



## CAMERON, GEORGE GLENN

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**CAMERON, GEORGE GLENN**, philologist and historian, b. 30 July 1905 in Washington, Pennsylvania, d. 14 September 1979 in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Cameron received the A.B. degree from Muskingum College in New Concord, Ohio, in 1927. After two years as a high-school teacher and principal he took A.M. and Ph.D. degrees from The University of Chicago in 1930 and 1932 respectively.

*Career.* Cameron began his career as instructor in Oriental languages and history at the Oriental Institute of The University of Chicago in 1933, rising to associate professor. In 1948 he left Chicago, with the support of the Carnegie Foundation and subsequently the Ford Foundation, founded the Department of Near Eastern Studies at The University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, one of the first to exemplify the concept of area studies. He served as chairman until 1969 and became professor emeritus in 1975.

Cameron was an authority on the ancient Near East, particularly Iran and Elam. In his *History of Early Iran*, published in 1936, he presented the subject in a realistic historical and geographic context for the first time; the work remains the major reference for studies of Elamite history. In 1939 Cameron joined Erich Schmidt's expedition to Persepolis as epigraphist; he contributed extensively to Schmidt's three-volume excavation report, including retranslations of several known Achaemenid texts. In 1948 his monumental *Persepolis Treasury Tablets* appeared; a comprehensive study of 114 of the 753 Elamite tablets that Schmidt had excavated in the Persepolis treasury between 1936 and 1938, it constituted a major new source for Elamite and Old Persian,



as well as for the history of the Achaemenid empire during the reigns of Darius I and Xerxes.

While holding the annual professorship of the Baghdad branch of the American Schools of Oriental Research in 1948-49 Cameron discovered a new text from the annals of Shalmaneser III (1950) and led an expedition to Bīsotūn, which he described for laymen in a series of magazine articles. Suspended on a scaffold at considerable risk, he prepared latex squeezes of the trilingual rock inscription of Darius, which permitted detailed study for the first time. On several later visits while a Fulbright scholar at the University of Göttingen in 1956-57, he made new squeezes of the least accessible Babylonian portion of the inscription; he published the initial results of his study as a contribution to his friend Roland G. Kent's *Old Persian* (1950). After the publication of the Old Persian and Elamite versions (1951, 1959, 1960) Cameron sent circular letters to colleagues inviting comment and debate, witness to his scholarly openness and generosity. The same generosity can be recognized in his assigning to students full publication of the Babylonian portion of the Bīsotūn inscription (E. von Voigtlander, *The Bisitun Inscription of Darius the Great. Babylonian Version*, Corp. Inscr. Iran. I/2, pt. 1, 1978) and of two Urartian-Assyrian bilingual stelae unearthed by the Michigan expedition to Iraq in 1951 (W. Benedict, "The Urartian-Assyrian Inscription of Keleshin," *JAOS* 81, 1961, pp. 359-85).

Although it cost him valuable time from his own research, Cameron undertook the posthumous editing of two major works by colleagues. In 1938 he produced Edward Chiera's *They Wrote on Clay. The Babylonian Tablets Speak Again* from the author's initial draft (Chicago, 1938; paperback ed., Chicago, 1956; Cameron also oversaw subsequent translations into French, German, Danish, Japanese, and Persian), and in 1945 he revised A. T. Olmstead's *History of the Persian Empire. Achaemenid Period* (Chicago, 1949). From 1940-48 he also served as editor of the *American Journal of Semitic Languages*, which later became *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*.

*Awards and honors.* Aside from the appointments already mentioned, Cameron received the Litt. D. from Muskingum College in 1952, the Order of Homāyūn 2nd class from the government of Iran in 1949, and a Ph.D. honoris causa from the University of Tehran 1974. In 1954 he was Haskell Lecturer at Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio. The 1972 issue of the *Journal of the American Oriental Society* was dedicated to him on the occasion of his sixty-seventh birthday, and at his retirement in 1976 his colleagues at The University of



Michigan presented him with Michigan Oriental Studies in Honor of George G. Cameron.

