ISO/IEC JTC1/SC2/WG2 N3339
L2/07-288
2007-08-25

Universal Multiple-Octet Coded Character Set
International Organization for Standardization
Organisation Internationale de Normalisation
Международная организация по стандартизации

Doc Type: **Working Group Document**
Title: **Proposal for encoding the Imperial Aramaic script in the SMP of the UCS**
Source: **UC Berkeley Script Encoding Initiative (Universal Scripts Project)**
Author: **Michael Everson**
Status: **Liaison Contribution**
Action: **For consideration by JTC1/SC2/WG2 and UTC**
Replaces: **N3273R2, L2/07-197R2**
Date: **2007-08-25**

This document replaces N3273R2 and L2/07-197R2. It is essentially the same document, but it includes a punctuation character which was not available to the author when the previous document was published. See §3 and Figures 17 and 18.

1. Background. The Imperial Aramaic script is the head of a rather complex family of scripts. It is named from the use of Aramaic as the language of regional and supraregional correspondance in the Persian Empire though, in fact, the language was in use in this function already before that. The practice continued after the demise of the Persian Empire and was the starting-point for the writing-systems of most of the Middle Iranian languages, namely Inscriptional Parthian, Inscriptional Pahlavi, Psalter Pahlavi, Book Pahlavi, and Avestan. Imperial Aramaic has many other descendents, including Mongolian and possibly Brahmi.

The term "Imperial Aramaic" refers both to a script and to a language. As a script term, Imperial Aramaic refers to the writing system in use in the Neo-Assyrian and Persian Empires, and was used to write Aramaic, but also other languages. There is no script code for Imperial Aramaic yet registered by ISO 15924. As a language term, Imperial Aramaic refers to a historic variety of Aramaic, as spoken and written during the period roughly from 600 BCE to 200 BCE. The Imperial Aramaic language has been given the ISO 639 language code in "arc".

The earliest Aramaic language texts were written in the Early Aramaic alphabet, one of the forms of early Western Semitic writing or old Canaanite script, which also included the Phoenician alphabet of the Phoenicians. This complex of early Western Semitic writing is encompassed in the UCS, encoded in the Phoenician block, U+10900..U+1091F. The Aramaeans had adopted this Canaanite or Phoenician form of script during the 11th or 10th century BCE. By the mid-8th century BCE the form of the script had begun to diverge, and by the end of that century, the cursive form used by the Aramaeans had been standardized as what later became the official script of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. It remained in use, through succeeding empires, for at least another four centuries.

Imperial Aramaic is an historic script, and as for many other historic scripts, which often saw continuous change in use over periods of hundreds or thousands of years, its delineation as a script is somewhat problematic. This issue is particularly acute for historic Semitic scripts, which share basically identical repertoires of letters, which are historically related to each other, and which were used to write closely related Semitic languages. In the UCS, the Imperial Aramaic script is intended for the representation of

the Imperial inscriptions and hands script which stands between its mother, the Canaanite (or Phoenician) group of script forms, and its many daughters, only one of which is Square Hebrew.

Some scholars consistently transliterate the texts written in the Imperial Aramaic script into Square Hebrew (see Figure 3). In such contexts, because the relationship between the Imperial Aramaic letters and Square Hebrew letters is one-to-one and quite regular, the transliteration is conceived of as simply a font change. Other scholars of Aramaic transliterate texts into Latin. The encoding of the Imperial Aramaic script does not invalidate such scholarly practice; it is simply intended to make it possible to represent Imperial Aramaic and similar textual materials directly in the historic script, rather than as specialized font displays of transliterations in modern Square Hebrew. (See Figure 16.)

2. Processing. Imperial Aramaic is an alphabetic script written right-to-left, in *scriptio continua* or with spaces between words.

3. Punctuation and numbers. One script-specific punctuation mark is used with Imperial Aramaic, the SECTION SIGN 𐡷 used, evidently, to mark topic divisions in text. Imperial Aramaic builds up numbers out of 1, 2, 3, 10, 20, 100, 1000, and 10000. The numbers 2 𐡺 and 3 𐡻 are composed of multiples of 1 𐡹, but because in practice the numbers are clumped together as units separate from one another they are encoded as individual characters. Numbers above 4 are formed by combining 1, 2, and 3. The origin of the highest numbers has been analysed. Number 20 𐡼 is in origin two 10s 𐡽 one atop the other; number 100 𐡾 is also in origin two 10s one atop the other, with a stroke added to differentiate it from 20; number 1000 𐡿 is in origin a ligature of the letters 𐡠 and 𐡽, since 𐡀𐡠𐡽 *'lf* means 'a thousand'; number 10000 𐢀 is in origin 100 over two 10s. The numbers have right-to-left directionality. In the chart below, the third column is displayed in visual order.

1	𐡹	1 ←	11	𐡹𐡽	1 + 10 ←
2	𐡺	2 ←	12	𐡺𐡽	2 + 10 ←
3	𐡻	3 ←	13	𐡻𐡽	3 + 10 ←
4	𐡹𐡻	1 + 3 ←	14	𐡹𐡻𐡽	1 + 3 + 10 ←
5	𐡺𐡻	2 + 3 ←	15	𐡺𐡻𐡽	2 + 3 + 10 ←
6	𐡻𐡻	3 + 3 ←	16	𐡻𐡻𐡽	3 + 3 + 10 ←
7	𐡹𐡻𐡻	1 + 3 + 3 ←	17	𐡹𐡻𐡻𐡽	1 + 3 + 3 + 10 ←
8	𐡺𐡻𐡻	2 + 3 + 3 ←	18	𐡺𐡻𐡻𐡽	2 + 3 + 3 + 10 ←
9	𐡻𐡻𐡻	3 + 3 + 3 ←	19	𐡻𐡻𐡻𐡽	3 + 3 + 3 + 10 ←
10	𐡽	10 ←	100	𐡾𐡹	100 + 1 ←
20	𐡼	20 ←	200	𐡾𐡺	100 + 2 ←
30	𐡽𐡼	10 + 20 ←	300	𐡾𐡻	100 + 3 ←
40	𐡼𐡼	20 + 20 ←	400	𐡾𐡹𐡻	100 + 1 + 3 ←
50	𐡽𐡼𐡼	10 + 20 + 20 ←	500	𐡾𐡺𐡻	100 + 2 + 3 ←
60	𐡼𐡼𐡼	20 + 20 + 20 ←	600	𐡾𐡻𐡻	100 + 3 + 3 ←
70	𐡽𐡼𐡼𐡼	10 + 20 + 20 + 20 ←	700	𐡾𐡹𐡻𐡻	100 + 1 + 3 + 3 ←
80	𐡼𐡼𐡼𐡼	20 + 20 + 20 + 20 ←	800	𐡾𐡺𐡻𐡻	100 + 2 + 3 + 3 ←
90	𐡽𐡼𐡼𐡼𐡼	10 + 20 + 20 + 20 + 20 ←	900	𐡾𐡻𐡻𐡻	100 + 3 + 3 + 3 ←
3000	𐡿𐡻	1000 + 3 ←	30000	𐢀𐡻	10000 + 3 ←

4. Names and ordering. The names used for the characters here are based on the transliteration given in Driver 1976 and Rosenthal 1995. The order of the characters in the code charts is their alphabetical order.

