

A Middle Elamite Inscribed Brick in the National Museum of Oriental Art, Rome

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The National Museum of Oriental Art (henceforth MNAO, according to the Italian name, Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale) in Rome owns a tiny collection of Elamite artefacts, among which a tile knob with the name of the Middle Elamite king Untaš-Napiriša (ca. 1340-1300 BC)² deserves a mention for being probably the best published exemplars among the many hundreds found at Chogha Zanbil³. The only other inscribed artefact is a brick bearing a Middle Elamite inscription⁴, whose text is already known from other exemplars. Notwithstanding this, I would like to give here a small contribution to the study of Middle Elamite royal inscriptions publishing the very exemplar of MNAO and addressing also some methodological concerns.

According to the museum records, the brick has been donated in 1998 by a lady who received it as a gift from the French archaeologists working at the site of Chogha Zanbil. The archaeological mission directed by Roman Ghirshman was active at the site in the years 1951-1962⁵. The provenance could be

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² Dates are given according to the historical framework provided in Steve & al. 2002-03 (see especially table 1 on columns 377-386).

³ Fiandra 1982. See Basello 2012a (add Mofidi-Nasrabadi 2011, 15-19 and pls. 129-137 to the treatment of door sealing practices) and Tourtet 2013 for a discussion on the functions and symbolic values of the tile knobs. Andrea Manzo ("L'Orientale" University) kindly suggested that knobs like the one published by Fiandra could be protective and decorative caps for the ends of wooden poles protruding from the external walls and embedded in the masonry in order to strengthen a massive building made of unbaked bricks; as an example, Manzo draw my attention to the poles and planks unevenly distributed in the masonry of the funerary temple K XI at Kerma in Nubia (Bonnet 2000, 60-61 and fig. 47; ca. 1750-1550 BC). Actually Ghirshman (MDP 39, 13) mentioned the remains of wooden trunks in a sector of the second stage of Chogha Zanbil ziggurat: 'Le seul matériau de chaînage ou de liaison que nous ayons rencontré furent les restes des troncs d'arbres enrobés de bitume, mis au jour dans le massif du second étage, sur sa face Nord-Ouest, près de l'angle Ouest de la ziggurat. ... A la ziggurat ces troncs d'arbres devaient renforcer le chaînage des briques crues avec celles, cuites, du coffrage extérieur'. Unfortunately, Ghirshman did not provide drawings or photos; it would have been useful to know the original arrangement and the size of the trunks.

⁴ According to Ermidoro 2011, there are three more Elamite inscribed bricks in Italian cuneiform collections.

⁵ On the French missions in Iran, see Tissot 1996.

confirmed by the inscription, the same of other bricks found in situ in the so-called temple⁶ of Išnikarap at Chogha Zanbil. The brick bears two modern labels with the provenance and the dating (13th century BC, according to the middle chronology) written in Dutch.

The god Išnikarap is well-known in Akkadian and Elamite sources from Elam⁷. The name is Akkadian, Išme-karāb, and means ‘(the god) heard the prayer’. His masculine character is debated and some scholars consider him as a goddess⁸, consort of Inšušinak, whom he is paired with in the oaths of the Old Babylonian legal documents from Susa (MU ^{AN}*Inšušinak u* ^{AN}*Išme-karāb*); in these texts his name is also common in onomastics (Išmekarāb-mušēzib, Išmekarāb-DINGIR and others, including the Elamite compound name Kuk-Išmekarāb)⁹. As a divine judge, Išme-karāb is attested also in Mesopotamian sources¹⁰. The spelling iš-me- is attested only in Akkadian, while in the Elamite texts discussed below it is always iš-ni-; iš-ni- is attested also in some Akkadian texts from Susa.

Buildings were dedicated to Išnikarap in Elam. Temti-Agun (ca. 1600 BC) built a temple (zi-ia-nam) to Išnikarap according to an Akkadian brick inscription (IRS 14) from Susa¹¹. Afterwards, another (?) Išnikarap temple (si-ia-an) was built by Untaš-Napiriša, according to an inscription found in Susa (EKI 6e = IRS 24)¹² and written in Elamite as the following texts. Hutelutuš-Inšušinak (ca. 1120-1100 BC) (re)built a ‘temple of Išnikarap of the grove’ (si-ia-an ^{AN}*iš-ni-ka₄-ra-ab-me hu-sa-me*)¹³ at Kipu (^{AŠ}*ki-pu-ú*, an unidentified site¹⁴) according to a brick inscription found in Susa (EKI 60 = IRS 51). Šutruk-Nahunte II (717-699 BC) dedicated something (the name is lost) to Išnikarap (IRS 56)¹⁵. On the extant part (EKI 37) of a longer inscription attributed to Šilhak-Inšušinak I (ca. 1150-1120 BC), the name Išnikarap is in concord with si-ip ra-ap-pi, probably a gate or a gate-related

⁶ ‘Temple’ is used here as a translation of Elamite *sian* and it is applied to buildings as the brick inscriptions did. However, it should not be considered as a building having exclusively cultic functions or a religious destination as it could be intended today. On the idea of religion in Elam, see Basello 2012b.

⁷ On Išnikarap, see Lambert 1976-1980 or, more concisely, Malbran-Labat 1995, 194-195.

⁸ God: Lambert 1976-1980, 196; see also the evidence cited in MDP 53, 13, fn. 40. Goddess: Malbran-Labat 1995, 194.

⁹ See the lists of proper nouns in MDP 22-24 and 28. On Kuk-Išmekarāb, see Zadok 1984, 18, s.v. Išme-karāb.

¹⁰ Lambert 1976-1980, 196.

¹¹ See also Potts 2010, no. 27 in Appendix 2.

¹² See also Potts 2010, no. 49 in Appendix 2 (read no. 49 instead of no. 48 in Table 1, s.v. Išme(ni)karab; add also no. 50 to the list). The evidence of this text seems to be omitted in Malbran-Labat 1995, 194, where it is stated that Išnikarap is attested on bricks only at Chogha Zanbil under the reign of Untaš-Napiriša.

¹³ For a recent discussion on Elamite *husa* ‘grove’ in relationship with god names, see Henkelman 2008, 441-443. See also Potts 2010, 58.

¹⁴ Vallat 1993, 140, s.v. Kipū.

¹⁵ In Lambert 1976-1980, 196, the inscription IRS 56 is attributed to Šutruk-Nahunte I (ca. 1190-1155 BC).

element¹⁶; the meaning ‘gate’ for *sip* seems to be assured by Achaemenid Elamite AŠ^zi-ip (corresponding to Akkadian KÁ) in DB/AE II:56 (= DB/OP §32)¹⁷.

