 2:4.

5　Caution is necessary, however, since examples of /l/ survive sporadically in Iranian and Indic dialects. P. Oktor Skjærvø, "Old Iranian," in *The Iranian Languages* (ed. G. Windfuhr; New York, 2009), p. 49.

6　M. Ellenbogen, *Foreign Words in the Old Testament: Their Origin and Etymology* (London, 1962), p. 9.

territory. Likewise *zĕmān* 'time' is cognate with Ethiopic *zaman*, while *šû'al* 'fox, jackal' is cognate with Arabic *ṯu'al* and Old Aramaic <š'l>. A final set of proposed loanwords do not have an Old Persian equivalent, but have equivalents in other languages that were spoken in the Achaemenid empire: *karpas* 'cotton' corresponds to Indic *karpāsa* and *ădarkōnîm* 'darics' corresponds to Greek *dareikos*. In this case, there is no need or reason to posit an Old Persian intermediary when trade and contact were so prevalent in the Achaemenid Empire. A revised distribution of Iranian words in the biblical corpus can be found in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1[7]

	Hebrew	Gloss	Verse	Aramaic	Persian
1	*'ăhašdarpān*	'satrap'	Esth 3:12, 8:9, 9:3; Ezra 8:36	*'ḥšdrpn*	OP *ḥšaçapāvan* (Kent, 181)
2	*'ăhaštĕrān*	'royal'	Esth 8:10, 14	Ø	OP *ḥšaça + ana* (Kent, 181)
3	*'appeden*	'palace'	Dan 11:45	*'pdn*[8]	OP *apadāna* (Kent, 168)
4	*gizbār*	'treasurer'	Ezra 1:8	*gzbr*	OP **ganzabara* (Hinz, 102)
5	*ganzak / genez*	'treasury'	Esth 3:9, 4:7; 1 Chr 28:11	*gnz*	OP **ganza / *ganza + ka* (Hinz, 102)

7 Some of the Old Persian loanwords in LBH are directly attested in Achaemenid sources. Others are not, but have a plausible Iranian etymology. In the former case, the Persian antecedent is cited according to R. Kent, *Old Persian: Grammar, Texts, Lexicon* (New Haven, 1953). In the latter case, the reconstructed Persian form is taken from W. Hinz, *Altiranisches Sprachgut der Nebenüberlieferung* (Wiesbaden, 1975). Aramaic words occur in Imperial Aramaic unless otherwise noted.

8 This word does not appear in Imperial Aramaic, but occurs in Syriac and Jewish Babylonian Aramaic.

9 Although Hebrew *zan* means 'kind' and not 'human being', Old Persian *zana* is still the most likely source for the word. In their Old Persian inscriptions, the Achaemenid kings boast of ruling over 'countries containing all (kinds of) men' (*dahyūnām vispazanānām*) (DNa 10-11; DSe 9-10; DZc 5). Such compounds would provide an environment for a Hebrew speaker to interpret *zana* as 'kind'.

TABLE 1 (*cont.*)

	Hebrew	Gloss	Verse	Aramaic	Persian
6	*dāt*	'law'	Esth 1:8, 13, 15, 19; 2:8, 12; 3:8 [×2], 14, 15; 4:3, 11, 16; 8:13, 14; 9:1, 13, 14; Ezra 8:36	*dt*	OP *dāta* (Kent, 189)
7	*zan*	'kind'	Ps 144:14; 2 Chr 16:14	*zn*	OP *zana* 'human being'[9] (Kent, 196)
8	*nādān*	'sheath'	1 Chr 21:27	*ndn*	OP **nidāna* (Hinz, 175)
9	*ništĕwān*	'letter'	Ezra 4:7, 7:11	*nštwn*	OP **ništāvan*, cf. Parthian *nštw'nk* 'document' (Hinz, 176)
10	*parbār / parwār*	'forecourt'	1 Chr 26:28; 2 Kgs 23:11	*prbr*	OP **paribāra-* (Hinz, 179)
11	*pardēs*	'garden'	Song 4:13; Eccl 2:5; Neh 2:8	*prds*[10]	OP *paradayadām*, Avestan *pairidaēza*
12	*partĕmîm*	'nobles'	Esth 1:3, 6:9; Dan 1:3	Ø	OP *fratama* (Kent, 197)
13	*pat-bag*	'dainties'	Dan 1:5, 8, 13, 15, 16; 11:26	Ø	OP **patibāga* (Hinz, 185)
14	*pitgām*	'decree'	Eccl 8:11; Esth 1:20	*ptgm*	OP **patigāma* (Hinz, 186)
15	*patšegen*[11]	'copy'	Esth 3:14, 4:8, 8:13	*pršgn*	OP **patičagnya-* (Hinz, 186)
16	*tiršātā'*	'governor'	Ezra 2:63; Neh 7:65, 69; 8:9, 10:2	Ø	OP **tršāta*, Avestan *taršta* (Hinz, 238)[12]

