

Proposal to encode the Elymaean script in Unicode

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1 Introduction

This proposal is a revision and expansion of “Preliminary proposal to encode the Elymaic script in Unicode” (L2/17-055). In addition to a change of the script name, this version contains additional background details, an expansion of the character repertoire, and several new specimens of usage.

2 Background

The proposed script was used in the ancient state of Elymais, located in southwestern Iran at the head of the Persian Gulf, which flourished from the 2nd century BCE to the early 3rd century CE (see figure 1). It was a semi-independent polity and was intermittently under the control of the Parthian empire (247 BCE – 224 CE). The name ‘Elymais’ is a romanization of the Hellenic designation *Ἐλυμαίς* for the region known in Sumerian as *elam*, in Akkadian as *elamū*, and indigenously as *halamti*. Known in English as ‘Elam’, the region lies in the present-day Iranian province of Khuzestan, the name of which derives from ‘Huza’, the Old Persian name for the area.

There is no attested native name for the script. It is generally referred to as ‘Elymaean’ in English scholarly literature. This identifier is used for the Unicode script block. The script was identified as ‘Elymaic’ in Unicode records (see Everson 2001).

Elymaean is a right-to-left, non-joining *abjad* derived from Imperial Aramaic. It is related to other scripts of southern Mesopotamia that are derived from Aramaic, mostly closely to Parthian and Mandaic (Mandaean), and also to Characenean and the script of Persis (see Coxon 1970, Häberl 2005, Naveh 1997, Rezakhani 2012). However, Elymaean is distinct from these in terms of character repertoire and letterforms. A comparison of related scripts is shown in table 1.

The script was used for writing Aramaic and “continued the Achaemenid standard language”, while introducing “a number of orthographic modernizations” (Gzella 2008: 127). The earliest attestations of the script are inscriptions on coins dated to the 2nd century CE. The extant Elymaean corpus consists of short epigraphical and numismatic inscriptions. Some important epigraphical records are:

- *Tang-e Sarvak* This “valley of the cypresses” in eastern Khuzestan is considered to be the most important archaeological site in Elymais. It is believed to be a sacred grove used for the coronation of Elymaean kings. The site contains four free-standing monuments, with rock reliefs consisting of thirteen panels (Haerinck 2005). The artefacts at the site are generally dated between the 1st century CE and the first quarter of the 3rd century. Six inscriptions are extant (see figures 12–18).
- *Tang-e Butan* The “valley of the idols” in the Shimbar valley in northeastern Khuzestan consists of two large rock reliefs. The first relief depicts an image of one individual and the second depicts twelve individuals (Bivar and Shaked 1964). The reliefs are generally dated between the 1st century BCE and the 3rd century CE. There are five inscriptions extant at the site (see figures 19–23).
- *Tang-e Chilau* A large triangular stone containing graffito written in carbon ink. Bivar and Shaked note that “Elymaean script of the first and second centuries A.D., similar to that of the Tang-i Butān was especially prominent” here and that “[s]everal examples seemed to mark a stage transitional in the development from chancery Aramaic to Elymaean, and may be of the first century B.C. or even earlier” (1964: 283). Also at the site are ink graffiti in the Parthian and Pahlavi scripts. Specimens of the Elymaean graffiti are shown in figures 24–26.

There are several types of numismatic records from Elymais, containing inscriptions in Greek, Parthian, and Elymaean. Coins bearing Elymaean legends were minted during the Arsacid period. Coins of Orodes II and Kamnaskires Orodes are shown in figures 9–10.

3 Script details

3.1 Character names

Traditional names for Elymaean letters are not attested. For this reason, the proposed Unicode character names are based upon analogues in the ‘Imperial Aramaic’ block. These differ slightly from traditional Semitic or scholarly names for Aramaic letters. But, given the relationship of Elymaean to Aramaic, it seems practical to follow the existing naming convention.

In this document, names in italics refer to scholarly names for graphemes while names in small capitals refer to proposed Unicode characters, eg. *𐤀* is *aleph* and ELYMAEAN LETTER ALEPH. For sake of brevity, the descriptor ‘ELYMAEAN’ is dropped when referring to Elymaean characters, eg. ELYMAEAN LETTER ALEPH is referred to as ALEPH. Characters of other scripts are designated by their full Unicode names. Latin transliteration of Elymaean letters follows the current scholarly convention.

3.2 Character repertoire

The proposed repertoire for Elymaean contains 23 characters: 22 letters and 1 ligature.

3.2.1 Letters

The 22 letters are distinctive analogues to the letters of the ‘Imperial Aramaic’ script. The full Elymaean *abjad* is attested in the five epigraphs at Tang-e Sarvak.

Glyph	Unicode character name	Aramaic name	Latin
𐤀	ELYMAEAN LETTER ALEPH	<i>ālap</i>	ʾ
𐤁	ELYMAEAN LETTER BETH	<i>bēth</i>	b
𐤂	ELYMAEAN LETTER GIMEL	<i>gāmal</i>	g
𐤃	ELYMAEAN LETTER DALETH	<i>dālath</i>	d
𐤄	ELYMAEAN LETTER HE	<i>hē</i>	h
𐤅	ELYMAEAN LETTER WAW	<i>waw</i>	w
𐤆	ELYMAEAN LETTER ZAYIN	<i>zain</i>	z
𐤇	ELYMAEAN LETTER HETH	<i>hēth</i>	ḥ
𐤈	ELYMAEAN LETTER TETH	<i>tēth</i>	ṭ
𐤉	ELYMAEAN LETTER YODH	<i>yodh</i>	y
𐤊	ELYMAEAN LETTER KAPH	<i>kāp</i>	k
𐤋	ELYMAEAN LETTER LAMEDH	<i>lāmadh</i>	l
𐤌	ELYMAEAN LETTER MEM	<i>mem</i>	m
𐤍	ELYMAEAN LETTER NUN	<i>nun</i>	n
𐤎	ELYMAEAN LETTER SAMEKH	<i>semkath</i>	s
𐤏	ELYMAEAN LETTER AYIN	<i>ē</i>	ʿ
𐤐	ELYMAEAN LETTER PE	<i>pē</i>	p
𐤑	ELYMAEAN LETTER SADHE	<i>ṣādhē</i>	ṣ
𐤒	ELYMAEAN LETTER QOPH	<i>qop</i>	q
𐤓	ELYMAEAN LETTER RESH	<i>rēsh</i>	r
𐤔	ELYMAEAN LETTER SHIN	<i>shin</i>	š
𐤕	ELYMAEAN LETTER TAW	<i>taw</i>	t

3.2.2 Ligature

A ligature for the Aramaic particle zy is also proposed as a distinctive character:

Glyph	Unicode character name	Aramaic name	Latin
𐤪	ELYMAEAN LIGATURE ZAYIN-YODH	zy	zy

In some inscriptions the Aramaic particle 𐤪 zy is represented using the form 𐤪 in which the 𐤪 *zayin* and 𐤫 *yodh* are joined. As the letters of the script do not generally connect as a matter of convention, the *zy* ligature may be considered a special case and a candidate for encoding as a distinctive character. This LIGATURE ZAYIN-YODH may correspond to 𐤪 U+0856 MANDAIC LETTER DUSHENNA.