While the preceding evidence comes from inscriptions on bricks, Untaš-Napiriša dedicated to Išnikarap also a glazed knob (EKI 13b = TZ 57; in Elamite)¹⁸ found in his temple at Chogha Zanbil and Humban-umena a lapislazuli bead (MDP 53, no. 3; in Akkadian) found in the Ville Royale at Susa. Šilhak-Inšušinak I stated also to have built a temple to Iš[nikarap] in one of his stelae found in Susa (EKI 47, §36; in Elamite). The connection between Šilhak-Inšušinak I and Išnikarap appears also in the name of his female relative Išnikarap-huhun (^{MÍ-AN}Išnikarap-BÀD), attested in several Elamite inscriptions of different provenance where the king did something for the life (*tak(i)-me*) of his family¹⁹.

Finally, Išnikarap is attested in one of the Akkadian funerary texts (ca. 1500 BC) from the entrance pit of a burial chamber near the Apadana of Susa: together with Lagamal, he precedes the dead person in his path towards the pit where Inšušinak proclaims the judgement²⁰.

As it is well-known, Chogha Zanbil (چغازنبیل ‘hillock of the basket’ in modern Persian, probably with reference to the weathered shape of the ziggurat prior to the excavations), is the ancient site of Al Untaš-Napiriša, i.e. the city of Untaš-Napiriša²¹. It is a new foundation of the Middle Elamite II period

¹⁶ König 1965, 88, fn. 4 and 5; also 84, fn. 9. EIW, 1076, s.v. si-ip.ra-ap-pi. The gate dedicated to Išnikarap in the temenos of Chogha Zanbil, mentioned in Malbran-Labat 1995, 194, is perhaps inferred from this inscription.

¹⁷ EIW, 1075, s.v. si-ip. See also Steve 1968, 295, fn. 1. Compare EIW, 657, s.v. hi-el (another term for ‘gate’), and 391, s.v. h.e-el (the term for ‘gate’ used in XPa/AE:11, the inscription on the gate of Xerxes at Persepolis).

¹⁸ See also Basello 2012a, 3-6.

¹⁹ See, for example, IRS 39, IRS 45, IRS 48 (according to lines A32-33 she is a daughter of Šilhak-Inšušinak), IRS 50; also the inscription of Hutelutuš-Inšušinak from Anšan (Lambert 1972 and Reiner 1973; according to lines 38-39 she is a sister of Hutelutuš-Inšušinak). The equivalence between Akkadian *dūru* (BÀD) and *huhun* is provided by the not coterminous bilingual TZ 31:6 and TZ 32:8 (see MDP 41, 69-70). Lambert preferred the transcription Išnikarap-pat (Lambert 1972, 65), implicitly rejecting the logographic value of BÀD.

²⁰ MDP 18, 88, no. 251 (no. 16 in Bottéro 1982; no. 2 in Steve/Gasche 1996 and Tavernier 2013). The seven tablets are published in Scheil 1916, Bottéro 1982 and Steve/Gasche 1996. Jan Tavernier presented a new translation of these texts at the *Susa and Elam* conference held in Ghent in December 2009 (see now Tavernier 2013).

²¹ In Elamite, the ancient name is attested in some brick inscriptions from Chogha Zanbil as a-al un-taš-DINGIR-GAL (EKI 13 A and B = TZ 31:2 and TZ 32:2) and possibly on a stele of Šutruk-Nahunte I from Susa as AŠ^zBÀD un-taš hi-it-hi-te ‘Dur Untaš (of the) Hit(-)hit(e)’ (EKI 20:9-10). In both cases, an Akkadian writing is used: a-al seems to be a loan-word from Akkadian *ālu* ‘city’ in construct state, while BÀD is the logogram used in Akkadian writing for *dūru* ‘fortified place’ (*huhun* in Elamite according to the not coterminous bilingual; see footnote 19). Considering that *ālu* is attested in Elamite also in *alimeli* ‘acropolis’ (attested in the syntagm *temti alimeli-r* ‘lord of the Acropolis’; from Akkadian *ālum elūm*, uru.an.na in the Sumerian inscriptions from Susa; see Poebel 1933), it seems likely that it was a commonly used loan. In Akkadian, URU^zBÀD (DⁱŠ)un-da-(a-)si ⁱDⁱid-id(-e) ‘Dur Untas (on the river) Itit(-e) (= today river Dez)’ is attested in some inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian king Ashurbanipal (occurrences in Parpola 1970, 115, s.v. DÜR-UNDĀSI, and 172, s.v. IDID) among the conquered cities in Elam. Note also URU^zBÀD un-da-si-ma (V:54) following

and it is generally described as a cult centre. I would define it as a ceremonial centre where both the gods and the kingship were celebrated, strengthening the ideological link between them²². Specific rituals and the architectural setting itself were complementary components of this ideological environment. Recent investigations (since 1999) of the Iranian and German mission led by Behzad Mofidi-Nasrabadi have greatly improved the knowledge of the site²³. As remarked by Mofidi-Nasrabadi, the ziggurat, with its estimated original height of ca. 50 m, was a landmark visible from a great distance²⁴.

The Išnikarap temple is part of the north-west complex of the inner precinct²⁵. The north-west complex, together with the nearby temple of Napiriša ('GAL' in MDP 39 and 41), groups the main

^{URU}BĀD un-da-si (V:53) in a list of conquered cities in the so-called Rassam cylinder of Ashurbanipal (text in Streck 1916, 46). Probably Untaš-Napiriša founded or gave his name to different cities.

²² On the interpretation of the site, see Lantos 2013, 149-150 and especially Mofidi-Nasrabadi in print.

²³ Mofidi-Nasrabadi 2003-2004, 2007 and also 2010.

²⁴ The ziggurat of Chogha Zanbil is exactly 32.7 km far from the Acropolis of Susa as a bird flies. The estimated height is 52.60 m according to Ghirshman in MDP 39, 59. Considering that from the top of a 50 m building one can see till ca. 25 km (distance of the horizon in a plain) and that the Acropolis of Susa is at least 15 m higher than the site of Chogha Zanbil (thus granting ca. 14 km of further visibility), Chogha Zanbil seems to be placed just within the limit of visibility of the ziggurat from Susa (25 + 14 = 39 km).

Standing on the Acropolis of Susa, the ziggurat of Chogha Zanbil is at an azimuth of 127.5°. Considering the obliquity of the ecliptic for the 13th century BC ($\epsilon = 23.84^\circ$), the sun rose between 61.5° (summer solstice) and 118.5° (winter solstice) of azimuth, so it did not reach the ziggurat; the maximum south rise of the moon was 124.9°, quite close to the small point of the ziggurat on the horizon.