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10   This word does not appear in Imperial Aramaic, but occurs in Syriac, Christian Palestinian Aramaic, Galilean Aramaic, and Palestinian Targumic Aramaic.

11   A potential biform, *paršegen*, appears once in the Hebrew portion of Ezra (Ezra 7:11).

12   P. Oktor Skjærvø, review of E. M. Yamauchi, *Persia and the Bible*, JAOS 114 (1994), p. 501 questions this derivation and tentatively suggests a connection between Old Persian **taršita* 'thirsty' and Hebrew *tiršātā'* as a designation for Artaxerxes' cupbearer.

In this new distribution, Old Persian loanword cluster in books dated to the late Persian period on internal grounds, such as Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles[13] or otherwise known to be post-exilic, such as Esther, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Daniel, and the fifth section of the Psalms. Texts from the reigns of Cyrus, Darius, and Xerxes, like Haggai, Zechariah 1-8, Isaiah 40-55, and 56-66 do not contain any Old Persian loanwords. This distribution correlates well with historical and archaeological data. Under the first three Achaemenid rulers, Yehud was a provincial backwater. After the first Egyptian revolt in 464-54 B.C.E., however, Artaxerxes I and his successors fortified Yehud as an outpost against Egypt, which led to increased contact between speakers of Hebrew and speakers of Old Persian. The book of Nehemiah, for example, recounts how Artaxerxes I sent Nehemiah to Yehud to fortify Jerusalem (Neh 2:1-8). Additional fortifications were constructed in the Judean Hills, the Shephelah, and the Negev.[14] The shifting political circumstances also led to a change in administrative practices: the late 5th century witnesses a dramatic change in the form, paleography, and orthography of native stamp seals, which O. Lipschitz attributes to increased Persian oversight. He also suggests that these stamp seals labeled agricultural products, which were given to Persian troops and administrative personnel garrisoned in Yehud.[15] Presumably, these individuals owned the Persian style seals that have been discovered in Israel, some of which bear Iranian names.[16]

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13   Ezra and Chronicles contain one or two possible Greek loanwords, but it is unlikely that they were first composed during the Hellenistic period. Both *darkĕmônîm* (< Gk. *drachmōn*) (Ezra 2:69) and *ădarkônîm* (< Gk. *dareikōn*) (Ezra 8:27; 1 Chr 29:7) could have entered Hebrew through sporadic contact with Greek merchants in the Persian period. Attic pottery is a common find in Persian period sites in Israel and even more tellingly, excavators at Tell en-Naṣbeh have found an imitation Athenian tetradrachma dating to 406-393 B.C.E. E. Stern, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible* (New York, 2001), p. 432.

14   O. Lipschits, "Persian-Period Judah: A New Perspective," in *Texts, Contexts and Readings in Postexilic Literature: Explorations into Historiography and Identity Negotiation in Hebrew Bible and Related Texts* (ed. L. Jonker; Tübingen, 2011), p. 205.

15   Ibid., p. 205. O. Lipschits, Y. Gadot, D. Langgut, "The Riddle of Ramat Raḥel: The Archaeology of a Royal Persian Period Edifice," *Transeu* 41 (2012), p. 77.

16   For these seals see E. Stern, "Seals in the Achaemenid Style from the Province of Judah," *BASOR* 202 (1971), pp. 6-16; and less certainly, J. Naveh and S. Shaked, "Three Aramaic Seals of the Achaemenid Period," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 118 (1986), pp. 21-27; and P. Bordreuil, *Catalogue des sceaux ouest-sémitiques inscrits de la Bibliothèque nationale, du Musée du Louvre et du Musée biblique de Bible et de Terre sainte* (Paris, 1986), pp. 97-105.