3.3 Representative glyphs

The Elymaean script was not standardized. Naturally, there are variations in letterforms across the corpus. However, the script types may be classified into two groups: epigraphical and numismatic. While there are differences in letterforms between the classes of inscription, it is practical to unify the epigraphical and numismatic styles within a single encoding for ‘Elymaean’. It is, therefore, necessary to determine a suitable form for a digital Elymaean standard.

Of the numismatic and epigraphical script types, the latter are most representative of an ‘Elymaean’ script. The type of script used on coins differs in several respects from the epigraphical type, and may be considered a transitional phase in the development of the Elymaean script. With regard to the letterforms in the Tang-e Sarvak inscriptions, Henning notes: “The writing is simply the same as that found on the coins which the kings of Elymais issued in Parthian times” and may be “allocated to the first and second centuries” CE (1952: 163). With regard to the script of Tang-e Butan, Bivar and Shaked write, “the Shīmbār inscriptions are very close from the point of view of palaeography to the Elymaean script of Tang-i Sarvak” (1964: 271). Concurring, Gzella writes: “The same script [as that of Tang-e Sarvak], with a few palaeographic differences which might be due to local variation has also been used for five inscriptions accompanying rock sculptures from Tang-e Butan in the Shimbar Valley” (2008: 119).

These statements suggest that the scripts of the epigraphs are variants of a style that may be considered ‘Elymaean’. For this reason, the representative glyphs for the Elymaean encoding are normalizations of forms used in the epigraphs from Tang-e Sarvak and Tang-e Butan. Other forms may be considered typological variants (see list of variants below). The display of these is to be managed through the selection of fonts designed specifically for each style.

3.4 Variants

The following characters have variant forms:

	Representative	Epigraphical	Numismatic
<i>aleph</i>	𐤀	𐤁	𐤂
<i>beth</i>	𐤃		𐤄 𐤅
<i>gimel</i>	𐤆	𐤇	

<i>daleth</i>	𐤃	𐤃	𐤃 𐤄
<i>he</i>	𐤅	𐤅 𐤆 𐤆	𐤅
<i>zayin</i>	𐤇	𐤇	
<i>yodh</i>	𐤈	·	
<i>mem</i>	𐤌	𐤌 𐤌	
<i>pe</i>	𐤍		𐤍
<i>sadhe</i>	𐤎	𐤎	
<i>shin</i>	𐤏	𐤏	𐤏
<i>taw</i>	𐤐	𐤐	
<i>zy</i>	𐤑	𐤑	

These variants are to be considered glyphic differences, therefore, they are not encoded as separate characters. They can be represented using fonts.

3.5 Other features

Digits and punctuation Digits and punctuation marks are not attested. Spaces are generally not used for separating words, but do appear to be used in some of the inscriptions at Tang-e Butan.

Line-breaking There are no formal rules for the breaking of words at end of line. In some inscriptions lines appear to be broken at phrase boundaries. In digital layouts, line-breaks may occur after any character.

Cursive writing In the majority of inscriptions letters are freestanding. In some sources, the strokes of adjacent letters of a word may connect or overlap. But the script does not possess intrinsic conjoining or cursive behavior. The only evidence of connected writing is the ligatured form of zy. There are no requirements for shaping.

3.6 Collation

The sort order of the letters follows the encoded order:

𐤀 ALEPH < 𐤁 BETH < 𐤂 GIMEL < 𐤃 DALETH < 𐤄 HE < 𐤅 WAW < 𐤆 ZAYIN <
 𐤇 HETH < 𐤈 TETH < 𐤉 YODH < 𐤊 KAPH < 𐤋 LAMEDH < 𐤌 MEM < 𐤍 NUN <
 𐤎 SAMEKH < 𐤏 AYIN < 𐤐 PE < 𐤑 SADHE < 𐤒 QOPH < 𐤓 RESH < 𐤔 SHIN < 𐤕 TAW

The LIGATURE ZAYIN-YODH should be collated after the sequence <J ZAYIN, I YODH>, for example:

... זכ זי זי זי ...
zk zy zy zʔ

3.7 Character Properties

3.7.1 UnicodeData.txt

```
10EC0;ELYMAEAN LETTER ALEPH;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10EC1;ELYMAEAN LETTER BETH;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10EC2;ELYMAEAN LETTER GIMEL;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10EC3;ELYMAEAN LETTER DALETH;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10EC4;ELYMAEAN LETTER HE;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10EC5;ELYMAEAN LETTER WAW;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10EC6;ELYMAEAN LETTER ZAYIN;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10EC7;ELYMAEAN LETTER HETH;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10EC8;ELYMAEAN LETTER TETH;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10EC9;ELYMAEAN LETTER YODH;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10ECA;ELYMAEAN LETTER KAPH;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10ECB;ELYMAEAN LETTER LAMEDH;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10ECC;ELYMAEAN LETTER MEM;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10ECD;ELYMAEAN LETTER NUN;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10ECE;ELYMAEAN LETTER SAMEKH;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10ECF;ELYMAEAN LETTER AYIN;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10ED0;ELYMAEAN LETTER PE;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10ED1;ELYMAEAN LETTER SADHE;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10ED2;ELYMAEAN LETTER QOPH;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10ED3;ELYMAEAN LETTER RESH;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10ED4;ELYMAEAN LETTER SHIN;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10ED5;ELYMAEAN LETTER TAW;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10ED6;ELYMAEAN LIGATURE ZAYIN-YODH;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
```