5. Reference glyphs. The glyphs used in the code table are based on the Elephantine cursive. See Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, and 8.

6. Bibliography

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7. Unicode Character Properties

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10840;IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER ALEPH;Lo;0;R;;;;;N;;;;;
10841;IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER BETH;Lo;0;R;;;;;N;;;;;
10842;IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER GIMEL;Lo;0;R;;;;;N;;;;;
10843;IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER DALETH;Lo;0;R;;;;;N;;;;;
10844;IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER HE;Lo;0;R;;;;;N;;;;;
10845;IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER WAW;Lo;0;R;;;;;N;;;;;
10846;IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER ZAYIN;Lo;0;R;;;;;N;;;;;
10847;IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER HETH;Lo;0;R;;;;;N;;;;;
10848;IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER TETH;Lo;0;R;;;;;N;;;;;
10849;IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER YODH;Lo;0;R;;;;;N;;;;;
1084A;IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER KAPH;Lo;0;R;;;;;N;;;;;
1084B;IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER LAMEDH;Lo;0;R;;;;;N;;;;;
1084C;IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER MEM;Lo;0;R;;;;;N;;;;;
1084D;IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER NUN;Lo;0;R;;;;;N;;;;;
1084E;IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER SAMEKH;Lo;0;R;;;;;N;;;;;
1084F;IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER AYIN;Lo;0;R;;;;;N;;;;;
10850;IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER PE;Lo;0;R;;;;;N;;;;;
10851;IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER SADHE;Lo;0;R;;;;;N;;;;;
10852;IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER QOPH;Lo;0;R;;;;;N;;;;;
10853;IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER RESH;Lo;0;R;;;;;N;;;;;
10854;IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER SHIN;Lo;0;R;;;;;N;;;;;
10855;IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER TAW;Lo;0;R;;;;;N;;;;;
10858;IMPERIAL ARAMAIC NUMBER ONE;No;0;R;;;;1;N;;;;;
10859;IMPERIAL ARAMAIC NUMBER TWO;No;0;R;;;;2;N;;;;;
1085A;IMPERIAL ARAMAIC NUMBER THREE;No;0;R;;;;3;N;;;;;
1085B;IMPERIAL ARAMAIC NUMBER TEN;No;0;R;;;;10;N;;;;;
1085C;IMPERIAL ARAMAIC NUMBER TWENTY;No;0;R;;;;20;N;;;;;
1085D;IMPERIAL ARAMAIC NUMBER ONE HUNDRED;No;0;R;;;;100;N;;;;;
1085E;IMPERIAL ARAMAIC NUMBER ONE THOUSAND;No;0;R;;;;1000;N;;;;;
1085F;IMPERIAL ARAMAIC NUMBER TEN THOUSAND;No;0;R;;;;10000;N;;;;;
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8. Acknowledgements

This project was made possible in part by a grant from the U.S. National Endowment for the Humanities, which funded the Universal Scripts Project (part of the Script Encoding Initiative at UC Berkeley).

Figures

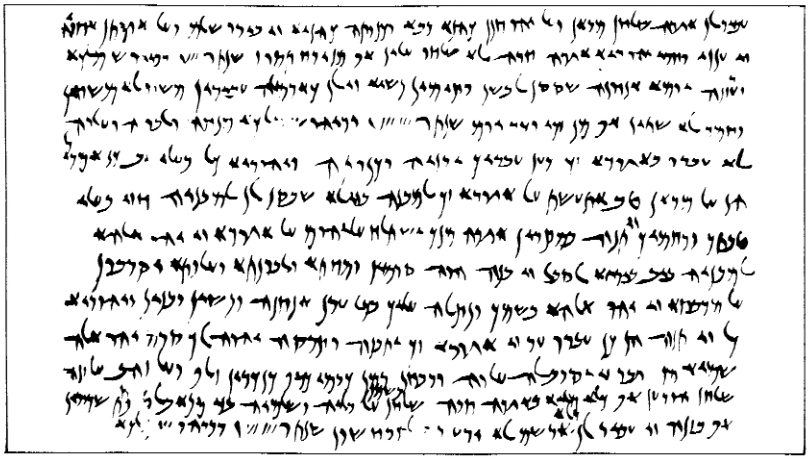


Figure 1. Petition to the governer of Judah from Elephantine, given in Naveh 1987.

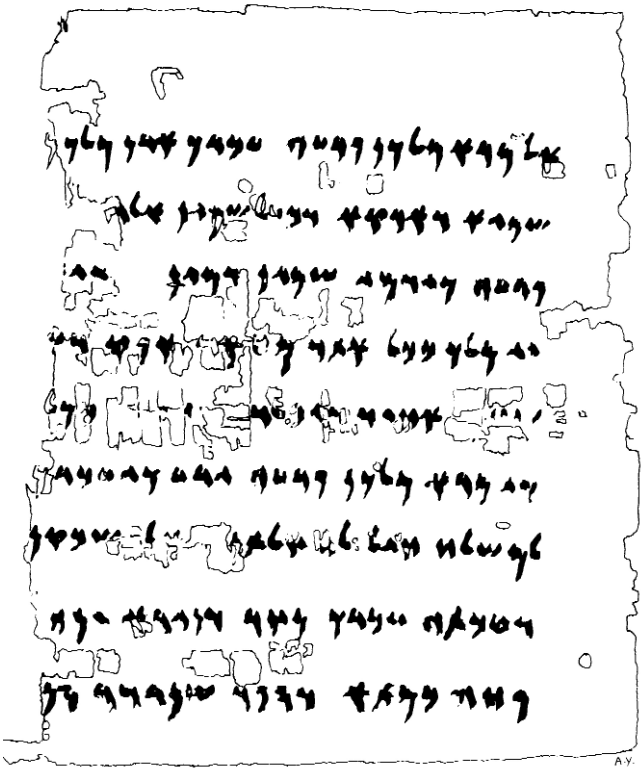


Figure 2. Letter of Adon found at Saqqarah in Egypt, given in Naveh 1987.