Several of the Old Persian loanwords in LBH were motivated by need. They describe items, institutions, and concepts that were introduced by the Persian administration and did not have a ready equivalent in Hebrew. Examples include *ʾappeden* '(Persian style) palace', *dāt* '(Persian) law', *ăḥašdarpān* 'satrap', *pardēs* 'royal garden', and *pitgām* 'decree'. Others were apparently motivated by prestige. They partially replace native Hebrew words that appear in CBH (see Table 2 below). Parallel passages in 1 Samuel–2 Kings, written in CBH, and Chronicles, written in LBH, used inherited Hebrew vocabulary. But in stories exclusive to Chronicles, Persian loanwords occasionally replace inherited vocabulary.[17] The storerooms in the Jerusalem temple, for example, are called *ʾōṣĕrôt* in 1 Kings 7:51 and 2 Chronicles 5:1, but *ganzakkîm* in 1 Chronicles 28:11.

TABLE 2

Gloss	LBH Term	CBH Term
'treasury'	*ganzak / genez*	*ʾôṣār*
'kind'	*zan*	*mîn*
'sheath'	*nādān*	*taʿar*
'letter'	*ništĕwān*	*sēper*
'forecourt'	*parbār*	*ʾûlām*

In contrast to LBH, the CBH corpus contains a single Iranian loanword, *parwār* 'forecourt' (2 Kgs 23:11), and a single Iranian name, *parnāk* < Median **farnaka*? (Num 34:25).[18] These words could have entered Hebrew during the 8th cen-

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17   On the importance of contrast for linguistic dating see A. Hurvitz, "Linguistic Criteria for Dating Problematic Biblical Texts," *Hebrew Abstracts* 14 (1973), pp. 74-77.

18   Numbers 34:25 most likely belongs to the Priestly source, which dates to the pre-exilic period as A. Hurvitz has shown. For the affiliation of Numbers 34:25 see B. Levine, *Numbers 21-36: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York, 2000), pp. 542-43 and J. Milgrom, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Numbers* (Philadelphia, 1990), pp. 389, 502. For the dating of the Priestly source see Hurvitz, *A Linguistic Study of the Relationship between the Priestly Sources and Ezekiel: A New Approach to an Old Problem*, (Paris, 1982), *passim*; Idem, "The Language of the Priestly Source and its Historical Setting: The Case for an Early Date," in *P8WCJS*, pp. 83-92; Idem, "Dating the Priestly Source in Light of the Historical Study of the Biblical Hebrew a Century after Wellhausen," *ZAW* 100 (1982), pp. 88-100.

tury B.C.E., when the Assyrian emperor Sargon II deported large numbers of Medians to the areas surrounding Judah in the aftermath of his eastern campaigns.[19] As such, they are the product of sporadic contact. They do not appear in the same density as the Old Persian loanwords and therefore do not blur the distinction between CBH and LBH.

2   Mechanisms of Language Contact

Before examining the syntactic influence of Old Persian on Hebrew, I would like to clarify the mechanisms of contact between these languages. In the past, most scholars have posited an Aramaic intermediary for the Old Persian loanwords in LBH. In his study of lexical borrowing in LBH, for example, M. Ekshults states that "Persian loanwords . . . have mostly entered Hebrew via Aramaic."[20] Likewise A. Hurvitz argues for "close contact between Hebrew and Persian—through the mediation of Imperial Aramaic."[21] The reasons for this belief are not hard to find. The corpus of Imperial Aramaic documents is only slightly larger than the LBH corpus, but contains over 100 Old Iranian terms in addition to several calques, loan blends, and extensions, which are lacking in LBH.[22] Many of the Old Persian loans into Hebrew also appear in Aramaic. Furthermore, there is significant evidence for Old Persian-Aramaic bilinguals. In his 2001 dissertation, C. H. Bae showed that the Aramaic version of the Behistun inscription was a translation and expansion of Darius' oral

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19   N. Na'aman and R. Zadok, "Sargon II's Deportations to Israel and Philistia (716-708 B.C.),"
      JCS 40 (1988), pp. 40-42.

20   M. Ekshuts, "The Importance of Loanwords for Dating Biblical Hebrew Texts," in *Biblical
      Hebrew: Studies in Chronology and Typology* (ed. I. Young; London, 2003), p. 12.