3.7.2 LineBreak.txt

```
10EC0..10ED6;AL # Lo [23] ELYMAEAN LETTER ALEPH..ELYMAEAN LIGATURE ZAYIN-YODH
```

4 References
























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

















5 Acknowledgments

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	10EC	10ED
0	 10EC0	 10ED0
1	 10EC1	 10ED1
2	 10EC2	 10ED2
3	 10EC3	 10ED3
4	 10EC4	 10ED4
5	 10EC5	 10ED5
6	 10EC6	 10ED6
7	 10EC7	
8	 10EC8	
9	 10EC9	
A	 10ECA	
B	 10ECB	
C	 10ECC	
D	 10ECD	
E	 10ECE	
F	 10ECF	

Letters

10EC0		ELYMAEAN LETTER ALEPH
10EC1		ELYMAEAN LETTER BETH
10EC2		ELYMAEAN LETTER GIMEL
10EC3		ELYMAEAN LETTER DALETH
10EC4		ELYMAEAN LETTER HE
10EC5		ELYMAEAN LETTER WAW
10EC6		ELYMAEAN LETTER ZAYIN
10EC7		ELYMAEAN LETTER HETH
10EC8		ELYMAEAN LETTER TETH
10EC9		ELYMAEAN LETTER YODH
10ECA		ELYMAEAN LETTER KAPH
10ECB		ELYMAEAN LETTER LAMEDH
10ECC		ELYMAEAN LETTER MEM
10ECD		ELYMAEAN LETTER NUN
10ECE		ELYMAEAN LETTER SAMEKH
10ECF		ELYMAEAN LETTER AYIN
10ED0		ELYMAEAN LETTER PE
10ED1		ELYMAEAN LETTER SADHE
10ED2		ELYMAEAN LETTER QOPH
10ED3		ELYMAEAN LETTER RESH
10ED4		ELYMAEAN LETTER SHIN
10ED5		ELYMAEAN LETTER TAW

Ligature

10ED6		ELYMAEAN LIGATURE ZAYIN-YODH
		• used for the Aramaic conjunction zy



<http://kavehfarrokh.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Seleucids-and-Parthia-in-192-BCE.jpg>

Figure 1: Map of Parthian and Seleucid empires showing Elymais at the head of the Persian Gulf.

	Elymaic	Mandaic	Inscriptional Pahlavi	Inscriptional Parthian	Imperial Aramaic
<i>aleph</i>	𐤀	𐤀	𐭀	𐭀	𐤀
<i>beth</i>	𐤁	𐤁	𐭁	𐭁	𐤁
<i>gimel</i>	𐤂	𐤂	𐭂	𐭂	𐤂
<i>daleth</i>	𐤃	𐤃	𐭃	𐭃	𐤃
<i>he</i>	𐤄	𐤄	𐭄	𐭄	𐤄
<i>waw</i>	𐤅	𐤅	𐭅	𐭅	𐤅
<i>zayin</i>	𐤆	𐤆	𐭆	𐭆	𐤆
<i>heth</i>	𐤇	𐤇	𐭇	𐭇	𐤇
<i>teth</i>	𐤈	𐤈	𐭈	𐭈	𐤈
<i>yodh</i>	𐤉	𐤉	𐭉	𐭉	𐤉
<i>kaph</i>	𐤊	𐤊	𐭊	𐭊	𐤊
<i>lamedh</i>	𐤋	𐤋	𐭋	𐭋	𐤋
<i>mem</i>	𐤌	𐤌	𐭌	𐭌	𐤌
<i>nun</i>	𐤍	𐤍	𐭍	𐭍	𐤍
<i>samekh</i>	𐤎	𐤎	𐭎	𐭎	𐤎
<i>ayin</i>	𐤏	𐤏	(2)	𐭏	𐤏
<i>pe</i>	𐤐	𐤐	𐭐	𐭐	𐤐
<i>sadhe</i>	𐤑	𐤑	𐭑	𐭑	𐤑
<i>qoph</i>	𐤒	𐤒	(𐭒)	𐭒	𐤒
<i>resh</i>	𐤓	𐤓	(2)	𐭓	𐤓
<i>shin</i>	𐤔	𐤔	𐭔	𐭔	𐤔
<i>taw</i>	𐤕	𐤕	𐭕	𐭕	𐤕

Table 1: Comparison of Elymaic, Mandaic, Inscriptional Parthian, and Aramaic. Mandaic letters have unique names that differ from Aramaic names. Parenthesis indicate that a letter has been unified with another in the respective encoding. In Inscriptional Pahlavi, *ayin* and *resh* are unified with *waw*, and *qoph* with *mem*.

