

# Preliminary proposal to encode the Elymaic script in Unicode

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## 1 Introduction

The Elymaic script was identified by Michael Everson in 2001 in “Roadmapping early Semitic scripts” (N2311) as a suitable candidate for encoding in Unicode. It was allocated to the Roadmap to the Supplementary Multilingual Plane (SMP) in the same year.<sup>1</sup> Yet, to date, no additional information for the script has been submitted. Currently, it rests in scarlet on the Roadmap as ¿Elymaic? at the range U+10EE0..10EFF; the Spanish question marks indicating its status as a script “for which detailed proposals have not yet been written”, and for which “[t]here may be a link to an exploratory code table”. In the sixteen years that have passed since Elymaic was first allocated to the Roadmap, no additional information on the script has been submitted to the Unicode Technical Committee, not even ‘an exploratory code table’. This preliminary proposal aims to give some digital dignity to Elymaic and to build a foundation for a future encoding for the script. It provides a tentative character repertoire and code chart, a brief description of the script, and a few specimens illustrating usage of the script. Research is ongoing and a formal proposal is forthcoming.

## 2 Description

Elymaic is a historical right-to-left script derived from Imperial Aramaic. Also known as ‘Elymaean’ in English scholarly literature, the name ‘Elymaic’ refers to Elymais, a state within the Parthian empire (247 BCE – 224 CE) that is situated in the present-day region of Khuzestan in Iran. The name ‘Elymais’ is the Hellenic designation (Ἐλυμαίτις) for the region known in Sumerian as *elam* and in Akkadian as *elamū*, which has come down to English as ‘Elam’. The earliest attestations of the script are inscriptions on coins and other media dated to the 2nd century CE (see enclosed figures). Elymaic is related to other ancient Iranian scripts derived from Aramaic, such as Parthian, Sogdian, and Khwarezmian, but it is sufficiently distinct from these to be encoded separately in Unicode.

The tentative encoded repertoire for Elymaic contains the following characters, as shown in the table below, with representative glyphs and Latin transliterations. The glyphs are based upon forms found in charts and reproductions of inscriptions in secondary literature. These glyphs are presented as an aid for discussion, and may change as a result of additional research.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.unicode.org/roadmaps/smp/smp-3-0.html>

Glyph	Character name	Latin
𐤀	ELYMAIC LETTER ALEPH	ʾ
𐤁	ELYMAIC LETTER BETH	β
𐤂	ELYMAIC LETTER GIMEL	γ
𐤃	ELYMAIC LETTER DALETH	δ
𐤄	ELYMAIC LETTER HE	h
𐤅	ELYMAIC LETTER WAW	w
𐤆	ELYMAIC LETTER ZAYIN	z
𐤇	ELYMAIC LETTER HETH	ħ
𐤈	ELYMAIC LETTER TETH	ṭ
𐤉	ELYMAIC LETTER YODH	y
𐤊	ELYMAIC LETTER KAPH	k
𐤋	ELYMAIC LETTER LAMEDH	l
𐤌	ELYMAIC LETTER MEM	m
𐤍	ELYMAIC LETTER NUN	n
𐤎	ELYMAIC LETTER SAMEKH	s
𐤏	ELYMAIC LETTER AYIN	ʿ
𐤐	ELYMAIC LETTER PE	p
𐤑	ELYMAIC LETTER SADHE	š
𐤒	ELYMAIC LETTER QOPH	q
𐤓	ELYMAIC LETTER RESH	r
𐤔	ELYMAIC LETTER SHIN	š
𐤕	ELYMAIC LETTER TAW	t