We must take into account also the angular dimension of the ziggurat from Susa: the fourth stage (35.2 m long according to MDP 39, 36), which is at the limit of visibility from Susa (44 m above the ground according to the estimate in MDP 39, 59; distance of the horizon: ca. 24 km), has an angular dimension of 10 arc-second, which is well below the theoretical resolving power of the naked eye (33 arc-second for a pupil of 7 mm), so we have to suppose also a magnifying aid for the observer. It should be noted that the ziggurat is oriented with the sides roughly parallel or orthogonal to the direction of Susa (133° is the azimuth of north-east and south-west sides); the angular dimension would have been maximized (being calculated on the diagonal of the square instead of the side) if the ziggurat had been rotated of ca. 45°.

Ghirshman emphasized that the site of Chogha Zanbil is half-way between Susa and Shushtar (MDP 39, 11). The latter city lies probably in correspondence to an ancient Elamite centre (see Steve 2001 and Potts 2009 for the identification of ancient Shushtar with Tepe Surkhegan, ca. 6 km south-south-west of the modern centre). The distance between Chogha Zanbil and Shushtar is ca. 30 km as a bird flies and the line of sight is clear.

The calculations above were made using the formulae in Meeus 2002, 382-383 (neglecting the effect of atmospheric refraction which grants a somewhat larger range of visibility); the clearance of the line of sight has been checked using the SRTM elevation data (3 arc-second resolution). The height of the ground around the ziggurat of Chogha Zanbil is 74.5 to 76.5 m above the sea-level (Mofidi-Nasrabadi 2007, plan 20). The reference for the altimetry of Susa is the average level of the Shaur west of the Apadana in 1946, which can be fixed at about 66 m above the sea level (Hermann Gasche, personal communication); the level of the Acropolis at the time of Untaš-Napiriša was 25 to 30 m above the Shaur, i.e. 91 to 96 m above the sea level.

²⁵ The temples are not clearly labelled on the plans, generating some misattributions (e.g. Malbran-Labat 1995, 186). Judging from the plan and the related findings, the cellae were in the rooms nos. 13, 17 and 32 of the complex (see the axonometric plan in MDP 39, 89, fig. 52; here fig. 1). Thanks to the evidence of the

temples of Chogha Zanbil, as shown by the facade in baked bricks which no other temple in Chogha Zanbil has²⁶. The main entrance of the Išnikarap temple is from the north-west parvis, nearly in front of the north-west stairway of the ziggurat. The inscribed bricks were set in the unbaked brick masonry of the passages between rooms²⁷. Ghirshman explicitly pointed to the presence of inscribed bricks in the passages connecting rooms 26-27, 27-19, 19-14, 14-15 and 19-20 (fig. 1)²⁸. Except for the latter passage, the others seem to mark the path from the main entrance to the so-called antecella (room 16, accessible from court 15) and cella (room 17). Unfortunately, neither Ghirshman nor Steve provided detailed data on the arrangement of the inscribed bricks in the masonry. Judging from the published photos, the inscribed bricks were lined up in two rows on each side of a passage; the lower row is ca. 1.4 m from the floor and the upper row is separated from the lower one by eight or eleven rows of unbaked bricks²⁹. The first and last bricks of each inscribed row (corner bricks) were inscribed also on the face visible in the wall of the adjoining room. The inscribed bricks published by Rutten and Steve are corner half-bricks bearing a 4-line text on the full-length face and a 5-line text on the half-length one, the text being the same³⁰. According to Ghirshman and Steve, this text is attested in 101 bricks, of which 94 were in situ in the brickwork of the Išnikarap temple³¹. Only Steve provided the size of a brick: 32 × 7.5 × 15.5 cm. Judging from the published photos and from the MNAO exemplar, it seems that bricks of other sizes were used in different parts of the building.

The MNAO brick is not entirely preserved. The extant size of the brick is ca. 24 × 8 × 17 cm (length × height × depth, looking at the inscribed face), hinting at a full-size brick originally measuring 37.5 × 8 × 37.5 cm³². It seems possible that the brick has been splitted in recent times, since the two uneven surfaces exposed by the breaking do not seem to be weathered as the other ones; they are

inscribed bricks, the temples with the cellae nos. 13 (“Kiririša east”) and 32 (“Kiririša west”) were both dedicated to Kiririša (inscription TZ 7); the cella no. 17 pertains to the temple of Išnikarap (inscription TZ 8, the same of the MNAO brick). Perhaps a further cella, accessible from the parvis in a straight way (i.e. without the typical elbow path), was located in room no. 28 where the spade with the dedication to Nabû was found (MDP 33, 57, fig. 26 on p. 56, and pl. B 2-4; Mecquenem/Dossin 1938; MDP 39, 88).

²⁶ MDP 39, 88.

²⁷ MDP 39, 92. Ghirshman used generally the word ‘door’, mentioning a socket (attesting the existence of a door) only in the passage connecting rooms 19-14.

²⁸ MDP 39, 88-94.

²⁹ MDP 39, pl. L, no. 1: passage between rooms 27-19, probably the northern side; rows of eight inscribed bricks (apparently seven full-size bricks and a half-size one); size measured looking at the measuring rod in the photo: 33.5 × 10 cm (length × height); the two inscribed rows are separated by unbaked bricks for a height corresponding to eight rows. MDP 39, pl. LI, no. 1: passage between rooms 19-20; size: 37 × 8 cm; separation: 11 rows (according to MDP 39, 13, ten rows separated the inscribed rows in the external masonry of the ziggurat); the first row is at a height of 1.20 m from the floor and the second one at a height of 2.14 m according to MDP 39, 92.

³⁰ In other corner bricks from Chogha Zanbil bearing a longer text, each line of text runs from the full-length face to the half-length one (e.g. TZ 7).

³¹ MDP 39, 88; Steve 1962, 37 = MDP 41, 26.

³² This is the only kind of brick being 8 cm high (see the list in MDP 39, 12). This size is not attested in Susa (see the table in Malbran-Labat 1995, 157, column ‘Untash-Napirisha’).

particularly clean despite being very porous. However, it should be noted that the static load can break a brick in halves or quarters as a consequence of the uneven resistance of the baked and unbaked brick rows³³.

The porous fabric has macroscopic and microscopic inclusions of organic, especially straw which, on the external surfaces, burnt leaving tiny hollows. Looking at the breaking surfaces, the different levels of baking are clearly visible: the core, ca. 2 cm high, is gray, while going towards the original external surface the colour change towards a sandy brown and then to the external salmon red.