VALEUR	MONNAIES DE L'ÉLYMAÏDE			HADJI- ABAD		PAPYRUS ARAMÉENS	ARAMÉEN (époque perse)	MONNAIES PERSÉPOLITAINES	DRACHMES ARSACIDES	MANDÉEN	ESTRANGHÉLO *
	ORODE I ET ORODE II (petit module) CHALDÉO-PEHLVIES	ORODE I ET ORODE II (grand module) et monnaies postérieures MIXTES	BARBARES	CHALDÉO-FEHLVI	FEHLVI-SASSANIDE						
א a	𐤀 𐤁 𐤂 𐤃 𐤄 𐤅	𐤆 𐤇	𐤈 𐤉	𐤊 𐤋	𐤌 𐤍	𐤎	𐤏	𐤐	𐤑	𐤒	𐤓
ב b	𐤔 𐤕 𐤖	𐤗 𐤘 𐤙 𐤚	𐤛 𐤜	𐤝 𐤞	𐤟 𐤠	𐤡	𐤢	𐤣	𐤤	𐤥	𐤦
ג g				𐤧 𐤨	𐤩 𐤪	𐤫	𐤬		𐤭 𐤮	𐤯	𐤰
ד d	𐤲 𐤳 𐤴 𐤵 𐤶 𐤷	𐤸 𐤹 𐤺 𐤻 𐤼 𐤽	𐤾	𐤿 𐥀	𐥁 𐥂	𐥃	𐥄	𐥅	𐥆 𐥇	𐥈	𐥉
ה h		𐥊 𐥋 𐥌		𐥍 𐥎	𐥏 𐥐	𐥑	𐥒 𐥓	𐥔		𐥕	𐥖
ו u	𐥗 𐥘 𐥙 𐥚	𐥛 𐥜 𐥝	𐥞 𐥟	𐥠 𐥡	𐥢 𐥣	𐥤	𐥥	𐥦	𐥧	𐥨	𐥩
ז z		𐥫		𐥬 𐥭	𐥮 𐥯	𐥰	𐥱			𐥲	𐥳
ח h				𐥴	𐥵	𐥶	𐥷	𐥸	𐥹 𐥺	𐥻	𐥼
ט t						𐥾	𐥿			𐦀	𐦁
י i	𐦂 𐦃 𐦄 𐦅	𐦆 𐦇		𐦈 𐦉	𐦊 𐦋	𐦌	𐦍	𐦎	𐦏	𐦐	𐦑
כ k	𐦒 𐦓 𐦔 𐦕 𐦖	𐦗 𐦘 𐦙 𐦚 𐦛	𐦜 𐦝	𐦞 𐦟	𐦠 𐦡	𐦢	𐦣	𐦤	𐦥 𐦦	𐦧	𐦨
ל l	𐦪 𐦫 𐦬	𐦭 𐦮 𐦯 𐦰	𐦱 𐦲	𐦳 𐦴	𐦵 𐦶	𐦷	𐦸	𐦹	𐦺 𐦻	𐦼	𐦽
מ m	𐦿 𐧀 𐧁 𐧂	𐧃 𐧄	𐧅	𐧆 𐧇	𐧈 𐧉	𐧊	𐧋	𐧌	𐧍 𐧎	𐧏	𐧐
נ n		𐧑 𐧒 𐧓		𐧔 𐧕	𐧖 𐧗	𐧘	𐧙			𐧚	𐧛
ס s				𐧜 𐧝	𐧞 𐧟	𐧠	𐧡			𐧢	𐧣
ע e						𐧤	𐧥			𐧦	𐧧
פ p		𐧨 𐧩		𐧪 𐧫	𐧬 𐧭	𐧮	𐧯	𐧰	𐧱	𐧲	𐧳
צ c				𐧴 𐧵	𐧶 𐧷	𐧸	𐧹			𐧺	𐧻
ק q				𐧼 𐧽	𐧾 𐧿	𐨀	𐨁			𐨂	𐨃
ר r	𐨄 𐨅 𐨆 𐨇 𐨈	𐨉 𐨊 𐨋		𐨌 𐨍	𐨎 𐨏	𐨐	𐨑	𐨒		𐨓	𐨔
ש s	𐨖 𐨗 𐨘	𐨙		𐨚 𐨛	𐨜 𐨝	𐨞	𐨟	𐨠	𐨡	𐨢	𐨣
ת t				𐨞 𐨟	𐨠 𐨡	𐨢	𐨣	𐨤	𐨥 𐨦	𐨧	𐨨

Figure 2: Comparison of script styles on Elymaean coins (from Allotte de la Fuye 1905: 53).

	3rd c. B.C. Aśoka inscr.	Elymaic	Chara- cenian	Mandaic		Parallels	3rd c. B.C. (Egypt)	Nabataean		
				book- hand	cursive*			early	monu- mental	cursive
a	𐤀 𐤁	𐤀 𐤁	𐤀	𐤀 𐤁	𐤀 𐤁	𐤀 ¹ 𐤀 ² 𐤀 ³	𐤀	𐤀	𐤀	𐤀
b	𐤂 𐤃	𐤂 𐤃	𐤂 (1)	𐤂	𐤂		𐤂	𐤂	𐤂	𐤂
g	𐤄	𐤄	𐤄 (2)	𐤄	𐤄	𐤄 ⁴	𐤄	𐤄	𐤄	𐤄
d	𐤅 𐤆	𐤅 𐤆	𐤅 (3)	𐤅	𐤅		𐤅	𐤅	𐤅	𐤅
h	𐤇	𐤇		𐤇	𐤇		𐤇	𐤇	𐤇	𐤇
w	𐤈	𐤈		𐤈	𐤈		𐤈	𐤈	𐤈	𐤈
z	𐤉	𐤉		𐤉	𐤉		𐤉	𐤉	𐤉	𐤉
zy>d		𐤊 𐤋		𐤊 𐤋	𐤊 𐤋					
h	𐤌			𐤌	𐤌	𐤌 ^{4a}	𐤌	𐤌	𐤌	𐤌
t	𐤍		𐤍 (1)	𐤍	𐤍		𐤍	𐤍	𐤍	𐤍
y	𐤎	𐤎	𐤎 (1)	𐤎	𐤎		𐤎	𐤎	𐤎	𐤎
k	𐤏 𐤐	𐤏 𐤐	𐤏	𐤏	𐤏		𐤏	𐤏	𐤏	𐤏
l	𐤑 𐤒	𐤑 𐤒	𐤑	𐤑	𐤑		𐤑	𐤑	𐤑	𐤑
m	𐤓 𐤔	𐤓 𐤔	𐤓	𐤓	𐤓	𐤓 ⁴	𐤓	𐤓	𐤓	𐤓
n	𐤕 𐤖	𐤕 𐤖	𐤕	𐤕	𐤕		𐤕	𐤕	𐤕	𐤕
s	𐤗	𐤗	𐤗	𐤗	𐤗	𐤗 ⁴	𐤗	𐤗	𐤗	𐤗
e	𐤘	𐤘	𐤘 (1)	𐤘	𐤘		𐤘	𐤘	𐤘	𐤘
p	𐤙 𐤚	𐤙 𐤚		𐤙	𐤙		𐤙	𐤙	𐤙	𐤙
f	𐤛 𐤜	𐤛 𐤜		𐤛	𐤛		𐤛	𐤛	𐤛	𐤛
q	𐤝	𐤝	𐤝	𐤝	𐤝	𐤝 ⁴	𐤝	𐤝	𐤝	𐤝
r	𐤞 𐤟	𐤞 𐤟	𐤞 (1)	𐤞	𐤞		𐤞	𐤞	𐤞	𐤞
s	𐤠	𐤠	𐤠 (1)	𐤠	𐤠	𐤠 ^{4a} 𐤠 ⁴	𐤠	𐤠	𐤠	𐤠
t	𐤡	𐤡	𐤡	𐤡	𐤡		𐤡	𐤡	𐤡	𐤡

Fig. 119. Development of the South Mesopotamian scripts (in comparison with Nabataean). Key to the parallels: (1) a bulla from Babylonia; (2) the Nash papyrus; (3) Hatra; (4) the Birecik inscription, Syriac of 6 A.D.; (4a) Syriac inscription of 165 A.D. from Samatar Harabesi (A raised x marks final forms)

Figure 3: Comparison of Elymaic, Mandaic, Nabataean, and other scripts (from Naveh 1997: 137).

