

APPENDIX II ARAMAIC INSCRIPTIONS

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Only a minority of the stamp seals and cylinder seals impressed on clay bullae which have been excavated 1952-1955 by Ekrem Akurgal at Ergili-Daskyleion combines a pictorial scene with a short inscription in Aramaic script. 12 pieces are known, 2 of them (here nos. 2 and 9) are impressed twice. Sometimes they are not rolled out in their full extent, often superficially. Therefore, the reading is extremely difficult and in many instances not satisfactory. A first attempt to read and interpret the inscriptions has been made by Kemal Balkan (Balkan 1959). In the course of editing the full amount of seal impressions from Daskyleion, Dr. Kaptan has entrusted me with the re-editing of the Aramaic inscriptions. My sincere thanks go to her for her patience and support of my enterprise by drawings, photographs and prints of the seal impressions, which I, unfortunately, could not study on the originals. With respect to the reading and interpretation of certain inscriptions, I profited much from a discussion with my esteemed colleague A. Lemaire (Paris). Dr. Ran Zadok (Tel Aviv) let me partake in his broad knowledge of Iranian. But I remain responsible for all the readings or misreadings and the proposed interpretations.¹

1. DS 16 (Erg. 255)

The representation, on this stamp seal, of a hero in combat with a winged monster is interspersed with the inscription of 7 (?) characters. While the distribution of the letters is irregular, the texts seems to be complete. The reading is problematic in certain places, but seems to be:

¹ See below (p. 210) for a chart representing the various shapes of the Aramaic characters occurring in these inscriptions.

M H Y B W Z N

The letter *M* is distinct, but the character *H* is written in a vertical manner unusual during the period of these bullae but more common in later times. The same is true of the following letter, which could be a *G*, but in all probability should be read as *Y*. After the horizontally stretched out arm of the hero another character, which must be a badly written and unusually large *B*, follows. The paw of the beast, produced by three cruciform drillings, is inserted between the letters. This could indicate the separation of two names or two name elements. The separation of two names seems unlikely as an indication of filiation (*br* "son of ...") should then be expected. The stamp seals under discussion do not usually feature indications of filiation. The reading of the characters which follow is quite straightforward. Only the character *N* seems to be unusually broad in comparison with similar sign forms.

An explanation of the name could be based on Iranian precedents: the first part of the name corresponds with *mhy-*, i.e. **māhī*, the Iranian god of the moon. A parallel can be found in the name *mhyprn* in KAI 265,1. The second part of the name, consequently also of Iranian origin, has been identified by Hinz (1975, 156) as **-bauḡana*, compare Greek Μαίβουζάνης. Accordingly, the personal name has the meaning "who serves the moon god".

2. DS 18 (Erg. 258, Erg. 451)

The impression of this cylinder seal is only partly preserved on the bulla. The one-line inscription is situated behind the figure of a hero, who is struggling with a lion-griffin. The impression is clear and the whole inscription is preserved. It consists of 5 letters which are written stiffly but can be clearly read. The drawing of Balkan (1959, fig. 3, no. 30) is inaccurate and upside down. A duplicate of this seal impression is Erg. 451 (DS 18.2). Although only the last three letters of the adscript on Erg. 451 have been preserved, they correspond with the proposed reading of Erg. 258 (DS 18.1):

L S G R/D Y

The second letter is an unambiguous *S*, because it shows the lightly swinging shape of the down-strokes and the well-known "hump" of this letter, even though the small transverse stroke at the upper part of this character - cf. the

inscription from Limyra (*CIS* II 109) - is only suggested here. The fourth character can be read as the letter *R*, but it may also be the letter *D*, to which *R* bears a strong resemblance. The unusually upright position of the last letter is confusing, but it must be a *Y* as the small vertical stroke slanting to the left is characteristic of this letter only.

A reading *l-sgry* is supported by the bilingual inscription from Farasa in Cappadocia (*KAI* 265). In this inscription, the Persian name is written in Greek as Σαγάριος, in the Aramaic version as *sgr* (cf. Lipiński 1975, 173-184). The name can also be compared with the name *sgry* in the papyri from Elephantine, but their linguistic association is, however, disputed.²

If the reading is *l-sgdy*, which seems more probable to me, this corresponds - with a formation as a *nisbatun* - to Iranian **sugdya-*, "Sogdian".³ This means that the person who bore this name was named after his place of origin, on the river Oxus in the northeastern province of the Persian empire. Designations with *nisba*-formations such as *nysy*, "Nisaeen", *kšy*, "man from Kuš", etc. are also comparable.