The text is written in 4 lines and it is enclosed in a rectangular frame; each line is separated from the others by a horizontal rule. Each line is ca. 1.6 ~ 1.7 cm high. The frame and the rules were probably made by tracing (not by impressing longitudinally a straight stick); the point of the tracing stylus was ca. 1 mm broad. The signs were not equally distributed in the last line: after the last sign there is a blank of ca. 7 cm.

The cuneiform signs were impressed by means of a stylus having at least one right vertex at one end. Each wedge was obtained through a single stroke of the stylus. The vertex was pressed on the clay at an angle so that one of the intersecting edges touches a longer stretch of surface, resulting in the “leg” of the wedge; this intersecting edge is the main contact edge. Vertical and horizontal wedges were made holding the stylus roughly in the same position but switching the main contact edge through a small axial rotation of the stylus and a small change in the angle between the stylus and the surface (fig. 2a-b). Generally, the horizontal wedges were obtained turning the main contact edge towards the top of the writing surface and so widening the impressed area below the groove of the “leg”; on the MNAO brick, the main contact edge of the horizontal wedges was turned towards the bottom, widening the impressed area above the groove of the “leg”³⁴. Diagonal and angle (‘Winkelhaken’) wedges were made holding the stylus roughly in the same position but switching the main contact edge as for vertical and horizontal wedges; a perfect angle wedge is obtained keeping two edges in balance so that there is not a main contact edge (fig. 2c).

In the digital drawing of the inscribed surface (fig. 3), a gray fill represents the impressed areas; within them, the three contact lines of the three edges of the stylus vertex are drawn. Unfortunately, the inscribed surface is not as well preserved as needed to record exactly these details. The combination of both contact and impression data could provide discrete data about the hand of the copyist. While this representation is somewhat experimental, it is hoped that in the future such drawings, aimed at clarifying what has been seen on the surface by the editor of the text (thus excluding accidental impressions while singling out each stroke of the stylus) and providing useful palaeographical data, will be made with a three-dimensional sculpting software, using a brush which

³³ E.g. the upper row of inscribed bricks in MDP 39, pl. L, no. 1.

³⁴ E.g. IRS 24, Br. 658 (1) (photo in Malbran-Labat 1995, 65), and IRS 25, Br. 745 (photo in Malbran-Labat 1995, 67). It is also possible to hold the contact edge in the middle, resulting in a symmetrical impressed area below and above the groove of the “leg”; e.g. IRS 23, Br. 620 (photo in Malbran-Labat 1995, 63).

simulates the proper shape of the stylus (which was different in place and time³⁵) and presenting the final results as a three-dimensional rendering.

The text can be transliterated as follows:

- (1) [ù^{DIŠ}un-taš-]DINGIR-GAL ša-ak^{AN}hu-pan-um-me-en-na-
 (2) [-ki su-un-ki-i]k an-za-an šu-šu-un-ka si-ia-an
 (3) [ú-pa-at hu-us-]si-ip-me ku-ši-h^{AN}iš-<ni>?-ka-ra-ap
 (4) [si-ia-an-ku-uk]-ra in tu₄-ni-h

As anticipated above, this dedication to Išnikarap is already known. Probably the MNAO brick was one of the 101 bricks found in the Išnikarap temple at Chogha Zanbil. The inscription has been already published, firstly by Rutten, then by Steve as TZ 8; Lambert provided a translation of the text³⁶. Rutten published a corner brick in the Louvre Museum, drawing and transliterating both the full-length face (Ra) and the half-length one (Rb); Steve (S) published a composite text from several exemplars, drawing and transliterating according to the line division of the half-length face of a corner brick.

Comparing the text of the MNAO brick (B) with those already published, the following textual variants and diverging line divisions can be singled out:

S: (1) ù^{DIŠ} un- taš- DINGIR- GAL
 Ra: (1) S S S S S S
 Rb: (1) S S S [] S S
 B: (1) [] S S

S: ša- ak hu- pan- (2) nu- me- na- -ki
 Ra: S S^{DIŠ} S um- S S S n[a]- S
 Rb: S a[k]] (2) [n]u- S S S
 B: S S^{AN} S S um- S en- S (2) [

S: su- un- ki- ik an- za- an (3) šu- šu- un- ka
 Ra: S (2) S S S S S S S S S S
 Rb: S S S S S S S (3) S S S k[a]
 B: i]k S S S S S S S

³⁵ Probably also the flexibility of the stylus was a factor of palaeographical differentiation. On the shapes of the stylus, see Taylor 2011, 13-14, with further references.

³⁶ Rutten in MDP 32, 59-60, no. XVII; Steve 1962, 37, no. 8 = Steve in MDP 41, 26-27, no. 8; Lambert 1965, 22. See also Potts 2010, no. 50 in Appendix 2.

were equipped there to prepare food. Anyway, we have to consider also the time needed to write a single brick. With my home-made parallelepiped stylus and some plastiline, I could write a cuneiform copy of the inscription in less than 4 minutes, without hurrying and carefully impressing each wedge. Obviously the ancient copyists were more skilled and also more and more faster as they progressed in copying the same text. Considering some breaks, we can suppose that a single man could make at least 12 copies of the inscription per hour, resulting in 96 copies in a 8-hour working day, i.e. nearly all the inscribed bricks found in the Išnikarap temple. This seems to be in line with the fact, noted by Steve, that most of the 141 bricks mentioning the god Nabû (TZ 41) were written by the same hand³⁹. Keeping a minimalist approach, considering that corner bricks required two copies of the inscription⁴⁰ and that other inscribed bricks have been lost, for two skilled copyists one day was enough to write all the inscribed bricks needed for the temple of Išnikarap. Using this rough time scale, and considering that some texts are a little longer than the one from the Išnikarap temple, two copyists could have written all the inscribed bricks found at Chogha Zanbil, over six thousand⁴¹, in less than two months. Surely a support team preparing the bricks, keeping them wet and handing them to the copyists was needed to fulfill such a schedule.

A last remark should be made to emphasize that the bricks could have been stamped with a mirrored matrix instead of being written manually. Many stamped bricks are known from Mesopotamia and from Susa, especially for the Neo-Elamite period⁴². However, as already noted by Kozuh in his preliminary but informative analysis of the Middle Elamite inscribed bricks from Bard-e Kargar, the stamping option had been rarely chosen⁴³. To my knowledge, no stamped bricks have been found at Chogha Zanbil. Evidently, there was no shortage of manpower and the act of manually writing each brick, producing unique exemplars, was considered more valuable to men (contemporary or future) and gods. Moreover, the bricks from Susa were stamped on the top surface, which should have been hidden by the subsequent rows of bricks, thus suggesting that handwriting was meant to be in sight while stamped

³⁹ MDP 41, 2. Unfortunately Steve did not provide the exact number of bricks copied by this hand. Moreover, it is not clear whether it was the other inscriptions mentioning Nabû (TZ 42, only 6 exemplars) to have bricks written by this hand. I think that the two ‘équipes’ of copyists mentioned in the introduction to TZ 42 (MDP 41, 82) could correspond simply to two copyists.

