To: UTC
From: Deborah Anderson, Script Encoding Initiative, UC Berkeley
Date: 29 July 2007
RE: Comments in support of encoding Imperial Aramaic (proposal L2/07-197R2)

Below are four messages from various specialists who are in support of encoding Imperial Aramaic.

1. --------------------------- Original Message ---------------------------
Subject: Re: Review Imperial Aramaic proposal?
From: "Schniedewind William" <williams@humnet.ucla.edu>
Date: Wed, July 4, 2007 12:50 pm
To: dwanders@berkeley.edu

Dear Deborah,

I am the Kershaw Chair of Ancient Eastern Mediterranean Studies and Professor of Biblical Studies & Northwest Semitic Languages at UCLA. I have taught classes on Old Aramaic, paleography, and ancient inscriptions.

I have reviewed the Imperial Aramaic proposal, document N3273R by Michael Everson, and found it to be fine. If a font were to be created using such an encoding, I would use it for my courses in ancient inscriptions and Aramaic language. One comment: The glyphs reflect the Elephantine cursive, though this is less known than a lapidary script (which is similar to paleo-Hebrew and Phoenician). The Elephantine script does represent one of the major corpuses of Imperial Aramaic and works fine the purposes of the project.

I do hope this project will allow me to use the fonts on a Macintosh computer. I also will be interested in a flexible keyboard mapping. You should be aware of the work of the Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon, which is an electronic database. I hope that the font will be easily compatible with databases like this.

Sincerely,
Prof. William Schniedewind

William M. Schniedewind
Kershaw Chair of Ancient Eastern Mediterranean Studies Professor, Biblical Studies & NWS Languages NELC - UCLA 415 Portola Court, 378 Humanities Building MC 151105 Los Angeles, CA 90095-1511 http://www.nelc.ucla.edu/Faculty/Schniedewind.htm

2. -----Original Message-----
 From: Jost Gippert [gippert@em.uni-frankfurt.de]

Sent: Thursday, July 19, 2007 1:38 AM
To: dwanders@sonic.net
Subject: Unicode Encoding of Imperial Aramaic

Dear colleague,

I strongly support the attempt to provide an encoding scheme for the
Imperial Aramaic script. As a specialist in ancient languages of the
Near East, I have for long been impeded in preparing adequate editions
of Aramaic texts (mostly inscriptions) by the non-existence of
code-points relating to that script. As other scholars, I have been
forced to use either the Hebrew (Square) script or Roman
transliterations to render Aramaic texts; both transliterations are
inadequate for this purpose, esp. in teaching, as the awkward rendering
in my preliminary e-edition of the so-called Armazi bilingua (1st c.
A.D.) shows (cf. http://armazi.uni-frankfurt.de/armazibl.htm#bilingva).
The existence of an adequate set of code-points is also necessary for
the purpose of investigating and documenting the historical development
of several Near Eastern script systems such as the Middle Iranian
(Pahlavi, Parthian) and Avestan scripts; cf. the table in
http://titus.fkidg1.uni-frankfurt.de/personal/jg/unicode/table5.pdf
which cannot be rendered in any way using unique code-points for the
scripts involved.

With kind regards,
J.G.
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3. Letter from Annalisa Azzoni, Assistant Professor of Hebrew Bible/Near Eastern
Culture at the Divinity School, Vanderbilt University; author of forthcoming book,
Aramaic Legal Texts from the Neo-Assyrian to the Roman Empire; teaches a seminar on
Historical Aramaic Grammar at Vanderbilt
--------------------------- Original Message ---------------------------
Subject: Re: Aramaic : Assistance on Unicode proposal?
From: "Annalisa Azzoni" <annalisa.azzoni@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, July 5, 2007 11:26 am
To: "dwanders@berkeley.edu" <dwanders@berkeley.edu>

Dear Deborah,

I did review the updated proposal and here below are my comments. I think that it would be useful to have unicode font for Imperial Aramaic script. The script in the proposal is maybe a little to "calligraphic" for my taste, but unquestionably understandable to anybody who is familiar with the actual script. It would be very helpful, though, to have examples of sequences (maybe a page) as it is difficult for me to imagine how the signs would look next to each other. It has been my experience in the past that sign could look fine when free standing but next to one another they looked wrong (primarily due to the relative size, or the position on the line). Since you specifically asked about punctuation, I can think of at least on symbol, used as a sort of paragraph divider in one text ("The Words of Ahiqar"). I don' know whether the fact that it is used only in one text may be a reason to eliminate it, but I would like to see it it included (after all Ahiqar is one of the very few literary text of Imperial Aramaic, and possibly the best known outside of our little Aramaic world...). all the best, annalisa

4. Note from Elitzur Avraham Bar-Asher, PhD candidate in Semitic Philology at Harvard University, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, currently Visiting Lector at Yale University, Languages and Civilizations; has taught courses in Aramaic dialects at Yale and Harvard

 -------------------------- Original Message ---------------------------
Subject: Re: Review Imperial Aramaic proposal?
From: "Elitzur Avraham Bar-Asher" <barasher@fas.harvard.edu>
Date: Mon, July 23, 2007 2:03 am
To: dwanders@berkeley.edu

Hi,
As far as I can see everything seems fine.
>1. Is the introductory text accurate?
Yep

>2. Are the names of the characters (listed on p. 8) acceptable?
yes - these are the names that are common (there are also some variations)

>3. Are the glyphs on the code-chart on p. 8 representative? (The glyphs
>need only be "representative"; variants can be handled by individual
>fonts.)

>4. Would you ever use an "Imperial Aramaic" font based on this, if it
>were available (i.e., in pedagogical materials)?
yes.
Best, Elitzur