It should be noted that here, as in the seal-inscriptions no. 3 and no. 7 (as far as preserved), the attribution of the seal to its proprietor is designated by the preposition *l-* "(belonging) to", which is standard in seals of west-semitic origin (Hebrew, Phoenician, Aramaic, etc.).

3. *DS* 19 (*Erg.* 259)

Impressions of a cylinder seal. In the space between a seated person facing to the left and the figure of a lion, scant traces of an inscription of 4 or 5 letters can be seen. The letters are very vague but could be:



L? *P* ^c/*T* *Y* (*x*)

If the reading of the first letter as *L* is correct, it must be understood as the same preposition as in inscription no. 2. The letter which follows is drawn by K. Balkan (1959, fig. 3, no. 31) as an Aliph, but to me it seems to be a *P*. The third letter could also be read as *T* instead of Ayin. K. Balkan considers the down-stroke going to the right too high for the fourth letter to be a *T* and suggests a *Y*

² Cowley 1923, no. 22, 61. 69 = Porten & Yardeni 1993, no. 3.15, 64.72. Cf. Lipiński 1975, 176 and Kornfeld 1978, 123.

³ Mayrhofer 1973, 235, no. 8.1574; Hinz 1975, 228.

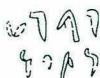
in his drawing. Despite that, *T* seems more probable to me, especially as it gives the inscription a possible meaning.

An exact translation of the reading *pty* is not easy. Traditional Old Persian personal names with the element **pati-* "lord", are quite well-known (cf. Mayrhofer 1973, no. 8.21ff.), but such names are still unknown in Aramaic context.⁴ While the name-element *pty*, which can be found as *pty-r/dn* in Teima (most recently Degen 1974, 82f.) or as *pty* in *CIS* II, 116, 1 could well be of relevance here, see for instance Kornfeld (1978, 93), where the explanation from Egyptian is very conjectural.

A. Lemaire has taken a different approach and, as the inscription is so badly preserved, tentatively suggested (pers.comm.) the reconstructed reading [W³]HWŠ with reference to Old-Persian *vahuš* "good" (Hinz 1975, 251).

4. DS 23 (Erg. 285)

Impression of a cylinder seal. Between the hero and the standing beast, approximately in the region of the knee, are the traces of a vertical inscription in two lines. The characters are poorly imprinted and can only be read with extreme uncertainty:



1. *W H W/P* ^c
2. *N T Y R*?

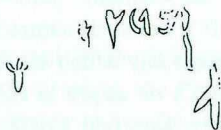
In this case I cannot offer a satisfactory interpretation. It is uncertain, if it is a single name and a title or if two names are intended. Considering the latter solution the first name should contain the Iranian element *vaḡhu-* "good", known from names as *Vaḡhudāta* etc. (Mayrhofer 1979, I/90f.). For the second line, the Iranian *Naotara-*, *Naotairiia-*, a patronymic epitheton without an explanation (*ibid.* I/63f.), may be suggested.

5. DS 24 (Erg. 470)

Impression of a cylinder seal (?) with the representation of a Persian hero fighting a winged ibex. The Aramaic inscription of 5 or 6 characters is on the top of this scene, but it is not well preserved and can be read with hesitation

⁴ See also *pateič* in Zgusta 1955, 133 §181 with references.

only. It may have had a continuation on the left which is not preserved. At the left and the right of the scene in the head-line are two separate letters. It can be disputed if they belonged to the main-inscription or are to be separated.



Single letters:	Y	K?
Inscription on top:	N 'B' H S R/K/W [

The single letter at the right has a upright position, a long vertical stroke and at the left a short stroke slanting in a sharp angle to the bottom. At the right side in the upper part, something seems missing, but this may have been the only upper part of the down stroke. The character is extraordinary in its height, but cannot be another character than Yoth. The single letter at the left shows a long vertical stroke with a hook in the upper third. This points, in comparison with for example the Xanthos-triligue, to the letter *K*.