⁴⁰ Unfortunately we have no data to estimate the percentage of corner bricks on the whole number of inscribed bricks.

⁴¹ MDP 39, 4. Steve in MDP 41, 1, mentioned 5257 inscribed bricks found till April 1965; however, he counted only the bricks found in situ and many bricks were found also afterwards; moreover, he did not provide the number of corner bricks which required two inscriptions to be copied.

⁴² E.g. Walker 1981. For Susa, Malbran-Labat 1995, 154-164 (note that, among the bricks showed on p. 155, a-c are stamped, d-f are stamped and then glazed, g seems to be handwritten).

⁴³ Kozuh 2003, 7, brick type 1.

writing was protected for future memory⁴⁴. Unfortunately, the lacking of detailed data about the arrangement of the inscribed brick in the masonry does not help us to reach reliable conclusions. It is clear, anyway, that several factors were mixed: inscribed bricks were decorative, especially when glazed with different colours or when set up in long rows; the inscribed rows completely surrounding the ziggurat at regular height intervals had probably also an apotropaic divine power in their wording; the text alone had this divine power in itself (even if it was hidden) but it could also be read by literate passers-by conveying ideological purposes; at the same time, the writing as a status symbol was perceived also by illiterate people. Finally, bricks were the simplest carriers of text in order to state property and mark one's own achievements; therefore they were often placed in passages and doors, where people passed and also good and evil could enter.

The MNAO brick presents a comparatively rare spelling of the name of Humban-umena, hu-pan-um-me-en-na-, not recorded by Rutten or Steve for this textual unit. In order to show all the attested spellings in a comprehensive manner, I have arranged them in a spelling flow chart (fig. 4)⁴⁵. It is quite clear that we are facing writing variants which probably did not affect pronunciation. As it is well known, cuneiform writing is variable in orthography and therefore can be redundant in order to facilitate reading. We can distinguish shorter and longer spellings, i.e. less and more redundant spellings. A CV-only spelling is possible (hu-pá-nu-me-na), but CV₁-V₁C combinations are also attested (hu-um, pá-an, nu-um, me-en) like (C)VC₁-C₁V ones (pan-nu, um-me, en-na). So one has to reflect on the unattested combinations, like an-nu or up-pan (the latter avoided probably because it did not render nasalized vowels before labial stops⁴⁶). Obviously we must be aware that the sequences CV, VC and CVC are a product of our interpretation, even if ancient syllabaries mostly confirm our perception.

According to the glossary in MDP 41, the Humban-umena spelling of the MNAO brick is attested 6 times. Actually I found it only in 4 textual units (TZ 5, TZ 22, TZ 33 and TZ 36), each attested in several exemplars. Looking at the exemplars published in photograph in MDP 41, the hands of two of these (TZ 5 and TZ 33) seem to be nearly the same of the MNAO brick. For example, compare the signs um (having a small horizontal wedge between the upper and lower ones in the central part of the sign) and hu (having the tiny diagonal wedge between the two vertical wedges) (fig. 5). The same spelling is attested also in several exemplars of a brick inscription of Untaš-Napiriša from Susa (IRS 24 = EKI 5b and 5e)⁴⁷.

⁴⁴ Malbran-Labat rightly addressed the problem of the visibility of the brick inscriptions (Malbran-Labat 1989, 306-307), especially for the bricks written on three or five surfaces (Malbran-Labat 1989, 300-301) which may be considered forerunners of the royal Achaemenid inscriptions on stone tables.

⁴⁵ For a presentation of this graphic device, see Basello 2006, 23-24.

⁴⁶ Stolper 2004, 72, §3.2.

⁴⁷ EIW, 680, s.v. d.hu-ban-um.me-en-na, lists also an inscription by Šilhak-Inšušinak (EKI 48b:34) where the name is partially restored.

There is only a difficult point in the reading of the MNAO brick. I cannot see the sign ni on line 3 but some space is left. It is possible that the sign was written on an organic inclusion which was afterwards burnt in the baking process, leaving a hollow. In the spellings of Išnikarap, the sign me instead of ni is attested only in Akkadian and therefore ni has been preferred here. The spelling with ka₄ instead of ka is regularly attested in the name of Išnikarap-huhun, the relative of Šilhak-Inšušinak.

I offer a tentative transcription highlighting the morphemes:

u, Untaš-Napriša šak Humpan-umena-k, sunki-k Anzan Šušun-k-a, sian upat husi-p-me kuši-h. Išnikarap Sian-kuk-r-a in tuni-h.

I would like to state briefly the value and the aims of transcription. Since cuneiform writings are variable in orthography, a transcription should be primarily intended as a way to group several phonemically equivalent spellings. Even if the phonological system of a written language could be largely guessed at best, I think that a phonemic-oriented transcription should be tried as a duty of modern scholarship in ancient languages⁴⁸. This transcription should be aimed more at the contrastive identification of single phonemes rather than at the description of each phoneme. I take this opportunity to state also that cuneiform writings, besides being logographic, are not syllabic, at least according to a linguistically defined syllable, but pluri-phonemic (i.e. representing usually more than a phoneme, generally two or three, with a single grapheme) and redundant (i.e. usually repeating the last phoneme of the preceding sign, as a hint for the reader). At the present knowledge of Elamite phonology, considering that signs transliterated with unvoiced stops could be transliterated also recurring to the homorganic voiced stop and vice versa, I prefer a minimalist approach where an unvoiced stop is systematically and conventionally written in transcription. As part of the same minimalist approach, and considering the redundant character of writing, I prefer not to use geminated consonants in transcription. Single cases not satisfactorily represented by such approach will be discussed in the future, contributing to the amelioration of the transcription.

The understanding of the text does not present particular difficulty, except for the interpretation of the much debated syntagms *upat husi-p* and *Sian-kuk*. Some other minor remarks on the text are also presented.

upat husi-p: the meaning of *upat* ‘brick’ is assured by an Elamite-Akkadian bilingual while many hypotheses were directed to the understanding of *husi*.