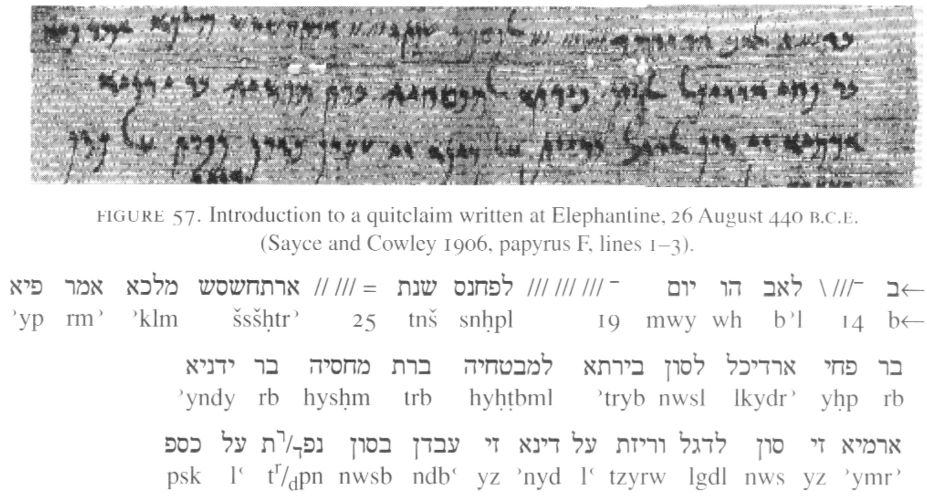


Figure 3. Imperial Aramaic text from Elephantine, dated -440-08-26 BCE, taken from Goerwitz 1996. Here the text is transliterated into Hebrew and Latin. In Imperial Aramaic, the text reads:

𐡁 𐡛𐡚𐡘 𐡋𐡀𐡁 𐡄𐡅 𐡉𐡅𐡌 𐡛𐡚𐡚𐡚 𐡔𐡍𐡕 𐡋𐡐𐡇𐡍𐡎 𐡜𐡚𐡙 𐡀𐡓𐡕𐡇𐡔𐡎𐡔 𐡌𐡋𐡊𐡀 𐡀𐡌𐡓 𐡐𐡇𐡉
𐡀𐡓𐡃𐡉𐡊𐡋 𐡋𐡎𐡅𐡍 𐡁𐡉𐡓𐡕𐡀 𐡋𐡌𐡁𐡈𐡇𐡉𐡄𐡁𐡓𐡕 𐡌𐡇𐡎𐡉𐡄 𐡁𐡓 𐡉𐡃𐡍𐡉𐡀
𐡀𐡓𐡌𐡉𐡀 𐡆𐡉 𐡎𐡅𐡍 𐡋𐡃𐡂𐡋 𐡅𐡓𐡉𐡆𐡕 𐡏𐡋 𐡃𐡉𐡍𐡀 𐡆𐡉 𐡏𐡁𐡃𐡍 𐡁𐡎𐡅𐡍 𐡍𐡐𐡕 𐡏𐡋 𐡊𐡎𐡐

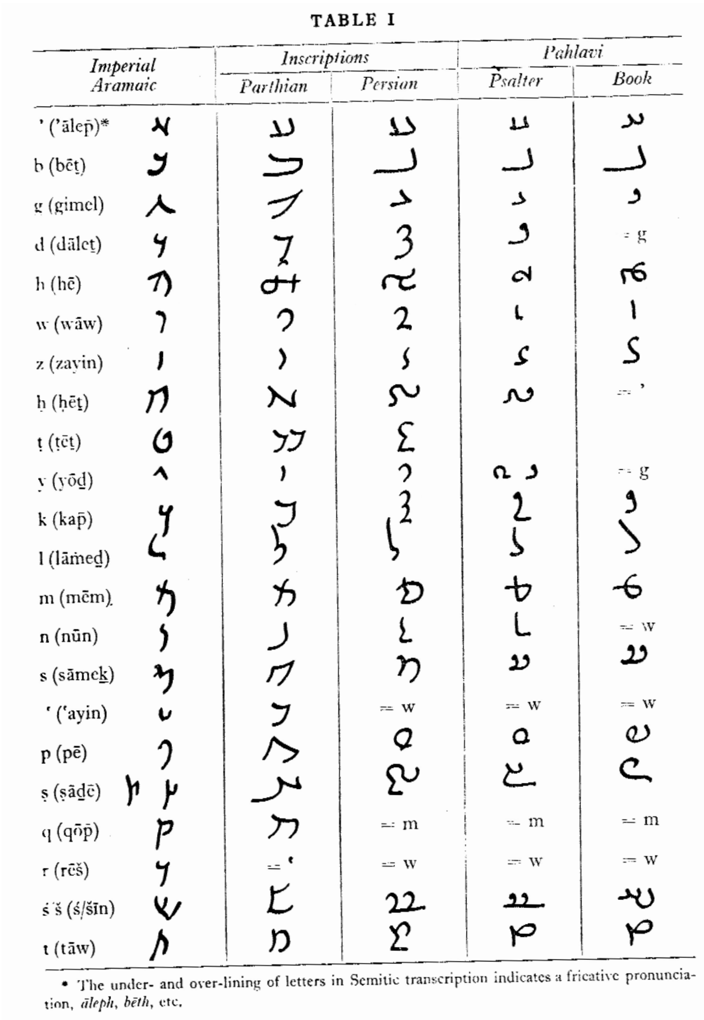


Figure 4. Table showing Imperial Aramaic, Inscriptional Parthian, Inscriptional Pahlavi, and Book Pahlavi, from MacKenzie 1971.

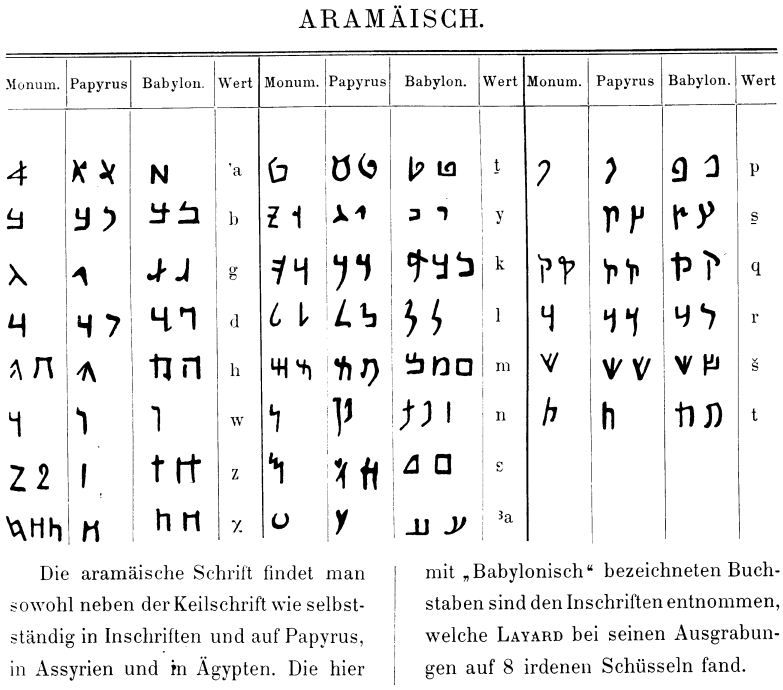


Figure 5. Table of Imperial Aramaic alphabets, from Faulmann 1880.