[illegible]

Figure 4: Comparison of Aramaic and Parthian with Elymaic letters used on coins and the inscriptions at Tang-i Sarvak (from Henning 1952: 168).

	TANG-I SARVAK	SHĪMBĀR				
		No. I	No. II	No. III	No. IV	No. V
א	𐤀 𐤁	𐤀 𐤁	𐤀 𐤁	𐤀 𐤁	𐤀 𐤁	𐤀 𐤁
ב	𐤂 𐤃	𐤂 𐤃	𐤂 𐤃	𐤂 𐤃	𐤂 𐤃	𐤂 𐤃
ג	𐤄	𐤄				
ד	𐤅 𐤆				𐤅 𐤆	𐤅 𐤆
ה	𐤇 𐤈	𐤇	𐤈		𐤇 𐤈	𐤇 𐤈
ו	𐤉 𐤊	𐤉	𐤊	𐤉 𐤊	𐤉 𐤊	𐤉 𐤊
ז	𐤋 𐤌 𐤍	𐤋	𐤌	𐤋	𐤋 𐤌	𐤋 𐤌
ח	𐤎					
ט	𐤏			𐤏		
י	𐤐	𐤐	𐤐	𐤐	𐤐	𐤐
כ	𐤑 𐤒	𐤑	𐤒	𐤑 𐤒	𐤑 𐤒	𐤑 𐤒
ל	𐤓					
מ	𐤔 𐤕		𐤔 𐤕		𐤔 𐤕	
נ	𐤖 𐤗				𐤖 𐤗	
ס	𐤘 𐤙				𐤘 𐤙	
ע	𐤚 𐤛				𐤚 𐤛	
פ	𐤜 𐤝			𐤜 𐤝	𐤜 𐤝	
צ	𐤞 𐤟	𐤞		𐤞	𐤞	
ק	𐤠					
ר	𐤡 𐤢	𐤡	𐤢	𐤡 𐤢	𐤡 𐤢	𐤡 𐤢
ש	𐤣 𐤤	𐤣	𐤤	𐤣 𐤤	𐤣 𐤤	𐤣 𐤤
ת	𐤥 𐤦					

FIG. 1. The script of the Shīmbār inscriptions. The column showing the Tang-i Sarvak forms is based on W. B. Henning's table in *Asia Major*, NS, II, 2, 1952, 168.

Figure 5: Comparison of Elymaic letters in the inscriptions at Tang-e Sarvak and Tang-e Butan (from Bivar and Shaked 1964: 270).

	Tang-i Sarvak	Shimbar	Lead amulet	Magic bowls	Characene coin legends	Classical Mandaic	Syriac inscriptions	Syriac bowls	Palmyrene		Nabataean	
									lapidary	cursive	lapidary	cursive
א	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ
ב	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ
ג	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ
ד	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ
ה	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ
ו	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ
ז	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ
ח	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ
ט	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ
י	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ
כ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ
ל	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ
מ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ
נ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ
ס	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ
ע	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ
פ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ
צ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ
ק	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ
ר	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ
ש	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ
ת	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ

The columns showing the Tang-i Sarvak and Shimbar forms are based on Bivar and Shaked's table in *B.S.O.A.S.* xxvii (1964), 270; the Mandaic and Syriac bowl texts on Montgomery's table in *Aramaic Incantation Texts from Nippur* (1913), plates xxxix and xl, and the Syriac inscription of the second century A.D. on Segal's table in *B.S.O.A.S.* xvi (1954), 32.

Figure 6: Comparison of Elymaean and other scripts (from Coxon 1970: 21).

TABLE 1. Comparison of Elymaic, Characenean, Parthian, and Mandaic Scripts

Hebrew	Aramaic Values	Elymaic (Tang-e Sarvak)	Elymaic (Shimbār)	Characene Coins	Other Forms	Iranian Values	Nisa Ostraca	Parthian Inscriptions	Mandaic Values	Book Hand	Lead Amulets	Incantation Bowls
א	א	א	א	א	א	א	א	א	א	א	א	א
ב	ב	ב	ב	ב	ב	ב	ב	ב	ב	ב	ב	ב
ג	ג	ג	ג	ג	ג	ג	ג	ג	ג	ג	ג	ג
ד	ד	ד	ד	ד	ד	ד	ד	ד	ד	ד	ד	ד
ה	ה	ה	ה	ה	ה	ה	ה	ה	ה	ה	ה	ה
ו	ו	ו	ו	ו	ו	ו	ו	ו	ו	ו	ו	ו
ז	ז	ז	ז	ז	ז	ז	ז	ז	ז	ז	ז	ז
ח	ח	ח	ח	ח	ח	ח	ח	ח	ח	ח	ח	ח
ט	ט	ט	ט	ט	ט	ט	ט	ט	ט	ט	ט	ט
י	י	י	י	י	י	י	י	י	י	י	י	י
כ	כ	כ	כ	כ	כ	כ	כ	כ	כ	כ	כ	כ
ל	ל	ל	ל	ל	ל	ל	ל	ל	ל	ל	ל	ל
מ	מ	מ	מ	מ	מ	מ	מ	מ	מ	מ	מ	מ
נ	נ	נ	נ	נ	נ	נ	נ	נ	נ	נ	נ	נ
ס	ס	ס	ס	ס	ס	ס	ס	ס	ס	ס	ס	ס
ע	ע	ע	ע	ע	ע	ע	ע	ע	ע	ע	ע	ע
פ	פ	פ	פ	פ	פ	פ	פ	פ	פ	פ	פ	פ
צ	צ	צ	צ	צ	צ	צ	צ	צ	צ	צ	צ	צ
ק	ק	ק	ק	ק	ק	ק	ק	ק	ק	ק	ק	ק
ר	ר	ר	ר	ר	ר	ר	ר	ר	ר	ר	ר	ר
ש	ש	ש	ש	ש	ש	ש	ש	ש	ש	ש	ש	ש
ת	ת	ת	ת	ת	ת	ת	ת	ת	ת	ת	ת	ת

Sources: The Elymaic forms from Tang-e Sarvak and Shimbār forms have been adapted from Bivar and Shaked 1964: 270; the Characene coin legends are from Coxon 1970: 21; other Aramaic forms cited above are from Naveh 1997: 142 (a = Hatra, b = Armazi, c = Hartra, d = Hassan-Kef, e = Garni); the forms from the Nisa ostraca and the Parthian inscriptions are from Skarvø 1996: 518; the Mandaic book hand is based on Macuch and Drower 1963: xii; the forms from the lead amulets are based on Coxon 1970: 21, and the two sets of scripts from the incantation bowls are taken from bowl 079M (BM 117872) and 087M (BM 91779), respectively, in Segal and Hunter 2000: 237.