21   A. Hurvitz, "The Date of the Prose-Tale of Job Linguistically Reconsidered," *HTR* 67
      (1974), p. 17. M. Wagner, *Die lexikalischen und grammatikalischen Aramaismen im alttesta-
      mentlichen Hebräisch* (Berlin, 1966), p. 152 and A. Sáenz-Badillos, *A History of the Hebrew
      Language* (trans. J. Elwolde; Cambridge, 1996), p. 115 share this opinion as well.

22   For the effect of Old Persian on Aramaic, see E. Y. Kutscher, "Two 'Passive' Constructions
      in Aramaic in Light of Persian," in *Proceedings of the International Conference on Semitic
      Studies* (Jerusalem, 1965), pp. 132-151; T. Muraoka and B. Porten, *A Grammar of Egyptian
      Aramaic* (Leiden, 1998), pp. 370-3; J. Makujina, "Dismemberment in Dan 2:5 and 3:9 as an
      Old Persian Idiom, 'To be Made into Parts',"*JAOS* 119 (1999), pp. 309-312; Idem, *Old Persian
      Calques in the Aramaic of Daniel* (Unpublished PhD diss., Westminster Theological
      Seminary, 2001), *passim*; and J. Naveh and S. Shaked, *Ancient Aramaic Documents from
      Bactria (Fourth Century B.C.E.)* (London, 2012), pp. 50-51.

res gestae, which was circulated for diplomatic purposes.[23] As such, it was prepared by bilingual scribes. Further evidence for Old Persian-Aramaic bilinguals comes from the book of Ezra, which most likely dates to the reign of Artaxerxes I (465-424 B.C.E.). When the Persian officials Bishlam, Mitredat (< OP **Miϑra-dāta*), and Tabel write a letter to Artaxerxes, the author comments that "the letter was written in Aramaic and translated (in/from) Aramaic" (*kātûb ʾărāmît û-mĕturgām ʾărāmît*) (Ezra 4:7).[24] In his response to this letter, Artaxerxes notes that "the letter which you to us sent has been read in translation before me" (*ništĕwānāʾ dî šĕlaḥtûn ʿălênāʾ mĕpāraš qĕrî qādāmāy*) (Ezra 4:18). These data suggest that there were scribes who could translate Old Persian into (written) Aramaic and vice-versa.

Yet the case for an Aramaic intermediary is overstated. There is both linguistic and historical evidence for direct contact between speakers of Hebrew and speakers of Old Persian. On the linguistic side, LBH contains four Old Persian loanwords that do not occur in Imperial Aramaic: *ʾăḥaštĕrān* 'royal', *partĕmîm* 'nobles', *pat-bag* 'dainties' and *patšegen* 'copy'. The absence of these words from Imperial Aramaic could be an accident of preservation, but one of these words—*patšegen*—cannot come from an Aramaic intermediary. According to E. Benveniste, Old Persian **pati-čagnya* (literally 'written again') is the ultimate source of Hebrew *patšegen*. It is also the source of Aramaic *pršgn*. Other pairs of Persian loanword into Aramaic and Hebrew show a systematic correspondence between Old Persian, Aramaic, and Hebrew /t/. Both Aramaic *petgām* and Hebrew *pitgām*, for example, come from Old Persian **pati-gāma*, which contains the same suffix as **pati-čagnya*.[25] Thus, the <r> of *pršgn* cannot have masked a Persian phoneme similar to both /r/ and /t/, but lacking in

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23　C. H. Bae, *Comparative Studies of King Darius's Bisitun Inscription* (Unpublished PhD diss., Harvard, 2001), pp. 40-44. In Db IV.91-2, Darius states, "I sent this inscription everywhere among the provinces."

24　I have left the translation of the second *ʾărāmît* in this verse ambiguous. Makujina, *Old Persian Calques*, pp. 23-24 argues that absence of a preposition following *mĕturgām* can indicate directionality and translates this phrase as "the letter was written in Aramaic and [subsequently] translated from Aramaic." H. G. M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah* (WBC 16; Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985) pp. 54, 61, by contrast, treats the second *ʾărāmît* as a scribal note warning the reader that the following verses are written in Aramaic, similar to its use in Daniel 2:4. Regardless of the correct translation, Ezra 4:7 provides evidence of Old Persian-Hebrew bilingual speakers.