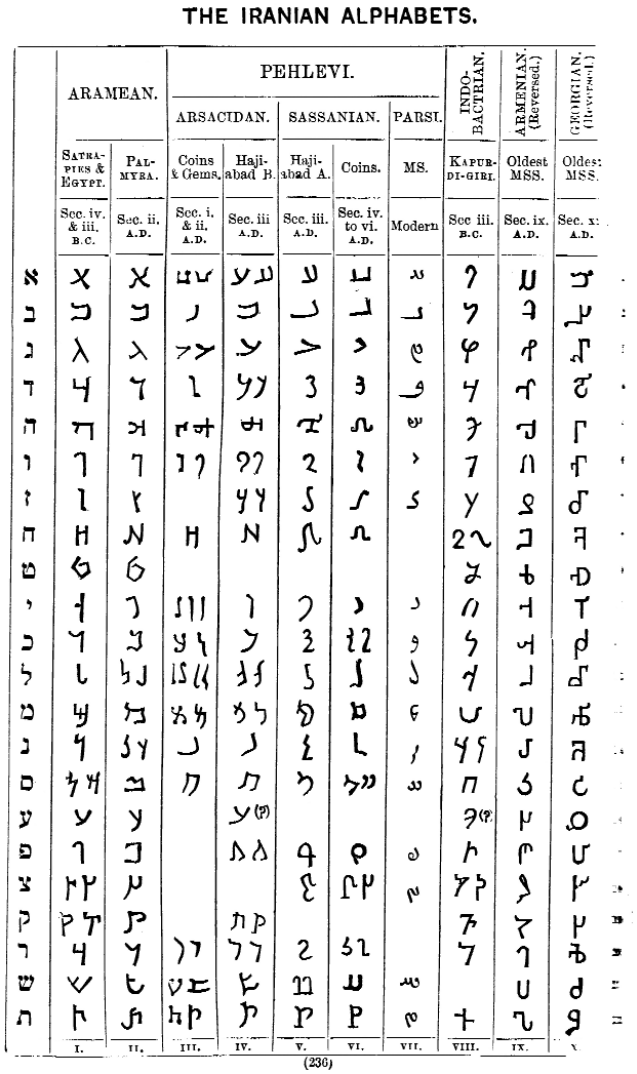


Figure 6. Table of Iranian alphabets, from Taylor 1883, showing Imperial Aramaic in column I.

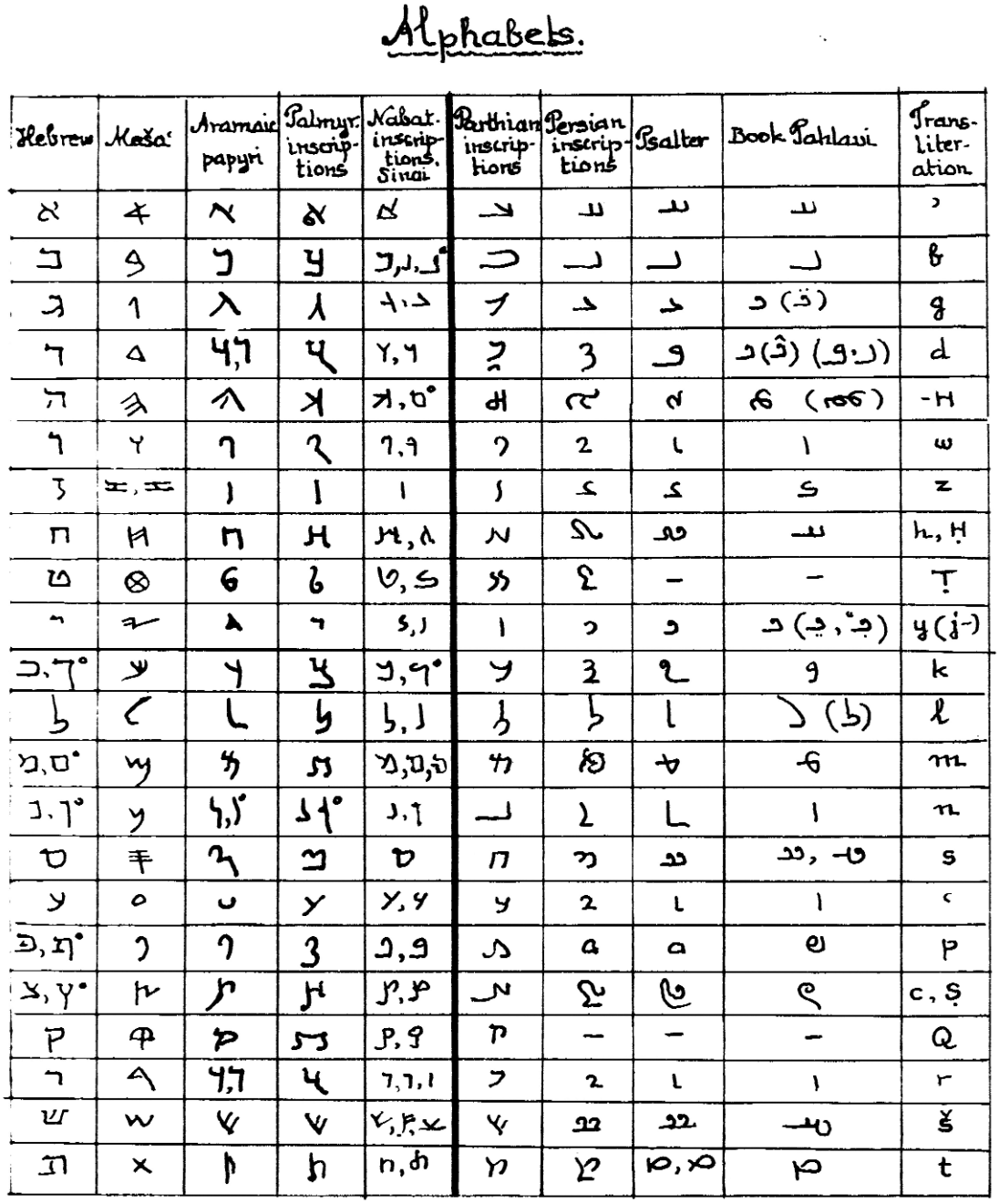
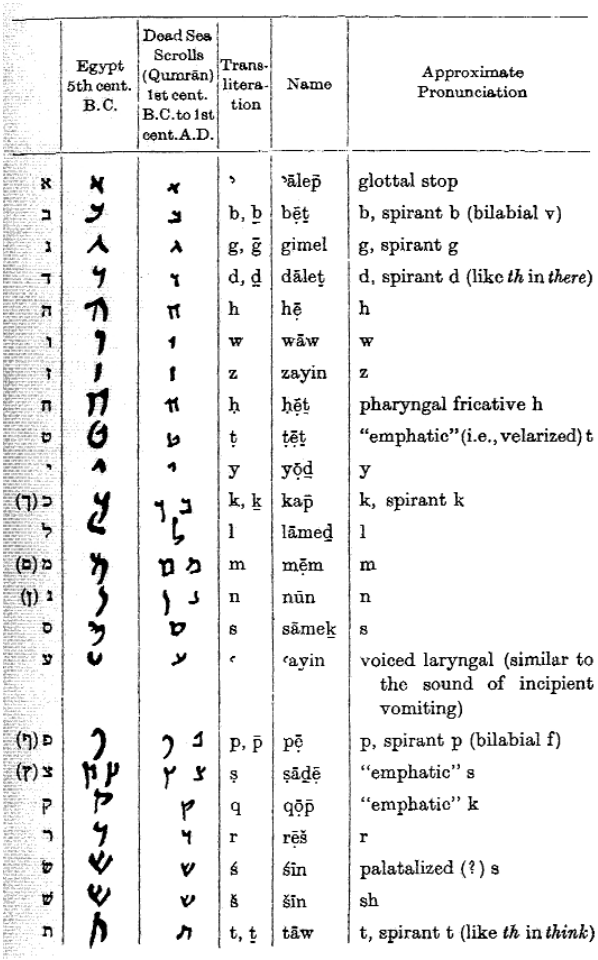
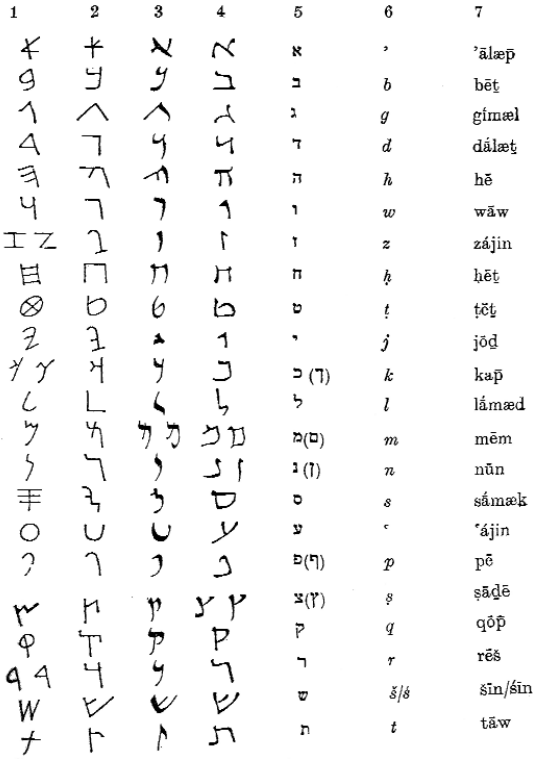