Figure 7: Comparison of Mandaic, Elymaic, and related scripts (Häberl 2006 : 57).

“King Kamnaskires Orodes, son of King Orodes”

17



ܠܠܐܢܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܝܪܝܐ

wrwd MLK' BRY wrwd
King Orodes, Son of Orodes

Figure 9: Copper alloy coin of Orodes II, early 2nd to mid 2nd century CE. 16mm, 3.89g. British Museum. Registration number: 1900,0405.94. Department of Coins and Medals catalogue number: GC28p262.17.



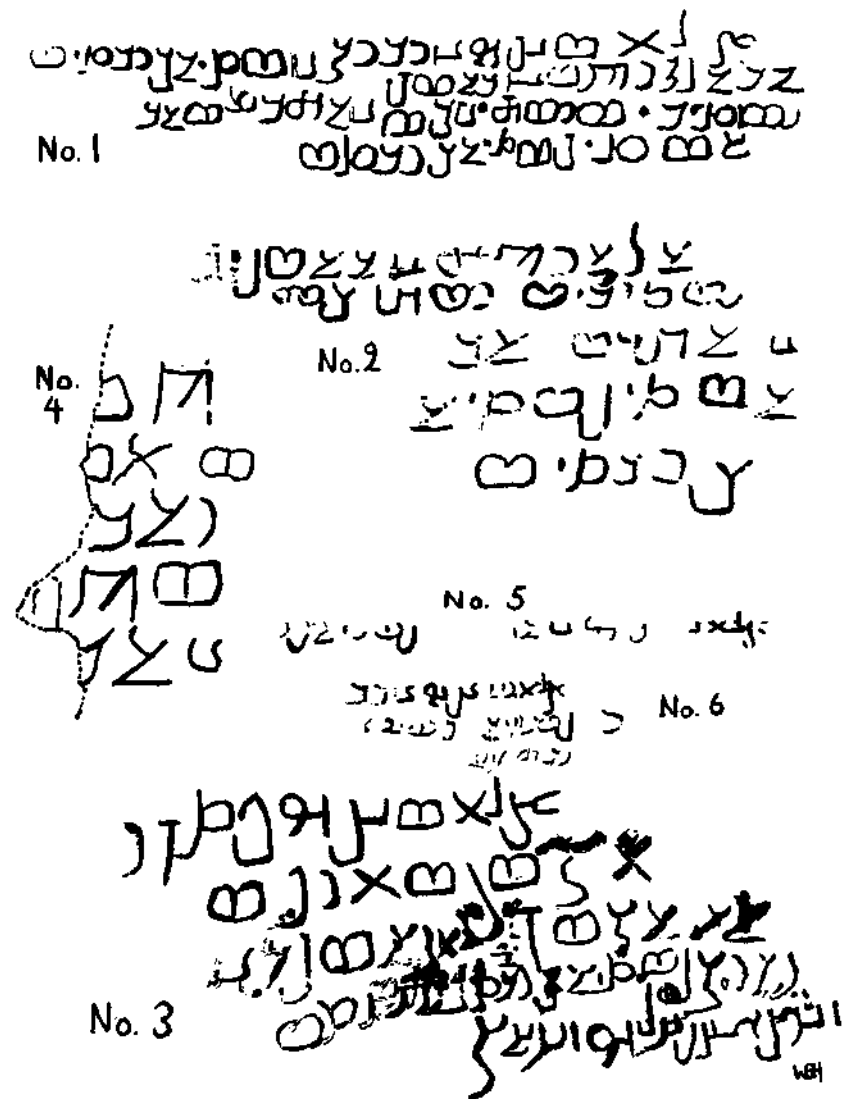
ܠܠܐܢܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܝܪܝܐ

knmkyr wrwd MLK'
King Kamnaskires Orodes

Figure 10: Copper alloy coin of Kamnaskires Orodes, early 2nd to mid 2nd century CE. 16mm, 3.73g. British Museum. Registration number: 1909,0205.114. Department of Coins and Medals catalogue number: GC28p267.64.

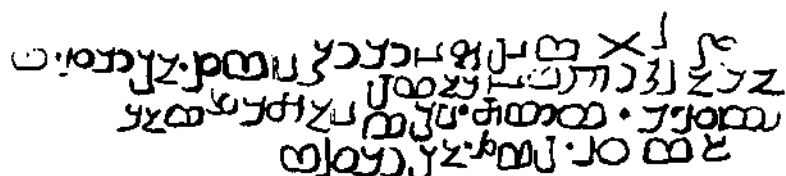
ORODE II - Type Aa			
41	URUD MaLKA BaRI URUD	URUD MaLKA BaRI URUD	2
42			3
43			2
ORODE II - Type Ad			
48	URUD MaLKA BaRI URUD	URUD MaLKA BaRI URUD	6
49			1
50			3
51			4
52			5
53			6
54			7
55			8
57			9
60			10
			11
			12
			13
			14
			15
			16
58			7
59			8
			3
Fig. 5			9
56			10
			2
Fig. 11			11
Fig. 12			2
ORODE II - Type Bb			
83	URUD MaLKA BaRI URUD	URUD MaLKA BaRI URUD	26
85			2
87			3
88			28
89			2
84			27
73	URUD MaLKA BaRI URUD	URUD MaLKA BaRI URUD	25
74	KU MaSKIR URUD MaLKA	KU MaSKIR URUD MaLKA	22
75			2
76			3
77			4
78			23
79			2
80			3
81			24
82			2

Figure 11: Legends on Elymais coins (from Allotte de la Fuye 1905: 72).