*Select bibliography of publications related to Iran. History of Early Iran*, Chicago, 1936 (repr., Chicago, 1969; tr. E.-J. Levin, *L'histoire de l'Iran antique*, Paris, 1937); "Historical Background" and "Religious Background," chapters 1 and 2 of G. Eisen, *Ancient Oriental Cylinders and Other Seals*, Oriental Institute Publications 47, Chicago, 1940, pp. 1-19; "Darius and Xerxes in Babylonia," *AJSLL* 58, 1941, pp. 314-25; "Darius' Daughter and the Persepolis Inscriptions," *JNES* 1, 1942, pp. 214-18; "Darius, Egypt, and the Lands beyond the Sea," *JNES* 2, 1943, pp. 307-13; "A Photograph of Darius' Sculptures at Behistun," *JNES* 3, 1943, pp. 115-16; "The Babylonian Scientist and His Hebrew Colleague," *Biblical Archaeologist* 7/2, 1944, pp. 21-40; *Persepolis Treasury Tablets*, Oriental Institute Publications 65, Chicago, 1948; "The Bisitun Carvings," *Naft Magazine*, April, 1949, pp. 8-11; "The Testament of Darius the Great," *Life*, May 23, 1949, pp. 149-52; "The Annals of Shalmaneser III, King of Assyria. A New Text," *Sumer* 6, 1950, pp. 6-26; "Darius Carved History on Ageless Rock," *The National Geographic Magazine* 98/6, 1950, pp. 825-44; "King Darius' Story of His Conquests," *Michigan Alumnus* 56/14, 1950, pp. 100-05; "A Message from Darius," in *The Story of Our Time*, Encyclopaedia Yearbook (New York), 1950, pp. 58-60; contributions to Kent, *Old Persian*; "The Old Persian Text of the Bisitun Inscription," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 5, 1951, pp. 47-54; "The Cradle of Civilization Revisited," *Michigan Alumnus* 58/21, 1952, pp. 324-30; signed contributions to E. F. Schmidt, *Persepolis I: Structures, Reliefs, Inscriptions*, Oriental Institute Publications 68, Chicago, 1953 (see index, p. 292); "The Idea of History. Ancient Persia," in *The Idea of History in the Ancient Near East*, ed. R. H. Bainton et al., New Haven, 1955, pp. 77-98; "Introduction," in *Social Forces in the Middle East*, ed. S. N. Fisher, Ithaca, 1955, pp. xiii-xvi; "Ibn Sina and the Role of Prophecy," *Le livre du millénaire d'Avicenna* IV, Tehran, 1956, pp. 64-75; signed contributions to E. F. Schmidt, *Persepolis II: Contents of the Treasury and Other Discoveries*, Oriental Institute Publications 69, Chicago, 1957 (see index, p. 160); "Persepolis Treasury Tablets Old and New," *JNES* 17, 1958, pp. 161-76; "The "Daiva" Inscription of Xerxes: in Elamite," *Die Welt des Orients* 2/5-6, 1959, pp. 470-76; "Elamite Cuneiform Documents from Persepolis," in *Akten des 24. Internationalen Orientalisten-Kongresses, München 1957*, Wiesbaden, 1959, pp. 467-69; "The Elamite Text of the Bisitun Inscription," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 14, 1959, pp. 59-68; "The Monuments of King Darius at Bisitun," *Archaeology* 13, 1960, pp. 162-71; "A New Akkadian Inscription at Sar-i Pul, Iran," *Trudy Dvadtsat'-pyatogo*



*Mezhdunarodnogo Kongressa Vostokovedov* I, Moscow, 1960, pp. 242-43; “New Tablets from the Persepolis Treasury,” *JNES* 24, 1965, pp. 167-92; “A Lagash Mace Head Inscription,” *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 20, 1966, p. 125; revisions of “Awan,” “Anshan,” “Elam,” “Media” in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1966 printing; “An Inscription of Darius from Pasargadae,” *Iran* 5, 1967, pp. 7-10; “Zoroaster the Herdsman,” *IJJ* 10, 1968, pp. 261-81; signed contributions to E. F. Schmidt, *Persepolis III: The Royal Tombs and Other Monuments*, Oriental Institute Publications 70, Chicago, 1970 (see index, p. 170); “Persian Satrapies and Related Matters,” *JNES* 32, 1973, pp. 47-56; “Cyrus the “Father,” and Babylonia,” in *Commémoration Cyrus I: Hommage universel*, Acta Iranica 1, Tehran and Liège, 1974, pp. 45-48.

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(Gernot L. Windfuhr)