25　Aramaic speakers misheard or reinterpreted the Persian suffix *pati-* as *par-* on at least one other occasion. The Jewish Babylonian Aramaic word *prdšnʾ* 'counter-gift' comes from Middle Persian *pāddāšn*, with the same meaning. E. Benveniste, "Termes et noms achéménides en araméen," *JA* 225 (1934), p. 181.

Hebrew and Aramaic, and must be a strictly Aramaic development. Working from Aramaic alone, Hebrew speakers could not have recovered and reinstated the original, Persian phoneme. Therefore, *patšegen* must be a direct Old Persian loan into Hebrew. This opens up the possibility that other Old Persian loanwords were loaned directly into Hebrew.

Although Old Persian-Hebrew bilinguals are not mentioned explicitly in Persian period sources, there is strong circumstantial evidence for their existence. Bilingual interpreters probably accompanied the Persian officials and soldiers who were stationed in Yehud following the first Egyptian revolt. These individuals would have been indispensible for communicating between the Persian officials and their local counterparts. Some of the local administrative figures may have been bilinguals as well. In the biblical text, two such figures are given a Persian pedigree and pictured as members of the royal retinue before coming to Yehud. Ezra is consistently depicted as a Persian scribe (Ezra 7:6, 11, 12, 21; Neh 8:1, 4, 9, 13; 12:26, 36; 13:13), a job that required fluency in spoken Old Persian and written Aramaic (see below). Nehemiah is indentified as Artaxerxes I's cupbearer and is even depicted having an extended conversation with the great King (Neh 2:1-8).[26] Without going into the historical accuracy of these accounts, it is enough that they were plausible to their intended audience as part of the historiographic genre: the literary depictions of Ezra and Nehemiah reflect the administrative situation in Yehud. A third local administrator, known from inscriptional material, was either an ethnic Persian or well enough integrated into Persian society that he was given or adopted a Persian name: Bagoas (< OP *Bagā-vahyā) (*TAD* A4 7:1).

Bilingual scribes may also have played a part in Old Persian-Hebrew contact, although here the evidence is more tenuous. Some scholars, such as J. Greenfield, J. Naveh, and S. Shaked, hypothesize that Persian scribal practice was an inherently bi-lingual activity. According to this model, bi-lingual scribes took dictation in Old Persian, but wrote in Aramaic. The loanwords and calques in these texts resulted from imperfect translation. Scribes who could not think of an Aramaic equivalent of an Old Persian word or phrase quickly enough either transcribed the Old Persian term phonetically or recreated the Old Persian construction using the morphological material of Aramaic. Some of these ad hoc constructions were subsequently adopted into local languages, giving rise to established loanwords and calques.[27]

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26   The text does not mention whether Nehemiah spoke through an interpreter. But even if he did, the interpreter would have been an Old Persian-Hebrew bilingual.

27   For this reconstruction of the translation process see J. Greenfield, "Aramaic in the Achaemenid Empire," in *The Cambridge History of Iran* vol. 2 (ed. I. Gershevitch;

While this practice probably took place in the upper echelons of Achaemenid administration, since most top officials were ethnic Persians and spoke Old Persian,[28] the evidence for bilingual scribes at the level of local administration is sparse.[29] The evidence for scribal translation at the provincial level comes from the correspondence of Arshama, the satrap of Egypt and the correspondence of Akhvamazda, the satrap of Bactria. In his recent edition of the Aramaic documents from Bactria, S. Shaked compares these two corpora and notes that, "both sets of documents contain a larger number of loanwords from Persian. Since in both cases the letters were presumably dictated in Old Persian and only written down in Aramaic, one may expect a certain number of calque translations, where the Aramaic bears the marks of a Persian original."[30] The evidence for translation at a local level, however, is confined to the figure of Ezra.