The Elymaean Inscriptions of Tang-i Sarvak

Figure 12: Renderings of Elymaic inscriptions at Tang-i Sarvak made by W. B. Henning (1952: 170). An analysis of inscriptions 1–3 is provided in the following figures.



ܠܡܐ ܕܢܗܝܢ ܕܝܠܕܝܢ ܕܝܠܕܝܢ
 ܕܝܠܕܝܢ ܕܝܠܕܝܢ ܕܝܠܕܝܢ
 ܕܝܠܕܝܢ ܕܝܠܕܝܢ ܕܝܠܕܝܢ
 ܕܝܠܕܝܢ ܕܝܠܕܝܢ ܕܝܠܕܝܢ

ṣlm ʾ znh zy wrwd n ʾ syb kwrsy ʾ
 br bldwš zy rb ʾ ny
 w ʾ syry ʾ w ʾ tytk ʾ zy btr ʾ ʾ br
 b ʾ sy n ʾ syb kwrs ʾ

ṣalmā denā dī Worōd nāseḅ korsiyā
 ḅar Bēldōšā(?) dī rabbān
 wa-ʾAsīryā wa-ʾAttyōkā dī ḅa-tar ʾ ā ḅar
 Bāsī nāseḅ kors(iy)ā

This image is the one of Worod, holder of the throne,
 the son of Beldosa(?), who is (my) lord,
 and Asirya(?) and Antiochus, who is at the gate,
 the son of Basi, holder of the throne.

Figure 13: Tang-i Sarvak inscription #1. Facsimile from Henning (1952: 170); transliteration, transcription, and translation from Gzella (2008: 113).

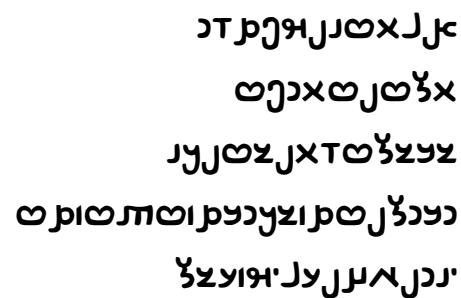
ܒܠܕܘܫ ܙܝ ܪܒ ܢܝ
 ܠܘܫܝܪܝܐ ܠܘܫܝܬܝܩܝܐ
 ܙܝ ܒܬܪ ܒܪ
 ܒܝܫܝܢܝܒ ܠܠܝܠܝܐ

bldwš zy rb'ny
 w'syry' w'tytk'
 zy btr' br
 b'sy n'syb kwrs'

Bēldōšā(?) dī rabbān
 wa-'Asīryā wa-'Attyōkā
 dī ḥa-tar(')ā ḥar
 Bāsī nāseḥ korsiyā

Bēldōšā(?), who is (my) lord,
 and Asīryā(?) and Antiochus,
 who is at the gate, the son
 of Bāsī, holder of the throne.

Figure 14: Tang-i Sarvak inscription #2. Facsimile from Henning (1952: 170); transliteration, transcription, and translation from Gzella (2008: 114).



zayūn gāḥen ʿalēh(?) yeʿbed

23

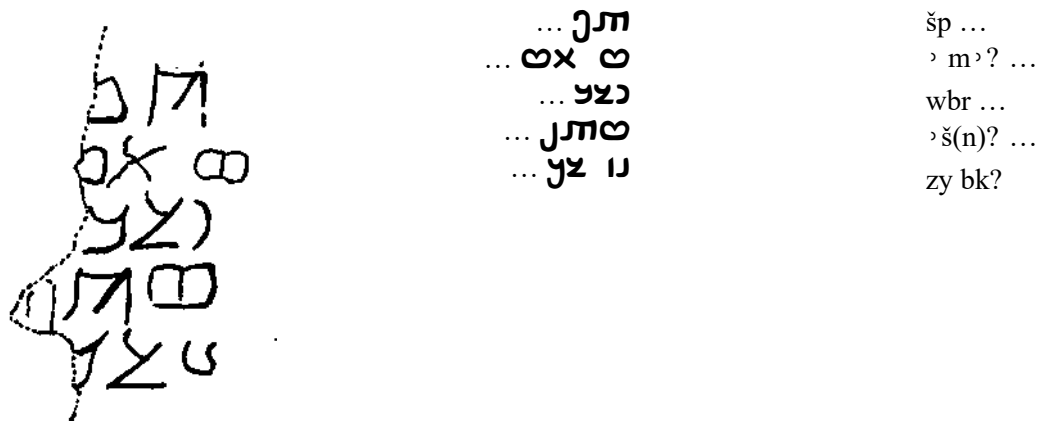


Figure 16: Tang-i Sarvak inscription #4 (Henning 1952: 170).

𐭪𐭫𐭬𐭭𐭮𐭯 𐭪𐭫𐭬𐭭𐭮𐭯 𐭪𐭫𐭬𐭭𐭮𐭯

[𐭪𐭫𐭬𐭭𐭮𐭯] 𐭪𐭫𐭬𐭭𐭮𐭯 ... (𐭪𐭫) 𐭪𐭫𐭬𐭭𐭮𐭯 (𐭪𐭫𐭬𐭭𐭮𐭯) 𐭪𐭫𐭬𐭭𐭮𐭯

šlm(ʾ) znh zy (br?) ... nʾ[s]yb kw[rsyʾ]

“This is the image of ... assuming the throne.”

Figure 17: Tang-i Sarvak inscription #5 (Henning 1952: 170).