The brick inscriptions TZ 31 and 32, each attested on some exemplars, are well known because, while the upper register is written in Elamite, the lower one is written in Elamite in TZ 31 and in Akkadian in TZ 32, the one translating the other. In such not coterminous bilingual, Elamite ú-pa-ti-pi (TZ 31:6) corresponds to Akkadian li-bì-it-ta-šu ‘its brickwork’

⁴⁸ Transcription is also an important didactic aid in the teaching of ancient languages, asking students to read the text aloud to learn grammar and lexicon effectively. Obviously, a conventional set of phonemic equivalences is needed, and students must be aware of the arbitrariness of such a set.

(TZ 32:8)⁴⁹. *upat-p* is attested also in another brick inscription (TZ 4:6) from Chogha Zanbil and seems to be the animate plural form of *upat*, even if a brickwork should be inanimate.

It is not my concern to provide a full history of the interpretation of *husi* since Malbran-Labat did it already in a clear and informative way⁵⁰. Among the proposed meanings, one can find ‘muraille (?)’ (Scheil; plural of *husa*)⁵¹, ‘Mauer’ (König)⁵², ‘brique d’entrée’ (Lambert; contraction of **hut-sip* ‘lieu d’entrée’, with reference to the finding of inscribed bricks in passages and doorways)⁵³, ‘voûtes de briques’ (Steve; with shifted meaning from *husa* ‘grove’ > ‘wood’ > ‘beam’ > ‘ceiling’)⁵⁴, ‘briques peintes (?)’ (Vallat)⁵⁵. Afterwards, Hinz, preceded by Reiner and followed by Malbran-Labat and others (e.g. Roche and Henkelman), preferred simply ‘baked bricks’, considering *upat husi-p* as a synonym of *erimtu* which is attested only in the Akkadian texts from Susa and as a loan in Elamite⁵⁶. Vallat and Malbran-Labat rightly pointed out that *husi* is attested only in the inscriptions of Untaş-Napiriša and in one inscription of Hutelutuš-Inšušinak (IRS 53:5’-6’: ú-pa-at hu-us-si-ip-na)⁵⁷. I would like to remind also that the usual word meaning ‘baked brick’ in Elamite, the Akkadian loan *erintum*, is never attested in the inscriptions of Untaş-Napiriša. Probably the scribal school deprecated the use of *erintum* but it is unlikely that this happened because of a preference for linguistically Elamite terms since other Akkadian words are attested in the inscriptions (e.g. the names of the gates in TZ 31).

Moreover, we cannot take for granted that *upat husi-p* was intended as a reference to the carrier of the inscription, as implicitly done by some scholars. The coincidence between the usual writing material and the usual building material, clay, supports this possibility, but several different materials were used in a same building.

According to our grammatical understanding, the suffix *-p* in *husi-p* cannot be in concord neither with *sian* (whose concord is generally provided by *-me*) nor *upat*, therefore it seems likely to consider it as a reference to the whole syntagm *upat husi* (in this case to be transcribed as *upat-husi-p*). Anyway, we have seen above that *upat* is attested also with the suffix *-p*, so it is difficult to draw any secure argument⁵⁸. In 1941 Bork proposed to translate *husi-p* as an animate plural referring to Hussi, a place (near Opis?) known from an inscription

⁴⁹ MDP 41, 10; also Reiner 1969, 118.

⁵⁰ Malbran-Labat 1989, 285-286, and, more concisely, Malbran-Labat 1995, 153.

⁵¹ MDP 11, 74.

⁵² König 1965, 40-41, fn. 14.

⁵³ Lambert 1955, 43, fn. 1, and Lambert 1965, 29, s.v. *hussip*. Compare also ElW, 1075-1076, s.v. *si-ip.hu-ti-e*.

⁵⁴ MDP 41, 10-11.

⁵⁵ Vallat 1978, 100.

⁵⁶ ElW, 724, s.v. *hu-us-si-ip*. Reiner 1969, 105. Malbran-Labat 1989, 285-286, and, more concisely, Malbran-Labat 1995, 153. Roche 2006, 31ff., nos. 5ff. Henkelman 2008, 356. On Akkadian *erimtu*, see Salonen 1972, 155, s.v. *erimtu*.

⁵⁷ See also Malbran-Labat 1995, 122, s.v. *upat hussip-na* (read ‘MDP XI, n° XCIX’ instead of ‘XCI’ under the heading ‘Publications’).

⁵⁸ See also Malbran-Labat 1995, 223, endnote 191.

of Šilhak-Inšušinak (EKI 55:8: ^{AŠ}hu-us-si) probably corresponding to the city of Ҳушсу attested in a Middle Babylonian source (^{URU}ḫu-uš-si)⁵⁹; in this case, *upat Husi-p* should be translated ‘brick (made) in the way of the Husi people’.

The suffix *-me* after *upat husi-p* provides the concord to *sian*; this concord is generally translated with an adjunct indicating a building material, i.e. ‘a temple (made with) *upat husi-p*’.

Finally, some assonances of *husi* with Akkadian words can be proposed, even if there are no similar usages or contexts to support such proposals: the noun *uššu* ‘foundation’, generally used in the plural, a peculiarity that could explicate the suffix *-p* in *husi*; the verb *hussû* ‘to crush or mince’⁶⁰, attested with reference to the curative preparation of plants, which in connection with *upat* could point to the unbaked bricks made by fragments of baked bricks and therefore more resistant, a kind of bricks unknown outside Chogha Zanbil according to Ghirshman⁶¹.

Sian-kuk: this compound is clearly composed with the word *sian* ‘temple’, attested in the Elamite documentation from Middle Elamite II period on. The oldest evidence goes back to the Sukkalmah period in the Akkadian inscriptions of Temti-Agun and Temti-halki (IRS 14:4: zi-ia-nam; IRS 15:8: zi-a-na-am). In Achaemenid Elamite, *sian* is attested with the spelling zī-ia-an instead of si-ia-an⁶². More difficult is the interpretation of *kuk*: Steve considered it as a form of the verb *kuk-* or *kukt-* ‘garder, protéger’ with the meaning of ‘protection du temple’⁶³. *Sian-kuk* is widely attested in the inscriptions of Untaš-Napiriša. It is not known in the inscriptions of other kings, except for a stone pedestal with a three-line inscription of Šutruk-Nahunte I (EKI 21), found at Susa and mentioning a stela of his predecessor Untaš-Napiriša (see below).

Sian-kuk is usually taken as a reference to a religious complex made by several temples or, more specifically, to the complex of Chogha Zanbil⁶⁴. According to Vallat, who translated it as ‘téménos’, the *Sian-kuk* includes the ziggurat and the temples inside the middle wall of Chogha Zanbil, therefore excluding the palace area (the so-called Royal City) inside the outer wall⁶⁵. Henkelman preferred to consider the *Sian-kuk* as the whole complex of Chogha Zanbil⁶⁶.