In the inscription on the top of both figures, the first letter is in an upright position and has an extremely long downstroke. This is characteristic for the letter *N*. Above and slightly to the right of the horn of the ibex there are only traces of a second letter which may have been a *B* since faint traces of the curved downstroke can be recognized.

The next character - slightly to the left of the horn of the ibex - consists of two parts: a nearly upright stroke with a hook to the left and a stroke at the left which is short and somewhat rounded. Therefore it seems to be a *H* in a form which is known from the papyri of the sixth/fifth century BC (Naveh 1970, fig. 2-3, esp. 3.3, 6). Not excluded, but unlikely, is a reading with two characters: *K* and *Z*.

The fourth character in this line is slightly bent to the left and shows a hook at the right side at the top. Therefore it can be read as *S* only. The character which follows is not so characteristic in its shape. It shows a straight downstroke which is thick at the top, and more slim at the bottom. It could be an *R*, but a *K* or a *W* is not excluded.

The interpretation of this name depends on the assumption that the two single letters do not belong to the name itself. In this case, a Babylonian name such as *Nabû-aḥa-ušur* is a possible solution. The orthography follows such names as *nbzrbn* for *Nabû-zēru-ibni* or *nbsršr* for *Nabû-šarru-ušur* in Aramaic argillary texts from the 7th century BC.

6. DS 61 (Erg. 256)

The inscription on this cylinder (?) seal is placed between the dramatic depiction of a boar hunt and the winged representation of Ahuramazda (?). As the seal could not be pressed into the bulla to its full extent, it seems probable that the inscription is also not preserved in its original length. The legend consists of at least 6 letters and its beginning is particularly difficult to verify.

H/H/G R/D N N ^ε/L^(?) Š/W/K

At the beginning traces of two nearly parallel, slightly rounded vertical strokes, which may belong to a letter *H*, can be recognized in the photograph, but neither *H* nor *G* can be excluded with certainty. A character follows which *K. Balkan* (1959 fig. 3) shows in the shape of a *H*, which - according to the photograph - is excluded. Conversely, traces of a small hook, indicating the letter *R*, are clearly visible at the top, although the hook is not angular as it is in no. 9 (Erg. 253). As an alternative, the reading *D* seems possible.

The following double *N* is distinct, but above the mane of the boar following it a further letter seems to have been written. A short stroke from the left to the right under the tail of the flying Ahuramazda can be recognized. This may have been a small *L* or the left side of the letter Ayin. The length of the distance between this character and the others is striking.

The last (?) character which can be recognized also presents problems. Inscriptions of the 7th century BC contain the letter *W* written in this manner, but after comparison with the papyri of the 6th century BC, the character *Š* and also *K* as in the Aršama letters cannot be excluded.

The many uncertainties in reading either *hrnnlš* or *grnn^εw* or other combinations of letters do not allow me to propose a satisfactory explanation of the inscription at this moment.

7. DS 65 (Erg. 261)

This cylinder (?) seal has an inscription of 5 characters above the Persian warrior on horseback, perpendicular to the figures. The fragmentary state of the impression of the seal does not allow a decision on which position the inscription took in relation to the whole picture. It seems possible that it is the imprint of a large cylinder seal which is only partly represented on the

preserved bulla. Since the characters of the inscription are impressed superficially, the reading is difficult:

7APVL

L R²/S/B T H/R P/Y/W

While the reading of the first character is straightforward, that of the second is already open to dispute. The relatively thick stroke which slants from above to below and from the left to the right could belong to an Aliph, although the two small cross-lines are missing. The thick stroke could also be part of an *S*, a variant of the form in no. 2. The letter *B* cannot be excluded, but in that case the down-stroke would be more curved and the curve at the bottom would be visible. If it is to be read *R*, the slanting from left to right would be uncommon, also in comparison with the fourth letter of this inscription. The next character, *T*, can be identified because this is the one letter of the Aramaic alphabet which shows a hook to the right. The following is an *R*, although an *H* cannot be excluded as the down-stroke on the left is not clearly visible. The last letter could be a *P* (cf. no. 8). Although it could be argued that the curvature of the character is too strong for a *W*, the latter reading cannot be excluded for this letter.