Figure 7. Table of Iranian alphabets, from Nyberg 1964.
The Aramaic papyri column refers to Imperial Aramaic.



	Egypt 5th cent. B.C.	Dead Sea Scrolls (Qumrān) 1st cent. B.C. to 1st cent. A.D.	Transliteration	Name	Approximate Pronunciation
א			ʾ	ʾālēp	glottal stop
ב			b, b̲	bēṯ	b, spirant b (bilabial v)
ג			g, g̲	gimel	g, spirant g
ד			d, d̲	dāleṯ	d, spirant d (like *th* in *there*)
ה			h	hē	h
ו			w	wāw	w
ז			z	zayin	z
ח			ḥ	ḥēṯ	pharyngal fricative h
ט			ṭ	ṭēṯ	"emphatic" (i.e., velarized) t
י			y	yōḏ	y
כ (ך)			k, k̲	kap̄	k, spirant k
ל			l	lāmeḏ	l
מ (ם)			m	mēm	m
נ (ן)			n	nūn	n
ס			s	sāmeḵ	s
ע			ʿ	ʿayin	voiced laryngal (similar to the sound of incipient vomiting)
פ (ף)			p, p̄	pē	p, spirant p (bilabial f)
צ (ץ)			ṣ	ṣāḏē	"emphatic" s
ק			q	qōp̄	"emphatic" k
ר			r	rēš	r
ש			ś	śīn	palatalized (?) s
ש			š	šīn	sh
ת			t, ṯ	tāw	t, spirant t (like *th* in *think*)

Figure 8. Alphabet chart showing Elephantine glyphs in the first column, Taken from Rosenthal 2006.



1	2	3	4	5	6	7
				א	ʾ	ʾālæp̄
				ב	*b*	bēṯ
				ג	*g*	gímæl
				ד	*d*	dálæṯ
				ה	*h*	hē
				ו	*w*	wāw
				ז	*z*	zájin
				ח	*ḥ*	ḥēṯ
				ט	*ṭ*	ṭēṯ
				י	*j*	jōḏ
				כ (ך)	*k*	kap̄
				ל	*l*	lámæd
				מ(ם)	*m*	mēm
				נ (ן)	*n*	nūn
				ס	*s*	sámæk
				ע	ʿ	ʿájin
				פ(ף)	*p*	pē
				צ(ץ)	*ṣ*	ṣāḏē
				ק	*q*	qōp̄
				ר	*r*	rēš
				ש	*š*/*ś*	šīn/śin
				ת	*t*	tāw

Figure 9. Alphabet chart from Segert 1975. Column 1 is Old Aramic and would be unified with Phoenician. Columns 2 and 3 are Imperial Aramaic. Column 4 is Biblical Aramaic and would be unified with Hebrew.

Figure 10. Table of Aramaic, Palmyrene, and Nabataean alphabets from Lidzbarski 1962 (1898).

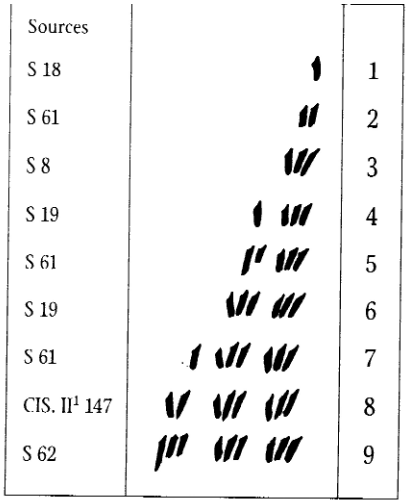


Figure 11. Table of Aramaic figures for the numbers 1 to 9, copied from Sachau 1911, abbreviated as S, from fifth century BCE papyri from Elephantine. Taken from Ifrah 2000.

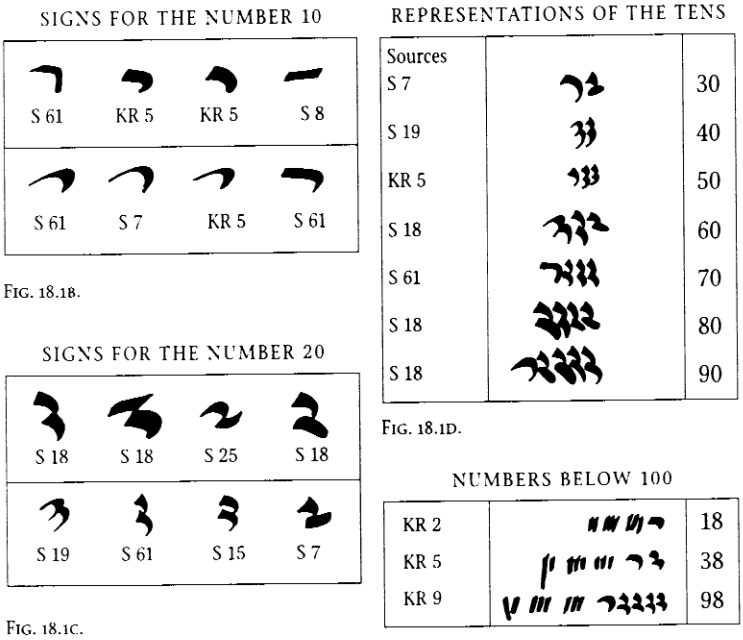


Figure 12. Table of Aramaic figures for the numbers 10 to 90, from fifth century BCE papyri from Elephantine. Taken from Ifrah 2000.