## 2.1 Tentative Character Data

In the format of UnicodeData.txt:

```

10EE0;ELYMAIC LETTER ALEPH;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10EE1;ELYMAIC LETTER BETH;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10EE2;ELYMAIC LETTER GIMEL;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10EE3;ELYMAIC LETTER DALETH;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10EE4;ELYMAIC LETTER HE;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10EE5;ELYMAIC LETTER WAW;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10EE6;ELYMAIC LETTER ZAYIN;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10EE7;ELYMAIC LETTER HETH;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10EE8;ELYMAIC LETTER TETH;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10EE9;ELYMAIC LETTER YODH;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10EEA;ELYMAIC LETTER KAPH;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10EEB;ELYMAIC LETTER LAMEDH;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10EEC;ELYMAIC LETTER MEM;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10EED;ELYMAIC LETTER NUN;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10EEE;ELYMAIC LETTER SAMEKH;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10EEF;ELYMAIC LETTER AYIN;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10EF0;ELYMAIC LETTER PE;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10EF1;ELYMAIC LETTER SADHE;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10EF2;ELYMAIC LETTER QOPH;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10EF3;ELYMAIC LETTER RESH;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10EF4;ELYMAIC LETTER SHIN;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;
10EF5;ELYMAIC LETTER TAW;Lo;0;R;;;;N;;;;;

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## 3 References

- Everson, Michael. 2001. "Roadmapping early Semitic scripts". N2311. <http://std.dkuug.dk/jtc1/sc2/wg2/docs/n2311.pdf>
- Henning, W. B. 1952. "Monuments and Inscriptions of Tang-i Sarvak". *Asia Major*, vol. 2, pp. 151–178.
- Naveh, Joseph. 1997. *Early History of the Alphabet: An Introduction to West Semitic Epigraphy and Palaeography*. Reprint, 2nd rev. ed., 1987. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University.

	10EE	10EF
0	𐤀 10EE0	𐤁 10EF0
1	𐤂 10EE1	𐤃 10EF1
2	𐤄 10EE2	𐤅 10EF2
3	𐤆 10EE3	𐤇 10EF3
4	𐤈 10EE4	𐤉 10EF4
5	𐤊 10EE5	𐤋 10EF5
6	𐤌 10EE6	
7	𐤍 10EE7	
8	𐤎 10EE8	
9	𐤏 10EE9	
A	𐤑 10EEA	
B	𐤒 10EEB	
C	𐤔 10EEC	
D	𐤕 10EED	
E	𐤖 10EEE	
F	𐤗 10EEF	

## Letters

10EE0	𐤀	ELYMAIC LETTER ALEPH
10EE1	𐤂	ELYMAIC LETTER BETH
10EE2	𐤄	ELYMAIC LETTER GIMEL
10EE3	𐤆	ELYMAIC LETTER DALETH
10EE4	𐤈	ELYMAIC LETTER HE
10EE5	𐤊	ELYMAIC LETTER WAW
10EE6	𐤌	ELYMAIC LETTER ZAYIN
10EE7	𐤍	ELYMAIC LETTER HETH
10EE8	𐤎	ELYMAIC LETTER TETH
10EE9	𐤏	ELYMAIC LETTER YODH
10EEA	𐤑	ELYMAIC LETTER KAPH
10EEB	𐤒	ELYMAIC LETTER LAMEDH