Because some of the Imperial Aramaic administrative texts were subject to rapid translation, they contain a large number of nonce loanwords. Of the seventy-two Old Persian loanwords words in the Imperial Aramaic documents from Egypt, only fifteen (21%) survive into later forms of Aramaic.[31] True, some of these words refer to specifically Persian items and institutions that disappeared with the fall of the Achaemenid Empire, but the majority were prestige loans. Many of these nonce forms occur in the correspondence of Arshama, who as an ethnic Persian and the satrap of Egypt, probably dictated his letters in Old Persian. As the knowledge of Aramaic deteriorated in the late Persian period, nonce loans become even more frequent. The administrative documents from Bactria contain seventy-two Old Persian terms, only ten (14%) of which survive into later forms of Aramaic. Some of these documents even

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Cambridge, 1985), pp. 707-8; J. Greenfield and J. Naveh, "Hebrew and Aramaic in the Persian Period," in *Cambridge History of Judaism* vol. 1 (eds. W. D. Davies and L. Finkelstein; Cambridge, 1984), p. 116; and Naveh and Shaked, *Ancient Aramaic Documents*, pp. 50-51.

28   Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, pp. 350-52.

29   This theory rests on the assumption that Old Persian was never used as an administrative language. But M. Stolper and J. Tavernier have recently published a tablet from the Persepolis Fortification archive that was written in Old Persian rather than Elamite or Aramaic, like the rest of the archive. This tablet shows that there was at least one scribe who used Old Persian for administrative purposes. M. Stolper and J. Tavernier, "From the Persepolis Fortification Archive Project, 1: An Old Persian Administrative Text from Persepolis," *Achaemenid Research on Texts and Archaeology* 1 (2007), pp. 1-28.

30   Naveh and Shaked, *Aramaic Documents from Bactria*, pp. 50-51.

31   Two of these words, *bāga* 'domain, property' and *hanbāga* 'partner in realty', may have been re-borrowed from Middle Persian. T. Muraoka and B. Porten, *A Grammar of Egyptian Aramaic* (Leiden, 1998), pp. 370-73.

contain entire phrases in Old Persian (e.g. *y'sšt wprtm* /**yāsišta fratama*/ 'in the best manner' A5:3; A6:6, 9).

As literary creations, the biblical texts were not subject to translation and, as a result contain fewer nonce loanwords than the Imperial Aramaic documents. Eight of the 16 (50%) Old Persian loanwords in LBH survive into Middle Hebrew, the last stage of Hebrew before it died out as a spoken language in the 3rd century B.C.E.[32] Unsurprisingly, most of the need-based loanwords disappeared along with the realities they described. Others took on new meanings in order to fill semantic gaps in Hebrew. *pardēs*, for example, originally referred to the royal gardens, but came to mean 'orchard' in Middle Hebrew.

3 Syntactic Influence

So far the syntactic influence of Old Persian on Hebrew has gone unnoticed. This is because syntactic influence is only possible at higher levels of contact and most scholars assume that the contact between Hebrew and Old Persian was minimal.[33] Building on the arguments developed in section two, I would like to propose two Old Persian calques in the Biblical corpus: 1) the discourse markers *ʾaḥar zeh* and *ʾaḥărê-zōʾt* and 2) the use of *lĕ-* to mark the final element in a series of direct objects. Like the Old Persian loanwords, these calques occur almost exclusively in LBH texts and therefore constitute an additional defining feature of LBH against CBH.

The discourse marker *pasāva* occurs frequently in the Old Persian corpus. Syntactically, it marks narrative sequence at the sentence level. It can also denote logical result.[34] Etymologically, *pasāva* is a compound of the preposition *pasā* 'after' and the nominative masculine singular demonstrative *ava* 'that'.[35] In his dissertation, J. Makujina demonstrates that the discourse markers *ʾaḥărê dĕnâ* and *bāʾtar dĕnâ* in the Aramaic sections of Daniel are

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32 The Middle Hebrew corpus consists of Ben Sirach, the Mishnah, the non-biblical manuscripts from Qumran, and some epigraphic documents from the Judean desert.

33 For the cline of borrowability in situations of bilingual language contact see S. G. Thomason and T. Kaufmann, *Language Contact, Creolization, and Genetic Linguistics* (Berkeley, 1988), p. 50; and S. G. Thomason, *Language Contact: An Introduction* (Washington, D.C., 2001), p. 68. Syntactic influence is more common in situations of language shift, but there is no evidence that Old Persian speakers ever shifted to Hebrew.