The indeterminate reading of most of the letters render it extremely difficult to interpret the inscription. While the initial *l*- can be accepted as "belonging to .." and the following name could - if read *bthw* - be compared with a Palmyrenian name with the same orthography, the rest of the inscription is uncertain. This name is explained by Stark (1971, 80b) as "Daughter of ʔHW²" and the element ʔhw as an abbreviation of the Arabic god-name *whblt* (cf. *ibid.* 85a). This interpretation presents difficulties with regard to correspondence of the laryngals. The translation "daughter of her brother" (i.e. *bt²hwh), as already proposed by Nöldeke (in Mordtmann 1899, 8) is preferable. It certainly would be curious if a purely Arabic theophorous element had been used in a seal of completely Persian origin. It would also mean that the seal belonged to a woman with a common Semitic name. The appearance of the seal alone makes such an assumption implausible.

The alternative reading *rthy* could also be considered. It might correspond to the Iranian name **rta-xaya*-. This name is known from the Aršama documents - but is written there with initial Aliph as ʔrthy, the usual

Aramaic orthography of the name element **rta-*.⁵ The loss of the Aliph could be explained by the prefixed preposition *l-* (cf. Segert 1975 §3.7.8.5.4).

Two final possibilities remain. Firstly, A. Lemaire (pers. comm.) has proposed the reading *ṭrw*, - a shortened Iranian name structurally parallel to the name *ṭprn* "having the brightness of fire" attested in Elephantine.⁶ At the same time, A. Lemaire offers another solution: the title **aθravā* "fire-priest".⁷ In this case, the seal would have been an "official seal" which belonged to the fire-priest. This interpretation is based on the proposition that such seals were used by officials in the Persian administration.

8. DS 76 (*Erg.* 257)

Stamp seal on a clay bulla of which only half is preserved. Below the representation of a horseman an inscription is partially preserved:



ṭ¹ L¹ N P

Only sparse traces of the first (?) letter are visible. It could have been an Aliph. The following letter is probably an *L*, as the partly visible stroke runs from the top right somewhat to the left. The letter *T* is also possible, but in that case the long down-stroke should be visible beneath the damage of the print.

In contrast to the drawing of K. Balkan (1959, fig. 3, no. 29) the next letter is clearly discernible as an *N*. Like most of the other letters of the inscriptions on bullae, it was written extremely steeply. This is also true of the last letter of the inscription which may be either a *P* or a *W*.

The decision for the reading and reconstruction *ṭ¹lnp* takes into account the well-known tomb inscription from Daskyleion (Gibson 1975, no. 37) which mentions a certain *ṭlnp br ṣy*. If our reading is correct, we are confronted with the seal of a man who later died and was buried at Daskyleion and who bore the Semitic name "(The god) El is exalted" (cf. Maraqtan 1988, 129). The question whether the seal and its inscription were produced at Daskyleion or elsewhere and brought by its owner to the capital of the satrapy remains open.

⁵ Cf. Kornfeld 1978, 100 for references and an interpretation as **rta+x+aya* (a form of endearment).

⁶ Kraeling 1953 no. 5, 16; cf. Kornfeld 1978, 101.

⁷ Hinz 1975, 50; cf. also Mayrhofer 1979, 1/22f.

9. DS 100 (Erg. 253-254)

The inscription on this stamp seal, impressed on two bullae, consists of six characters and is situated in front of the figure of the male priest. The characters are well defined in both preserved impressions. The drawing published by K. Balkan (1959, fig. 3, no. 26) is essentially correct. The inscription is clearly legible:



𐤠WR YM N

The first letter is a distinct Aleph. The oblique position corresponds to a cursive ductus which is known for example from the Starcky tablet (Naveh 1970, fig. 3, no. 2). The angular form of *W* also corresponds to this type of script. The ductus of the script is nearly the same between the third character, the letter *R*, and the *N* at the end of the name; only the down-stroke of the final letter is slightly longer. The fourth letter, however, is problematic. The photograph gives the impression of a short vertical stroke but the drawings available to me do not show this down-stroke, which therefore does not belong to the character. Consequently, it is a cursive-shaped *Y* character, which is normal on clay tablets and ostraca from the end of the 8th century BC onwards.