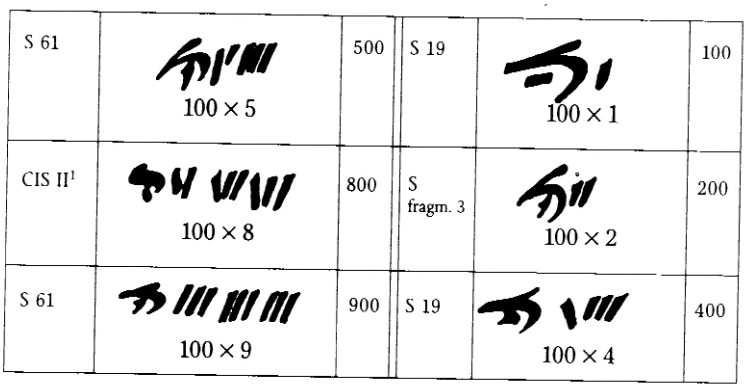


Figure 13. Table of Aramaic figures for the 100s attested in fifth century BCE papyri from Elephantine. Taken from Ifrah 2000.

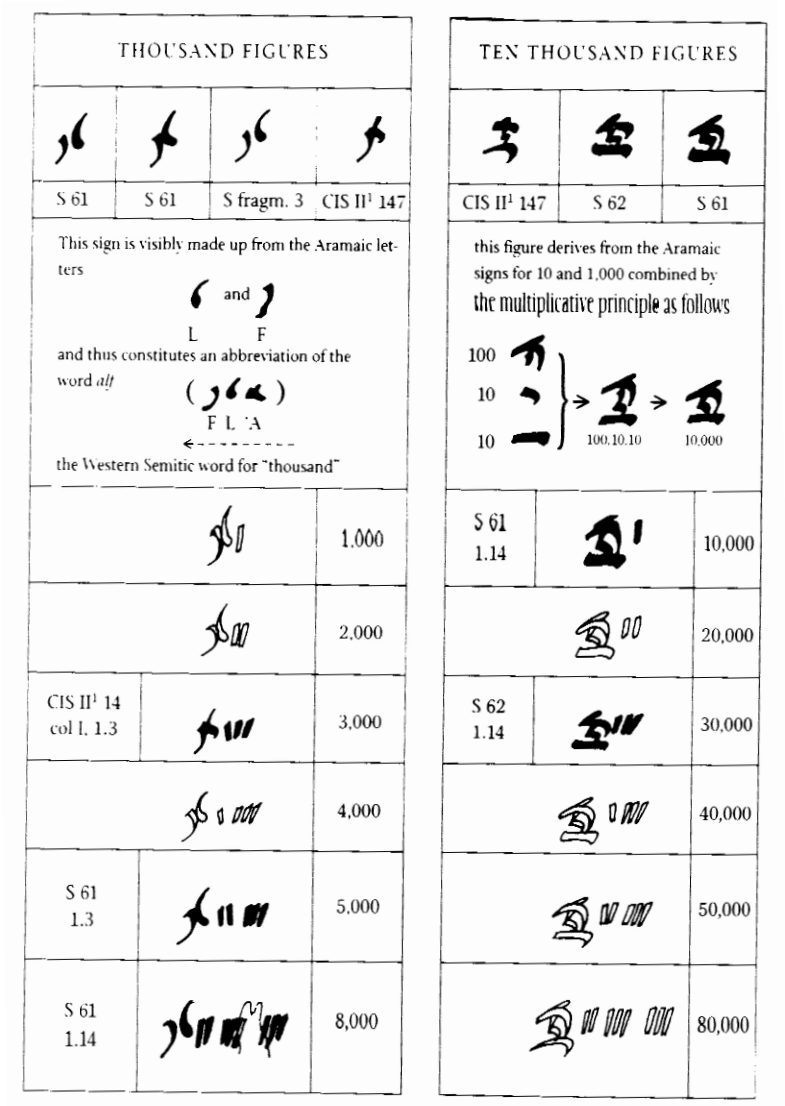


Figure 14. Table of Aramaic figures for the 1000s. Forms attested in fifth century BCE papyri from Elephantine are given in black. Taken from Ifrah 2000.

Papyrus du Vatican

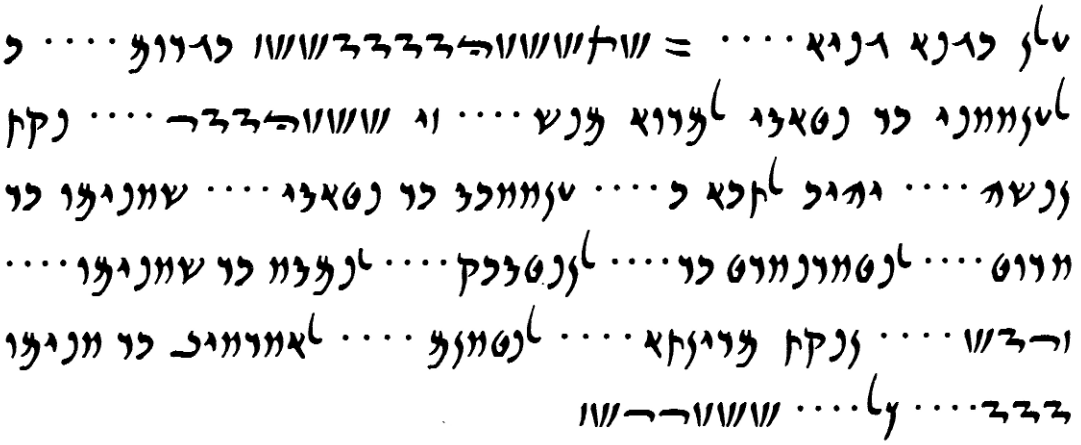


Figure 15. Typeset Aramaic text including numbers, taken from the Imprimerie Nationale 1990.