34 Makujina, *Old Persian Calques*, pp. 117-18.

35 Ibid., p. 197.

structurally transparent calques of *pasāva* (Dan 2:29, 45; 7:6, 7). They repli-
cate its surface structure as well as its syntactic functions. A related expression
<mn ʾḥry znh>, meaning 'after that point', occurs in the Samaria Papyri (SP
7:6,7).[36] The date of Daniel is problematic—it is usually dated to the Seleucid
period, since it alludes to Antiochus IV Epiphanes—but Makujina argues that
this calque entered Aramaic in the Persian period. Both *ʾaḥărê děnâ* and *bāʾtar
děnâ* presume an Old Persian form of *pasāva*. By the Seleucid period, *pasāva*
was shortened to *pas* (Middle Persian), rendering it etymologically opaque.
At that point, Aramaic speakers would not have known how to represent the
original form of this word in their language.

Makujina also points out that *ʾaḥărê děnâ* has an exact Hebrew counter-
part in *ʾaḥar zeh* and a near match in *ʾaḥărê-zōʾt* (2 Chr 32:9; Ezra 9:10; Job
42:16).[37] The texts where these terms occur are consistent with a date in the
Persian period. Both Ezra and Chronicles are dated to the Achaemenid period
on internal evidence as mentioned above. The linguistic affiliation of Job is
debated, but Hurvitz has shown that the prose section was written in LBH. In
fact, he suggests that *ʾaḥărê-zōʾt* is itself a late feature. It contrasts with earlier
discourse markers like *ʾaḥărê-kēn* (Josh 10:26) and *ʾaḥar had-děbārîm hā-ʾēllê*
(Gen 15:1) and appears only in late texts.[38] Unfortunately, it is unclear whether
Aramaic acted as an intermediary between Old Persian and Hebrew in this
case. The Hebrew form *ʾaḥărê-zōʾt* lacks an Aramaic equivalent, but this may
be an accident of preservation.

The next example is confined to the Hebrew. In several Old Persian texts, the
instrumental-ablative case marks the final noun in a series of accusatives.[39] In
the Behistun inscription column 1, line 64, Darius declares:

adam	niy-a-çār-ay-am	kār-ahyā	abicar-iš[40]
I	down-IPFV-set-CAUS-IPFV.1SG	people-GEN.SG	pasture-ACC.SG

gaiϑ-ām=cā	māniyam=cā	vⁱϑ-biš=cā[41]
herd-ACC.SG=and	slave-ACC.SG=and	house-ABL.PL=and

I restored to the people the pastures and the herds and the slaves and the
houses.

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36   A critical edition of the Samaria Papyri can be found in D. M. Gropp, *Wadi Daliyeh II and
      Qumran Miscellanea II: The Samaria Papyri from Wadi Daliyeh* (DJD 28; Oxford, 2002).

37   Ibid., p. 136.

38   Hurvitz, "The Date of the Prose-Tale of Job," p. 24.

39   The instrumental case performs a similar function in Avestan.

40   This word can also be read as *abicarīš*, an accusative plural.

41   Old Persian texts are cited according to the *Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum*.

This construction also occurs in Xerxes' famous 'Daiva Inscription', where he invokes

> Aʰurmazd-ām . . .   art-ā=cā
> Ahuramazda-ACC.SG . . . R̥ta-ABL.SG=and
>
> Ahuramazda and R̥ta (XPh 50f; 53f).

The origin of this construction is unclear. The Iranist R. Kent suggests that the preposition *hadā* 'with', which takes the ablative case, has elided in these examples, but there is no evidence for his proposed reconstruction.[42] More likely, the ablative could serve as a general case form with certain verbs in Old Persian. Whatever the diachronic origin of this construction, it existed synchronically in Old Persian during the Achaemenid period.

The use of the instrumental-ablative case in lists in Old Persian has a formal equivalent in the Hebrew of Chronicles. In 1 Chronicles 28:1 and 2 Chronicles 24:12 and 26:14, the preposition *lĕ-* marks the last item in a series of direct objects marked with either *ʾet* or Ø. The description of Uzziah's military planning reads:

> *way-yāken lā-hem ʿuzzîyāhû lĕ-kol-haṣ-ṣābāʾ māginnîm û-rĕmāḥîm wĕ-kôbāʿîm wĕ-širyōnôt û-qĕšātôt û-**lĕ**-ʾabnê qĕlāʿîm*
>
> And Uzziah prepared for the whole army shields, javelins, helmets, scale-mail, bows, and sling-stones (2 Chr 26:14).