The personal name, which can be presumed here, could be Semitic in origin. The component 𐤠wry, corresponding to *²urī “my light”, is frequent in West-semitic personal names.⁸ A theophorous element, which normally follows in such sequences (“my light is ...”), does not seem to be present here. This explanation is thus improbable.

The element 𐤠WR could also represent the Babylonian name of the god *Amurru*,⁹ in which case the second part of the compound name would be reconstructed as **ymn*. This word is known in Imperial Aramaic as **yammin* “right side” but not as an element of personal names. An Iranian or an Anatolian name could then be supposed here. A. Lemaire proposes the well-known Iranian name **Arymanā*, with the meaning “from Ariyan reasoning” (Mayrhofer 1973, 156, no. 8.471), cf. Greek *Ariamenes* (Ἀριαμένης), *Hieramenes* and Lykian *Ariyamana* (Schmitt 1982, 21, no. 11). Although the figure in Iranian costume on the seal supports this interpretation it does not explain the letter *W* as second character in the inscription.

⁸ Cf. Kornfeld 1978, 39; Maraqtan 1988, 118.

⁹ Cf. Maraqtan 1988, 44; see also Lemaire 1996, no. 98, 1.

10. DS 112 (Erg. 260)

Stamp seal depicting a long-legged bird. The inscription of 5 (?) characters beneath it does not begin until the bill of the bird. An image of a hippocamp above the bird, which has been interpreted as script by K. Balkan (1959, fig. 3 no. 32), does not belong to the inscription. The inscription reads:



$Z^t T W H Y$

A little damage in front of the bill of the bird precludes a definitive reading of the first letter as Z . The reading Aliph of the following character, too, is contestable due to the missing down-stroke, which seems to have been broken off when the breast of the bird was slightly damaged. The three characters which follow are clearly legible. It is open to question whether the circular hole at the end can actually be read as a Y . But the remaining traces do indicate this interpretation.

The element $*-why$ is known in some Iranian personal names from Persepolis (g^twhy Bowman 1970: 5,2) and from Egypt (rtwhy , $bgwhy$, $wrwhy$, $ztwhy$; cf. Kornfeld 1978, Index) and is to be interpreted as $*vahyah$ "better".

If the reading of a letter Z is not accepted an explanation for the element t - at the top of the name is very difficult. The name twn does exist in Bowman 1970: 13.2, but it has been emended satisfactorily to $^r>twn$. Sometimes, Aramaic personal names include the element t (cf. Maraqten 1988, 135), derived from the name of the goddess nt (cf. Kornfeld 1978, 42), but this derivation is disputed and the combination of t , a Semitic name element, with a name element of Iranian origin is so unlikely that it must be discounted. For that reason, I prefer to read Z^tT for Iranian $zāta$ - and to understand the name as $zāta-vahyah$ "of better origin" (cf. Hinz 1975, 278).

11. DS 108 (on Erg. 262)

Partly preserved impression on a clay bulla. It is impossible to decide whether this part belongs to the beginning or the middle of a cylinder seal. Above the back of a beast (lion?) the traces of at least 4 (?) unclear but quite large letters can be seen. The proposed reading is:



$Y H D Z$

The first character is distinctly a Y in a shape different from the other seal inscriptions but well known from stone inscriptions from Daskyleion, Sardis and Limyra (cf. Naveh 1970, figs. 10f). After it a fissure in the clay of the bulla which has damaged a proposed character *H* or *H* follows. The third letter is legible as a *D*, but a reading *R* or *B* cannot be excluded. At the end of the preserved part of the inscription there seems to be a vertical stroke which could be the character *Z*, but other letters such as *W*, *K*, *M*, *N*, *R* are also possible. It may be just a groove in the clay.

The name could stem from the Semitic root *hdy* "to rejoice, to be satisfied" (cf. Maraqten 1978, 162) and form part of a shortened name in the pattern of Hebrew *yaḥdi'el* "(The god) El rejoices" although an Aramaic onomastic parallel is unknown to me. If the reading -*rz* is favoured at the end of the preserved part of the inscription the Old Iranian name element *rāza* "vine" (*rz*, cf. Hinz 1975, 203f.) or - better - *arāza*- "battle" (cf. Mayrhofer 1979, I.21) could be taken in consideration.