⁵⁹ Bork 1941, 12, §5 and 14, §12. On the identification of Husi/Ҳушсу, see König 1965, 134, fn. 10; Brinkman 1968, 90, fn. 475, and 108, fn. 589. See also Nashef 1982, 133-134, s.v. Ҳушсу 2.

⁶⁰ CAD H, 257, s.v.

⁶¹ MDP 39, 12, type no. 3; Sauvage 1998, 20.

⁶² See the exhaustive treatment in Henkelman 2008, 469-473, appendix 3.

⁶³ MDP 41, 11, and 122, s.v. ku-uk, also 125, s.v. si-ia-an ku-uk. See already Scheil in MDP 10, 86 (‘protecteur du temple’).

⁶⁴ For a recent discussion of the different interpretations, see Potts 2010, 61.

⁶⁵ Vallat 1981, 28.

⁶⁶ Henkelman 2008, 356.

In support of the Chogha Zanbil interpretation, it is often recalled that there is no evidence for a Sian-kuk in the inscriptions from Susa, except for few cases which are, consequently, considered as brought from Chogha Zanbil in the past. The inscription of the above-mentioned stone pedestal is considered as a proof of this practice⁶⁷:

su-h-mu-tú^{MEŠ} i^{DIŠ} un-taš-DINGIR-GAL^{AŠ} si-ia-an-ku-uk ta-an-ra ú^D[^ŠŠutruk-Nahunte
^{AN}Inšušin]-ak na-pír ú-ri ur tu₄-ru-un-ra hu-ma-h a-ak^{AŠ} šu-šu-un^{AN}[Inšušinak na-pír ú-
ri i si-ma-ta-h]
*suhmutu i Untaš-Napiriša Sian-kuk ta-n-r-a – u [Šutruk-Nahunte, Inšušina]k nap-r u-r
ur turu-n-r-a, huma-h ak Šušun [Inšušinak nap-r u-r i sima-ta-h]*⁶⁸ (EKI 21:2-3)

This stela that Untaš-Napiriša put in the Sian-kuk – I Šutruk-Nahunte took (it as) Inšušinak, my god, told me and [I put it in front of Inšušinak (= in the temple of Inšušinak), my god,] in Susa.

Actually, *Sian-kuk* is attested in nearly all (IRS 25-31, EKI 15) the inscriptions of Untaš-Napiriša found in Susa, some (IRS 25, IRS 27-28 and IRS 30) attested in about one hundred exemplars. *Sian-kuk* is attested also in the Akkadian brick inscription of Untaš-Napiriša (IRS 32), where it is not translated and appears to be a loan or a proper noun; the spelling is the same used in Elamite. It has been emphasized that these textual units are known also from Chogha Zanbil. However, there are few exceptions: IRS 31 is not attested at Chogha Zanbil; some gods (Sin and Belala in IRS 30 ≈ TZ 27; Nazit and NUN-LUGAL⁶⁹ in IRS 27 ≈ TZ 28 and 35) are not attested in the corresponding textual units from Chogha Zanbil. These exceptions may be due to chance.

In addition to the Akkadian inscription of Untaš-Napiriša from Susa (IRS 32), *Sian-kuk* is not translated also in the above-mentioned not coterminous bilingual from Chogha Zanbil (TZ 31 and TZ 32) and in other Akkadian inscriptions from Chogha Zanbil (TZ I with the same text of IRS 32, TZ IV-V), so I feel authorized to maintain the Elamite words also in translation⁷⁰.

In order to further our understanding, we have to focus on the contexts. In some occurrences, *Sian-kuk* seems to be a place. In the above-quoted inscription of Šutruk-Nahunte (EKI 21), *Sian-kuk* is preceded by the so-called determinative marking place names or locations, the classifier AŠ, just like *Šušun* ‘Susa’. In the curse formula of the not coterminous

⁶⁷ Grillot/Vallat 1978, 82, fn. 3; see also Potts 1999, 236 with further textual proofs.

⁶⁸ The restored text, proposed by Scheil more than one hundred years ago (MDP 3, 42, no. XXV) and followed by König, is based on the inscription of Šutruk-Nahunte on the stela of Naram-Sin (EKI 22).

⁶⁹ Alternative reading according to Malbran-Labat 1995, 220, endnote 110: Zunkir-rišarra.

⁷⁰ Roche made the same choice (Roche 2006, 31ff, nos. 5ff; see also p. 32, fn. 46).

bilingual from Chogha Zanbil, *Sian-kuk* is connected to *huhun* ‘fort, (fortification) wall’ and followed by the postposition *-ma* (usually considered as locative in function):

ak-ka hu-hu-un si-ia-an-ku-uk-ma ku-ta-a a-ha-ar li-in-ra ...

aka huhun Sian-kuk-ma kuta aha-r li-n-r-a, ... (TZ 31:6)

Who will deliver an arrow here in the (fortification) wall (of the) *Sian-kuk*, ...

Compare also the corresponding Akkadian text whose meaning is clearer to us:

ša a-na BĀD ša si-ia-an ku-uk qa-a-na i-na-as-sú-ku ...

ša ana dūri ša Sian-kuk qanâ inassuku ... (TZ 32:8)

Who will throw an arrow towards the (fortification) wall of the *Sian-kuk*, ...

In the same inscriptions, *Sian-kuk* is the object of the verb *kuši-* ‘to build’:

ha-al ma-šu-um pi-it-te-ka/ga a-al un-taš-DINGIR-GAL a-ak si-ia-an-ku-uk a-ha(-an)
ku-ši-h

hal mašum piteka Al Untaš-Napiriša ak Sian-kuk aha(n) kuši-h. (TZ 31:1-2; TZ 32:1-2;
cf. TZ 6:2)

Having levelled[?] the land[?], I built here Al Untaš-Napiriša and the *Sian-kuk*.

There is only another occurrence of *Sian-kuk* in a clause with *kuši-*:

si-ia-an-ku-uk si-ia-an-i-me ú-pa-at hu-us-si-ip-me ku-ši-h

Sian-kuk sian-i-me upat husi-p-me kuši-h. (IRS 30:3 = TZ 27:3)

I built the *Sian-kuk* of his (= the god praised before) temple of baked[?] bricks.