𐭪𐭫𐭬𐭭𐭮𐭯 𐭪𐭫𐭬𐭭𐭮𐭯 𐭪𐭫𐭬𐭭𐭮𐭯

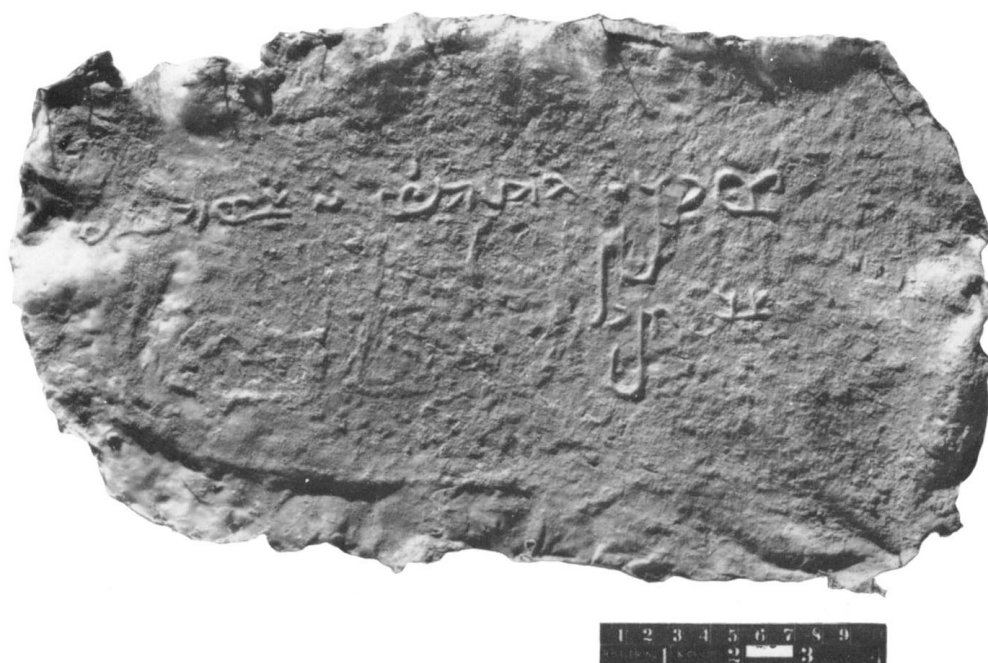
𐭪𐭫𐭬𐭭𐭮𐭯 𐭪𐭫𐭬𐭭𐭮𐭯 𐭪𐭫𐭬𐭭𐭮𐭯

...

šlm(ʾ) znh zy (br?) ... nʾ[s]yb kw[rsyʾ] ...

“This is the image of Orodes assuming the throne.”

Figure 18: Tang-i Sarvak inscription #6 (Henning 1952: 170).



TANG-I BUTĀN, INSCRIPTION NO. I

𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥𐭥 ~ 𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥𐭥 . 𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥𐭥
𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥𐭥 𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥𐭥

𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥𐭥 𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥𐭥
𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥𐭥

ṛ wky gšyšṛ zy bṛ šybh
br ṣwl

Figure 19: Tang-i Butan inscription #1 (Bivar and Shaked 1964: 273 & plate III).



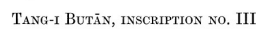
TANG-I BUTĀN, INSCRIPTION NO. II

אברהם יצחק

תצטרכו לו
צטתוצא צו תאכא

šrwkw zy
b'šybh br šmwmm

Figure 20: Tang-i Butan inscription #2 (Bivar and Shaked 1964: 273 & plate IV).



• ማንኛውም የጥራት ችግር
• ንጹህ ደረጃ ላይ

šptw štwr' zy
bl'rw br(y)? 'wky

Figure 21: Tang-i Butan inscription #3 (Bivar and Shaked 1964: 274 & plate V).



TANG-I BUTĀN, INSCRIPTION NO. IV

𐭪𐭥𐭥𐭥
𐭪𐭥𐭥𐭥
𐭪𐭥𐭥𐭥
𐭪𐭥𐭥𐭥

𐭪𐭥𐭥𐭥
𐭪𐭥𐭥𐭥
𐭪𐭥𐭥𐭥
𐭪𐭥𐭥𐭥
𐭪𐭥𐭥𐭥

šlmy'
'lh zy 'hyd
šptw zy
š'š mn
'yrsy

Figure 22: Tang-i Butan inscription #4 (Bivar and Shaked 1964: 275 & plate VI).



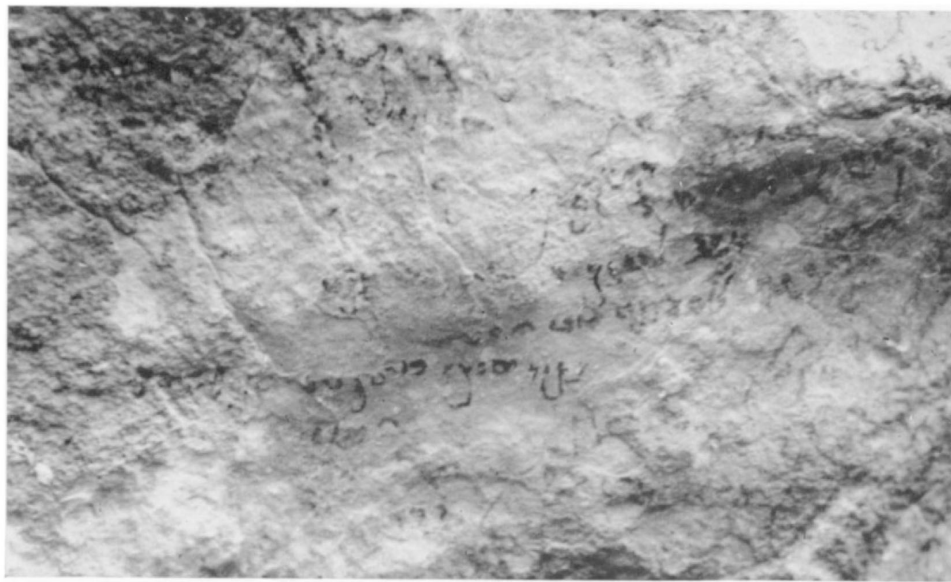
TANG-I BUTĀN, INSCRIPTION NO. V

𐤀𐤓𐤕𐤕𐤕
𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕

𐤕𐤕𐤕 𐤕𐤕𐤕
𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕

wrwd rb'
zy b' šybh

Figure 23: Tang-i Butan inscription #5 (Bivar and Shaked 1964: 276 & plate VII).



ELYMAEAN *GRAFFITO* AT TANG-I CHILAU

Figure 24: Carbon ink graffiti in the Elymaean script at Tang-i Chilau (Bivar and Shaked 1964: plate XI).



ELYMAEAN GRAFFITO AT TANG-I CHILAU

Figure 25: Carbon ink graffiti in the Elymaean script at Tang-i Chilau (Bivar and Shaked 1964: plate XII).



ELYMAEAN GRAFFITO AT TANG-I CHILAU

Figure 26: Carbon ink graffiti in the Elymaean script at Tang-i Chilau (Bivar and Shaked 1964: XIII).