12. DS 135 (Erg. 327)

Above and behind the representation of a heroic figure in combat are traces of some (4 or 5) alphabetic characters. Only two of them, the Aliph at the top and the strange sign behind the neck of the victorious figure, are clearly pressed into the clay. Two characters at the right side of the bulla are very flat and their reading is doubtful. Nevertheless, I propose:



$P H ^{??} R^{??} Y^{??}$

The first character shows, at the right side, a rounded shaft which may have been continued near the top of the bulla. Therefore, I think that it should be *P*. But it is not excluded, that, at the middle of the character, a stroke goes to the left; in this case the reading would be *M*. To the left of the *P*, I identify two nearly parallel strokes with a little connection in between, i.e. the letter *H*. If the reading *M* for the first character is accepted, only one little stroke is left for the second character and the reading *Z* must be proposed. The Aliph at the top is undoubtedly clear, but due to a little break of the bulla it remains uncertain if another character follows immediately. The photograph permits a reading *R*... The character behind the neck of the heroic figure - if it is an alphabetic sign at all - should be *Y*, but this reading is extremely doubtful, and the

sign has its position so far from the rest of the inscription, that its appertenance is not sure.

The interpretation of the name (?) poses some difficulties, too. If we accept the first three letters as a name we have a parallel for ph^2 in Hebrew, not only on a sherd from Samaria of the 8th century BC, but also on a stamp seal (with uncertain reading).¹⁰ With a reading ph^2ry it could be *nisbatun* "the man from PH^2R ", but I have no founded proposal for such a toponym. If it is the designation of a profession or office, a connection with Aram. *phr* "potter" seems unfounded in spite of the ortography (should be phr^2). The Aramaic word which is the equivalent of Akkad (*bēl*) *paḥati* "governor" is always written *phh*, stat.constr. *pht* (cf. Hoftijzer & Jongeling 1995, 904) and cannot be taken in consideration here. Therefore, for the time being, the interpretation of this inscription remains doubtful.

Conclusion

All of the 12 inscriptions on cylinder or stamp seals contain - as far as they are legible and understandable - the names of their proprietors. This result is not surprising. By all means, no title seems to be mentioned and also never a patronymic. Only seldom the appertenance is expressed by the common Semitic preposition *l-* (nos. 2, 3[?], 7).

Names which are undoubtedly Semitic in origin are rarely used. Possibly they are to be found in nos. 7, 8 and 11, but differing readings are possible in such instances, too.

Names of Iranian origin are, of course, more common: nos. 1, 2, 3[?], 7[?] and 10. This result is, again, not surprising. We can suppose that the seals were used by officials, which also in Daskyleion, the most-western capital of a satrapy of the Achemenid empire, belonged to the Iranian upper class. If the name "Sogdian" in no. 2 can be read with certainty it contains a hint on the origin of the name-bearer or his family from the extreme northeast of the empire.

The proprietor of the stamp seal no. 8 has been in all probability of Semitic origin and may be identified with the owner of the tomb with the well-known inscription (Gibson 1975, no. 37). Another seal (no. 5) belonged to a man with a Babylonian name.

¹⁰ Cf. Renz & Röllig 1995, vol. 1, 141, vol. 2/1, 81; Avigad & Sass 1997, no. 325; Hoftijzer & Jongeling 1995, 904, s.v. *phh*.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
א									א	א		א
ב	ב				ב							
ג		ג										
ד		ד									ד	
ה	ה			ה						ה		
ו	ו			ו		ו	ו		ו	ו		
ז	ז									ז	ז	
ח					ח	ח	ח				ח	ח
ט												
י	י	י	י	י	י				י	י	י	
כ					כ							
ל		ל	ל			ל	ל	ל				
מ	מ								מ			
נ	נ				נ	נ		נ	נ			
ס		ס										
ע				ע								
פ			פ					פ				פ
צ					צ	צ						
ק									ק			ק
ר				ר		ר	ר		ר			
ש												
ת			ת	ת			ת			ת		

Fig. 3. Shapes of the Aramaic characters