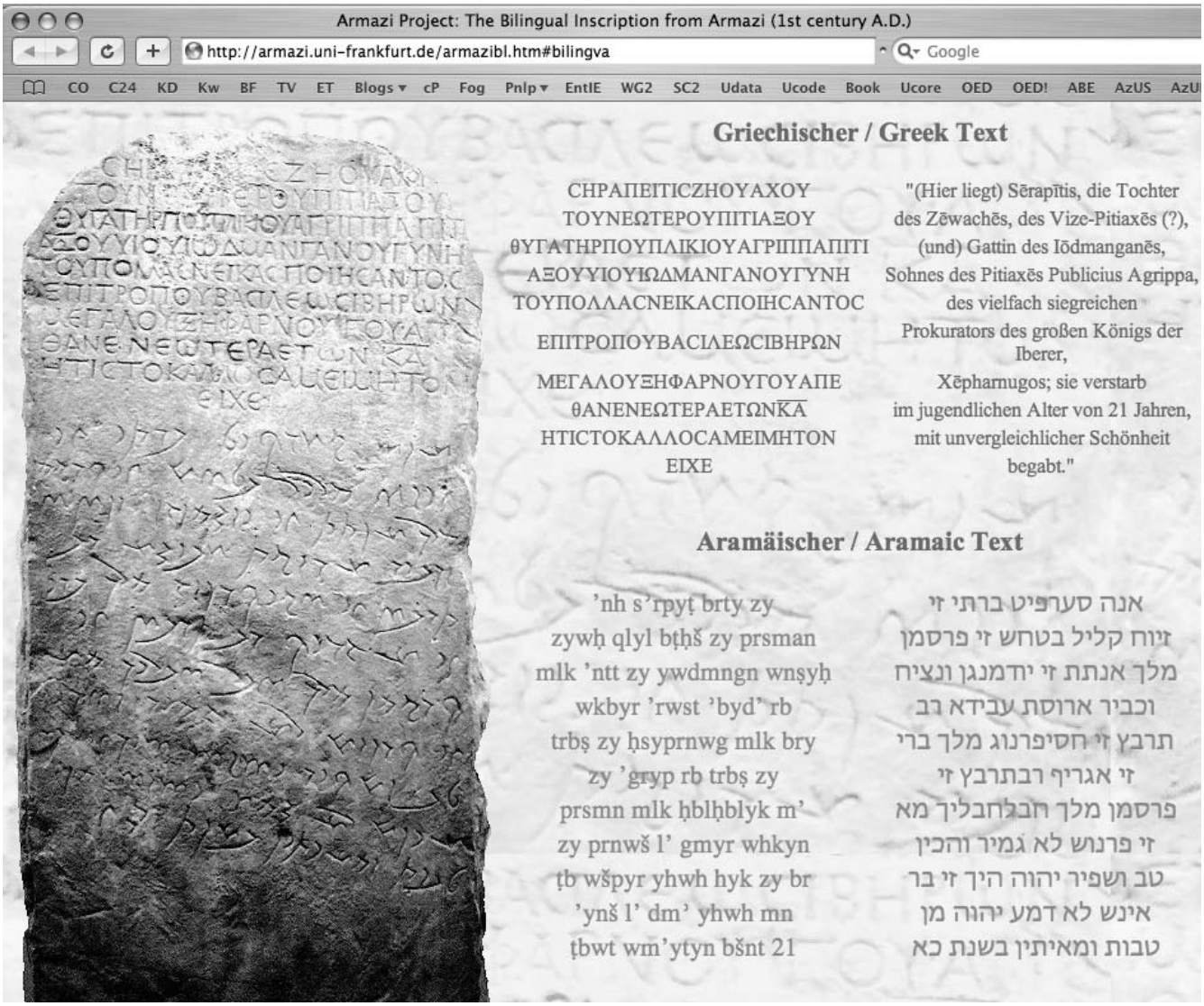


Figure 16. The Bilingual Inscription from Armazi (1. century A.D.), from the Fundamentals of an Electronic Documentationof Caucasian Languages and Cultures project. This image is from **http://armazi.uni-frankfurt.de/armazibl.htm#bilingva**. Professor Jost Gippert states of this: “I used both a Roman transliteration and a transliteration in Hebrew characters *BECAUSE* no Aramaic encoding has been available so far.”

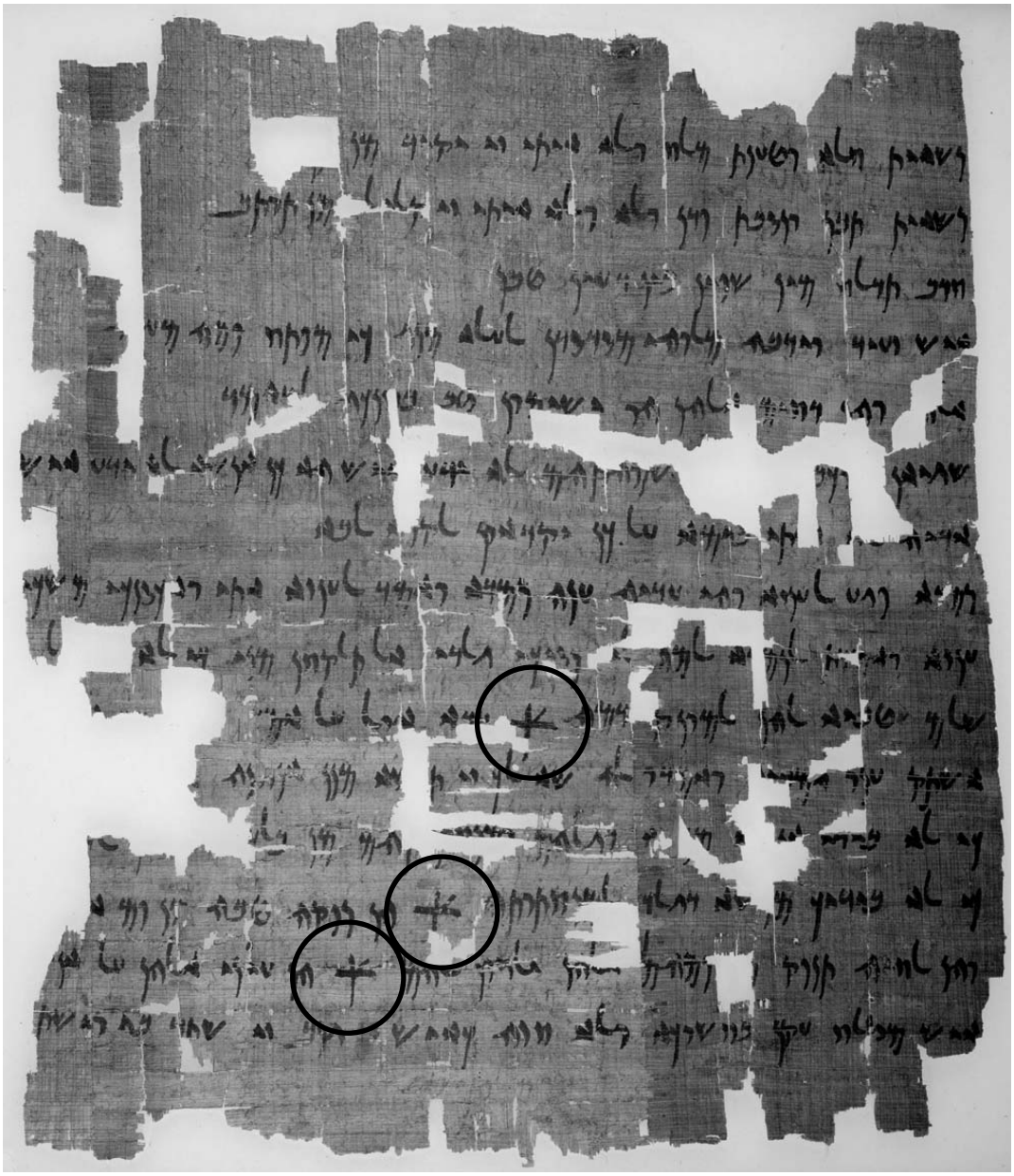
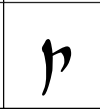
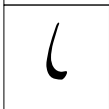


Figure 17. Manuscript TAD C1.1: 697 P13446F recto; Ahiqar col. 11; Accounts F recto cols. 1-3, held in the Staatliche Museen, Berlin. Photograph by Bruce Zuckerman and Kenneth Zuckerman, courtesy of West Semitic Research, Rolling Hills Estates, California. Pictured is the IMPERIAL ARAMAIC SECTION SIGN.