Similar constructions appear in the description of David's royal convocation in 1 Chronicles 28:1 and the account of temple repairs in 2 Chronicles 24:12:

> *way-yaqhēl dāwîd ʾet-kol-śārê yiśrāʾēl śārê haš-šĕbāṭîm wĕ-śārê ham-maḥlĕqôt ha-mĕšārtîm ʾet-ham-melek wĕ-śārê hā-ʾălāpîm wĕ-śārê ham-mēʾôt wĕ-śārê kol-rĕkûš-û-miqnê lam-melek û-lĕ-bānāyw ʿim-has-sārîsîm wĕ-hag-gibbôrîm û-**lĕ**- kol-gibbôr ḥāyil ʾel-yĕrûšālāim*

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42   Kent, *Old Persian*, p. 82.

And David assembled at Jerusalem all the officials of Israel: the tribal offi-
cials, the officers serving the king, the commanders of a thousand, the
commanders of a hundred, the officers in charge of the property and the
cattle of the king and his sons, together with the nobles, the mighty war-
riors, and the men of war.

*way-yihyû śōkĕrîm ḥōṣĕbîm wĕ-ḥārāšîm lĕ-ḥaddēš bêt yhwh wĕ-gam
lĕ-ḥārāšê barzel û-nĕḥōšet*

For they had hired carpenters and masons to restore the house of Yahweh,
together with workers in iron and bronze.

The other Semitic languages offer little help in explaining this syntactic
pattern.[43] In Aramaic, *lĕ-* can mark the direct object in all environments, but
it does not conform to the pattern found in the Hebrew of Chronicles.[44] In
certain Northwest Semitic languages, however, the preposition *l-* can occasion-
ally take on ablative functions, particularly in Ugaritic, which lacks the prepo-
sition *min*.[45] Remnants of this usage also appear in Biblical Hebrew (e.g., Ps
68:21; 84:12). In both Ugaritic and Hebrew *l-* can indicate motion away from and
separation, two functions of the ablative case in Old Persian.[46] Thus, it seems
that the construction in Chronicles is a direct Old Persian calque. Most likely,
the preposition *lĕ-* was chosen because the other Hebrew prepositions that
assume an ablative function, such as *min*, were too functionally marked to be
used with direct objects.

The two Old Persian calques in LBH are confined to Persian period texts.
This is also true of the undisputed Old Persian calques in Aramaic studied by
Kutscher and Makujina. Only the discourse markers *ʾaḥărê dĕnâ* and *bāʾtar
dĕnâ* survive until the Hellenistic period, but then suddenly fall out of use.
The use of Old Persian calques, it seems, depended on the existence of Persian
power structures in general and bilingual individuals in particular. Yet the

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43   R. Polzin, *Late Biblical Hebrew: Toward a Historical Typology of Biblical Hebrew Prose* (HSM
      12; Missoula, 1976), pp. 66-68 calls this use of *lĕ-* "an emphatic lamed." But such a label
      does not explain the function or origin of this construction.

44   *lĕ-* can also mark the direct object in both CBH and LBH. The frequency of this construc-
      tion is higher in LBH, likely due to Aramaic influence.

45   J. Tropper, *Ugaritische Grammatik: Zweite, stark überarbeitete und erweiterte Auflage*
      (AOAT 273; Münster, 2013), p. 760.

46   Kent, *Old Persian*, p. 82.

very transience of Old Persian calques makes them a sensitive tool for dating Biblical texts.

4   Conclusion

Prior to the Achaemenid period, contact between Hebrew and the Old Iranian languages was minimal. One loanword and one personal name in the Pentateuch and Deuteronomistic History attest to sporadic contact, perhaps as the result of Sargon II's deportations. The degree and nature of contact changed in the later Achaemenid period, however. Systematic, institutional contact between speakers of Hebrew and speakers of Old Persian following the first Egyptian revolt led to introduction of 16 Old Persian loanwords and two calques into the Hebrew language. The loanwords reflect both the *realia* of the Persian Empire and the presence of Persian officials in Yehud and thus can be used as evidence for dating Biblical texts. The two calques, on the other hand, attest to the intensity of contact between speakers of Hebrew and speakers of Old Persian and provide a new criterion for dating biblical texts.