10EEC	𐤔	ELYMAIC LETTER MEM
10EED	𐤕	ELYMAIC LETTER NUN
10EEE	𐤖	ELYMAIC LETTER SAMEKH
10EEF	𐤗	ELYMAIC LETTER AYIN
10EF0	𐤙	ELYMAIC LETTER PE
10EF1	𐤛	ELYMAIC LETTER SADHE
10EF2	𐤝	ELYMAIC LETTER QOPH
10EF3	𐤟	ELYMAIC LETTER RESH
10EF4	𐤡	ELYMAIC LETTER SHIN
10EF5	𐤣	ELYMAIC LETTER TAW

	3rd c. B.C. Aśoka inscr.	Elymaic	Chara- cenian	Mandaic		Parallels	3rd c. B.C. (Egypt)	Nabataean		
				book- hand	'cursive'			early	monu- mental	cursive
ı	𐤀 𐤁	𐤁 𐤂	𐤁	𐤁 𐤂	𐤁 𐤂	𐤁 𐤂 𐤃	𐤁	𐤁 𐤂	𐤁	
b	𐤄 𐤅	𐤄 𐤅	𐤄 (1)	𐤄	𐤄		𐤄	𐤄	𐤄	
g	𐤇	𐤇	𐤇 (2)	𐤇	𐤇	𐤇	𐤇	𐤇	𐤇	
d	𐤈 𐤉	𐤈 𐤉	𐤈 (3)	𐤈	𐤈		𐤈	𐤈	𐤈	
h	𐤊	𐤊		𐤊	𐤊		𐤊	𐤊	𐤊	
w	𐤌	𐤌		𐤌	𐤌		𐤌	𐤌	𐤌	
z	𐤎	𐤎		𐤎	𐤎		𐤎	𐤎	𐤎	
ny>d	𐤐	𐤐		𐤐	𐤐		𐤐	𐤐	𐤐	
h	𐤒			𐤒	𐤒	𐤒	𐤒	𐤒	𐤒	
t	𐤔		𐤔 (3)	𐤔	𐤔		𐤔	𐤔	𐤔	
y	𐤖	𐤖	𐤖 (3)	𐤖	𐤖		𐤖	𐤖	𐤖	
k	𐤘 𐤙	𐤘 𐤙	𐤘 𐤙	𐤘 𐤙	𐤘 𐤙		𐤘 𐤙	𐤘 𐤙	𐤘 𐤙	
l	𐤛 𐤜	𐤛 𐤜	𐤛 𐤜	𐤛 𐤜	𐤛 𐤜		𐤛 𐤜	𐤛 𐤜	𐤛 𐤜	
m	𐤞 𐤟	𐤞 𐤟	𐤞 𐤟	𐤞 𐤟	𐤞 𐤟		𐤞 𐤟	𐤞 𐤟	𐤞 𐤟	
n	𐤠 𐤡	𐤠 𐤡	𐤠 𐤡	𐤠 𐤡	𐤠 𐤡		𐤠 𐤡	𐤠 𐤡	𐤠 𐤡	
s	𐤣 𐤤	𐤣 𐤤	𐤣 𐤤	𐤣 𐤤	𐤣 𐤤		𐤣 𐤤	𐤣 𐤤	𐤣 𐤤	
e	𐤧	𐤧	𐤧 (3)	𐤧	𐤧	𐤧	𐤧	𐤧	𐤧	
p	𐤩	𐤩		𐤩	𐤩		𐤩	𐤩	𐤩	
s	𐤫	𐤫		𐤫	𐤫		𐤫	𐤫	𐤫	
q	𐤭	𐤭	𐤭	𐤭	𐤭		𐤭	𐤭	𐤭	
r	𐤯	𐤯	𐤯 (3)	𐤯	𐤯	𐤯	𐤯	𐤯	𐤯	
e	𐤱	𐤱	𐤱 (3)	𐤱	𐤱	𐤱	𐤱	𐤱	𐤱	
t	𐤳	𐤳	𐤳	𐤳	𐤳	𐤳	𐤳	𐤳	𐤳	

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

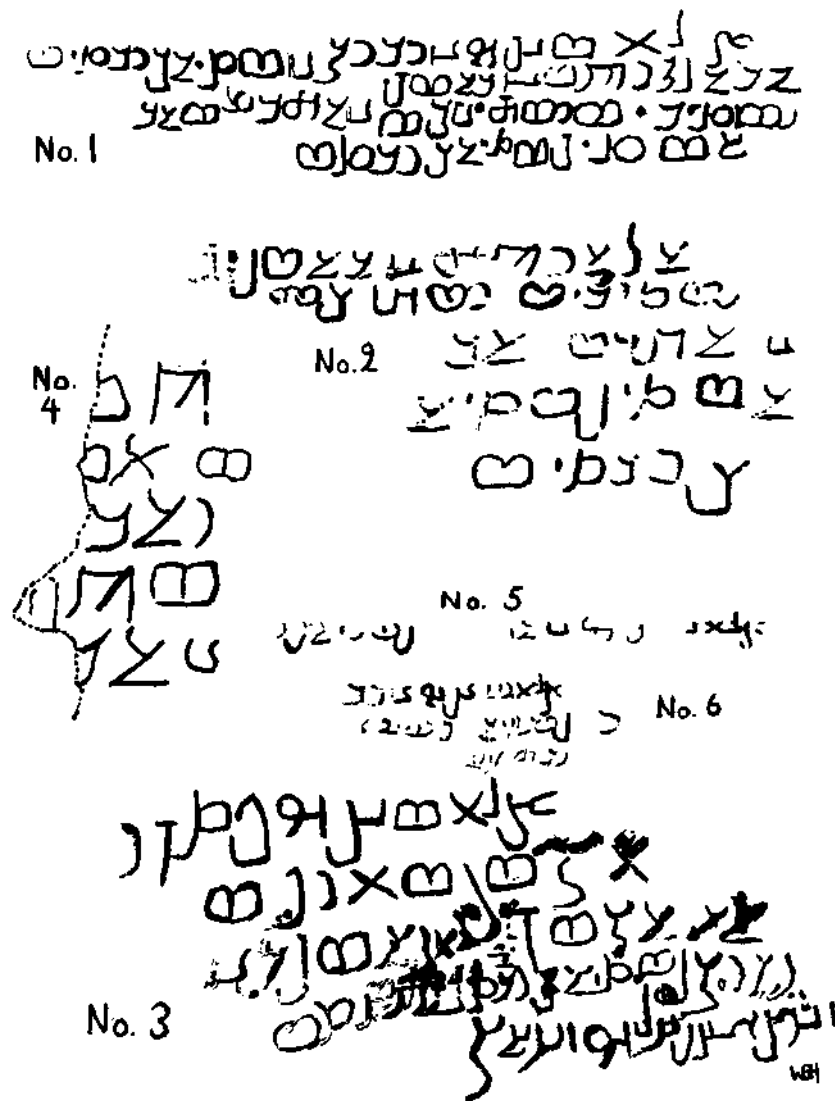
ARAMEIC S. 100-101	PARTHIAN H. 1-10	COINS OF ELYMAIS		TANG-I SARVAK					
		SMALL COPPER (PHRYG)	TETRA- DRACHM (ARMY)	No. 1	No. 2	No. 3	No. 4	No. 5	No. 6
𐤀	𐭀	𐭀	𐭀	𐭀	𐭀	𐭀	𐭀	𐭀	
𐤁	𐭁	𐭁	𐭁	𐭁	𐭁	𐭁	𐭁		
𐤂	𐭂								
𐤃	𐭃	𐭃	𐭃	𐭃	𐭃	𐭃			
𐤄	𐭄	𐭄	𐭄	𐭄	𐭄	𐭄			
𐤅	𐭅	𐭅	𐭅	𐭅	𐭅	𐭅			
𐤆	𐭆	𐭆	𐭆	𐭆	𐭆	𐭆			
𐤇	𐭇	𐭇	𐭇	𐭇	𐭇	𐭇			
𐤈	𐭈	𐭈	𐭈	𐭈	𐭈	𐭈			