Figure 18. Transcription of the text above showing the IMPERIAL ARAMAIC SECTION SIGN.

Row 108: IMPERIAL ARAMAIC

	1084	1085
0		
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
A		
B		
C		
D		
E		
F		

hex	Name
40	IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER ALEPH
41	IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER BETH
42	IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER GIMEL
43	IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER DALETH
44	IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER HE
45	IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER WAW
46	IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER ZAYIN
47	IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER HETH
48	IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER TETH
49	IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER YODH
4A	IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER KAPH
4B	IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER LAMEDH
4C	IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER MEM
4D	IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER NUN
4E	IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER SAMEKH
4F	IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER AYIN
50	IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER PE
51	IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER SADHE
52	IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER QOPH
53	IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER RESH
54	IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER SHIN
55	IMPERIAL ARAMAIC LETTER TAW
56	(This position shall not be used)
57	IMPERIAL ARAMAIC SECTION SIGN
58	IMPERIAL ARAMAIC NUMBER ONE
59	IMPERIAL ARAMAIC NUMBER TWO
5A	IMPERIAL ARAMAIC NUMBER THREE
5B	IMPERIAL ARAMAIC NUMBER TEN
5C	IMPERIAL ARAMAIC NUMBER TWENTY
5D	IMPERIAL ARAMAIC NUMBER ONE HUNDRED
5E	IMPERIAL ARAMAIC NUMBER ONE THOUSAND
5F	IMPERIAL ARAMAIC NUMBER TEN THOUSAND

A. Administrative

1. Title

Preliminary proposal for encoding the Imperial Aramaic script in the SMP of the UCS2.

Requester's name

UC Berkeley Script Encoding Initiative (Universal Scripts Project); Author: Michael Everson.

3. Requester type (Member body/Liaison/Individual contribution)

Liaison contribution.

4. Submission date

2007-08-25

5. Requester's reference (if applicable)

6. Choose one of the following:

6a. This is a complete proposal

No.

6b. More information will be provided later

Yes.

B. Technical – General

1. Choose one of the following:

1a. This proposal is for a new script (set of characters)

Yes.

1b. Proposed name of script

Imperial Aramaic.

1c. The proposal is for addition of character(s) to an existing block

No.

1d. Name of the existing block

2. Number of characters in proposal

31.

3. Proposed category (A-Contemporary; B.1-Specialized (small collection); B.2-Specialized (large collection); C-Major extinct; D-Attested extinct; E-Minor extinct; F-Archaic Hieroglyphic or Ideographic; G-Obscure or questionable usage symbols)

Category C.

4a. Is a repertoire including character names provided?

Yes.

4b. If YES, are the names in accordance with the "character naming guidelines" in Annex L of P&P document?

Yes.

4c. Are the character shapes attached in a legible form suitable for review?

Yes.

5a. Who will provide the appropriate computerized font (ordered preference: True Type, or PostScript format) for publishing the standard?

Michael Everson.

5b. If available now, identify source(s) for the font (include address, e-mail, ftp-site, etc.) and indicate the tools used:

Michael Everson, Fontographer.

6a. Are references (to other character sets, dictionaries, descriptive texts etc.) provided?

Yes.

6b. Are published examples of use (such as samples from newspapers, magazines, or other sources) of proposed characters attached?

Yes.

7. Does the proposal address other aspects of character data processing (if applicable) such as input, presentation, sorting, searching, indexing, transliteration etc. (if yes please enclose information)?

Yes.

8. Submitters are invited to provide any additional information about Properties of the proposed Character(s) or Script that will assist in correct understanding of and correct linguistic processing of the proposed character(s) or script. Examples of such properties are: Casing information, Numeric information, Currency information, Display behaviour information such as line breaks, widths etc., Combining behaviour, Spacing behaviour, Directional behaviour, Default Collation behaviour, relevance in Mark Up contexts, Compatibility equivalence and other Unicode normalization related information. See the Unicode standard at http://www.unicode.org for such information on other scripts. Also see Unicode Character Database http://www.unicode.org/Public/UNIDATA/UnicodeCharacterDatabase.html and associated Unicode Technical Reports for information needed for consideration by the Unicode Technical Committee for inclusion in the Unicode Standard.

See above.

C. Technical – Justification

1. Has this proposal for addition of character(s) been submitted before? If YES, explain.

No.

2a. Has contact been made to members of the user community (for example: National Body, user groups of the script or characters, other experts, etc.)?

Yes.

2b. If YES, with whom?

Jost Gippert.

2c. If YES, available relevant documents

3. Information on the user community for the proposed characters (for example: size, demographics, information technology use, or publishing use) is included?

Semiticists and other scholars.
4a. The context of use for the proposed characters (type of use; common or rare)
Historical use.
4b. Reference
5a. Are the proposed characters in current use by the user community?
Yes.
5b. If YES, where?
Scholarly publications.
6a. After giving due considerations to the principles in the P&P document must the proposed characters be entirely in the BMP?
No.
6b. If YES, is a rationale provided?
6c. If YES, reference
7. Should the proposed characters be kept together in a contiguous range (rather than being scattered)?
Yes.
8a. Can any of the proposed characters be considered a presentation form of an existing character or character sequence?
No.
8b. If YES, is a rationale for its inclusion provided?
8c. If YES, reference
9a. Can any of the proposed characters be encoded using a composed character sequence of either existing characters or other proposed characters?
No.
9b. If YES, is a rationale for its inclusion provided?
9c. If YES, reference
10a. Can any of the proposed character(s) be considered to be similar (in appearance or function) to an existing character?
No.
10b. If YES, is a rationale for its inclusion provided?
10c. If YES, reference
11a. Does the proposal include use of combining characters and/or use of composite sequences (see clauses 4.12 and 4.14 in ISO/IEC 10646-1: 2000)?
No.
11b. If YES, is a rationale for such use provided?
11c. If YES, reference
11d. Is a list of composite sequences and their corresponding glyph images (graphic symbols) provided?
No.
11e. If YES, reference
12a. Does the proposal contain characters with any special properties such as control function or similar semantics?
No.
12b. If YES, describe in detail (include attachment if necessary)
13a. Does the proposal contain any Ideographic compatibility character(s)?
No.
13b. If YES, is the equivalent corresponding unified ideographic character(s) identified?