𐤉	𐭉	𐭉	𐭉	𐭉	𐭉	𐭉			
𐤊	𐭊	𐭊	𐭊	𐭊	𐭊	𐭊			
𐤋	𐭋	𐭋	𐭋	𐭋	𐭋	𐭋			
𐤌	𐭌	𐭌	𐭌	𐭌	𐭌	𐭌			
𐤍	𐭍	𐭍	𐭍	𐭍	𐭍	𐭍			
𐤎	𐭎	𐭎	𐭎	𐭎	𐭎	𐭎			
𐤏	𐭏	𐭏	𐭏	𐭏	𐭏	𐭏			
𐤐	𐭐	𐭐	𐭐	𐭐	𐭐	𐭐			
𐤑	𐭑	𐭑	𐭑	𐭑	𐭑	𐭑			
𐤒	𐭒	𐭒	𐭒	𐭒	𐭒	𐭒			
𐤓	𐭓	𐭓	𐭓	𐭓	𐭓	𐭓			
𐤔	𐭔	𐭔	𐭔	𐭔	𐭔	𐭔			
𐤕	𐭕	𐭕	𐭕	𐭕	𐭕	𐭕			
𐤖	𐭖	𐭖	𐭖	𐭖	𐭖	𐭖			
𐤗	𐭗	𐭗	𐭗	𐭗	𐭗	𐭗			
𐤘	𐭘	𐭘	𐭘	𐭘	𐭘	𐭘			
𐤙	𐭙	𐭙	𐭙	𐭙	𐭙	𐭙			
𐤚	𐭚	𐭚	𐭚	𐭚	𐭚	𐭚			
𐤛	𐭛	𐭛	𐭛	𐭛	𐭛	𐭛			
𐤜	𐭜	𐭜	𐭜	𐭜	𐭜	𐭜			
𐤝	𐭝	𐭝	𐭝	𐭝	𐭝	𐭝			
𐤞	𐭞	𐭞	𐭞	𐭞	𐭞	𐭞			
𐤟	𐭟	𐭟	𐭟	𐭟	𐭟	𐭟			
𐤠	𐭠	𐭠	𐭠	𐭠	𐭠	𐭠			
𐤡	𐭡	𐭡	𐭡	𐭡	𐭡	𐭡			
𐤢	𐭢	𐭢	𐭢	𐭢	𐭢	𐭢			
𐤣	𐭣	𐭣	𐭣	𐭣	𐭣	𐭣			
𐤤	𐭤	𐭤	𐭤	𐭤	𐭤	𐭤			
𐤥	𐭥	𐭥	𐭥	𐭥	𐭥	𐭥			
𐤦	𐭦	𐭦	𐭦	𐭦	𐭦	𐭦			
𐤧	𐭧	𐭧	𐭧	𐭧	𐭧	𐭧			
𐤨	𐭨	𐭨	𐭨	𐭨	𐭨	𐭨			
𐤩	𐭩	𐭩	𐭩	𐭩	𐭩	𐭩			
𐤪	𐭪	𐭪	𐭪	𐭪	𐭪	𐭪			
𐤫	𐭫	𐭫	𐭫	𐭫	𐭫	𐭫			
𐤬	𐭬	𐭬	𐭬	𐭬	𐭬	𐭬			
𐤭	𐭭	𐭭	𐭭	𐭭	𐭭	𐭭			
𐤮	𐭮	𐭮	𐭮	𐭮	𐭮	𐭮			
𐤯	𐭯	𐭯	𐭯	𐭯	𐭯	𐭯			
𐤰	𐭰	𐭰	𐭰	𐭰	𐭰	𐭰			
𐤱	𐭱	𐭱	𐭱	𐭱	𐭱	𐭱			
𐤲	𐭲	𐭲	𐭲	𐭲	𐭲	𐭲			
𐤳	𐭳	𐭳	𐭳	𐭳	𐭳	𐭳			
𐤴	𐭴	𐭴	𐭴	𐭴	𐭴	𐭴			
𐤵	𐭵	𐭵	𐭵	𐭵	𐭵	𐭵			
𐤶	𐭶	𐭶	𐭶	𐭶	𐭶	𐭶			
𐤷	𐭷	𐭷	𐭷	𐭷	𐭷	𐭷			
𐤸	𐭸	𐭸	𐭸	𐭸	𐭸	𐭸			
𐤹	𐭹	𐭹	𐭹	𐭹	𐭹	𐭹			
𐤺	𐭺	𐭺	𐭺	𐭺	𐭺	𐭺			
𐤻	𐭻	𐭻	𐭻	𐭻	𐭻	𐭻			
𐤼	𐭼	𐭼	𐭼	𐭼	𐭼	𐭼			
𐤽	𐭽	𐭽	𐭽	𐭽	𐭽	𐭽			
𐤾	𐭾	𐭾	𐭾	𐭾	𐭾	𐭾			
𐤿	𐭿	𐭿	𐭿	𐭿	𐭿	𐭿			

The Elymaean Alphabet

Figure 2: Comparison of Aramaic and Parthian with Elymaic letters used on coins and inscriptions at Tang-i Sarvak (from Henning 1952: 168).

עזן חזק ונזא (עסזז וזוזאזאז) א

Figure 3: Elymaic inscription on the tetradrachm of Kamnaskires Orodes: *kbnškyr wrwd MLK' BR wrwd MLK'* “King Kamnaskires Orodes, son of King Orodes” (from Henning 1952: 164).



The Elymaean Inscriptions of Tang-i Sarvak

Figure 4: Renderings of Elymaic inscriptions at Tang-i Sarvak (from Henning 1952: 170).