Sian-kuk sian-i-me is commonly translated as ‘the temple of the *Sian-kuk*’, with an uncommon inverted genitive construction⁷¹. Anyway, a plain genitive construction does not imply that the *Sian-kuk* is smaller than the temple or inside the temple; a possible interpretation could be: ‘I built the enclosure (*Sian-kuk*) of his temple’. The text goes on as follows:

^{AN}na-ah-hu-un-te la-an-si-ti-ir-ra ir ša-ri-h

Nahunte lansit-r(a) ir šari-h;

⁷¹ MDP 41, 55: ‘j’ai (done) construit ce temple du Lieu-saint aux *voûtes* de briques’; Malbran-Labat 1995, 74: ‘j’ai construit son temple du *siyan-kuk* en briques cuites’.

I shaped⁷² a golden (statue of) Nahunte⁷³;

ir si-ia-an-ku-uk si-ia-an-ra ir mu-ur-tah⁷⁴

ir *Sian-kuk sian-r-a ir mur-ta-h*.

I placed him (= Nahunte as a statue) (who is) of⁷⁵ the *Sian-kuk*-temple.

This passage is difficult and different translations have been proposed⁷⁵. According to the usual translation of the verb *mur-ta-*, ‘to place’, a locative would be expected; in its stead, we have a construction *ir ...-r*, literally ‘he (who is) of ...’, which seems to be comparable to the syntagm DN *Sian-kuk-r-a* (see below). *Sian-kuk* and *sian* seems to join in a syntagm but their relationship is not clear. It would be interesting to consider *Sian-kuk* as the name of a temple, but the syntagm could be interpreted also in a broader way. Other occurrences of *Sian-kuk* in unique contexts of difficult interpretation are IRS 26 = TZ 38:3, IRS 31:4 and TZ 32:7.

Most of the occurrences of *Sian-kuk* are strictly connected to a divine name (DN) as in the MNAO brick:

DN *Sian-kuk-r-a*

The *-r* concord is referred to DN as shown by the following alternative writings using *-p* instead of *-r* when two or more divine names are mentioned:

DN₁ *ak* DN₂ *Sian-kuk-p-a* (e.g. IRS 27:5)

DN₁ DN₂ *ak* DN₃ *Sian-kuk-p-a* (e.g. TZ 31:7-8)⁷⁶

We have, however, also occurrences following this pattern:

DN₁ (*ak*) DN₂ *Sian-kuk-r-a* (e.g. TZ 36:2-3 and TZ 37:4, IRS 29:4-5, TZ 21:2-3 and 5-6, TZ 39:4 without *ak*)

⁷² The verb *šari-* is often attested with metals and metal objects; the proposed translation is deduced from these contexts (cf. Malbran-Labat 1995, 183). It is not clear if ša-ri-ik(-²ku) in IRS 23:4 is a form of the same verb.

⁷³ The gods Sin and Belala are attested as variants.

⁷⁴ Cf. e.g. MDP 53, no. 5:3-4: DN ir ša-ri-h ir si-ia-an-ra mu-ur-tah (DN = divine name).

⁷⁵ MDP 53, 16, no. 5 (Steve): ‘J’ai sculpté (une) Upurkupak, elle (qui est) du temple, je l’ai installée’. EIW, 1096, s.v. si-ya-an-ku-uk.si-ya-an.ra: ‘ich goß einen goldenen Sonnengott; als einen mit einem Siyankuk-Tempel stellte ich ihn auf’. Malbran-Labat 1995, 74: ‘j’ai sculpté (un) Sin en or, je l’ai installé en tant que le (dieu) d’un temple du *siyan-kuk*’. Grillot-Susini 2008, 92: ‘(la statue de) Pelala en or je l’ai façonnée, (en tant que) celle du *siyan-kuk* je l’ai établie’. Quintana 2010, 75: ‘un dios Nahunte de oro... como lo más sagrado del templo (allí) lo establecí’; see also the related remark (Quintana 2010, 75, fn. 62): ‘En este ejemplo el sustantivo *siyankuk* – seguido de *siyan*, su aposición genitival – hace las veces de la preposición’.

⁷⁶ See the occurrences in MDP 41, 125, s.v. si-ia-an ku-uk, and König 1965, 213, s.v. Si-ia-an-ku-uk-pa, Si-a-an-ku-uk-ra, Si-ia-an-ku-uk-ra. König listed some occurrences without *ak* (e.g. EKI 9 I d:5 and EKI 13 A §8) but they seem due to erroneous restorations. Steve listed occurrences without *ak* together with the ones with *ak*; a check on the transliteration of the texts showed that all the occurrences have *ak*; however, it is likely that *ak* was actually omitted sometimes considering the high number of exemplars and variants. Add a-ak in the transliteration of TZ 28 A:5 according to the related drawing and to MDP 41, pl. XI, 1. Note also ^{AN}*Naprata-p Sian-kuk-p-a* in TZ 17:4.

As remarked by Vallat, it is possible that in this case only DN₂ has to be connected to the *Sian-kuk*⁷⁷, even if both IRS 27 (with plural concord) and IRS 29 (with singular concord) feature the same two gods, Napiriša and Inšušinak.

In the Akkadian texts, this connection is rendered by *ša*. I provide a longer excerpt in order to give a sample of text:

a-na-ku ... ku-ku-un-na-a e-pu-uš-ma a-na DINGIR-GAL ù ^{AN}MÜŠ-EREN ša si-ia-an-ku-uk ad-di-in ša i-na-ap-pa-lu ... ḥa-at-tu₄ ša DINGIR-GAL ^{AN}MÜŠ-EREN ù ^{AN}ki-ri-ri-ša ša si-ia-an-ku-uk i-na mu-uḥ-ḥi-šu li-iš-ša-ki-in ...

anāku ... kukunnā ēpuš-ma ana DN₁ u DN₂ ša Sian-kuk addin. ša inappalu ... ḥattu ša DN₁ DN₂ u DN₃ ša Sian-kuk ina muḥḥišu liššakin ... (IRS 32:1-4,6-7)

«I ... build the *kukunnū* ..., and I offered it to the god DN₁ and DN₂ of the Sian-kuk. Let the terror of DN₁, DN₂ and DN₃ of the Sian-kuk be placed over anyone who will spoil it (= the *kukunnū*), ...».

The usual translation of the syntagm DN₁ (*ak* DN₂) *Sian-kuk-r/p* is ‘DN₁ (and DN₂) of the Sian-kuk’⁷⁸. The relationship translated with ‘of’ deserves a special attention beyond morphology and syntax. It seems to be a way to tie the worship of a deity to a specified place, the Sian-kuk, in implicit competition with other temples entitled to the same deity.

Therefore, considering the aims and functions of a brick inscription, it seems possible that the Sian-kuk was more than a place: it could be also the institution operating in that place. In the brick inscriptions of Untaš-Napiriša, after the royal titulary, there is usually a formula with the verb *kuši-* ‘to build’ pointing out which building had been built; only when the building is offered (formula with the verb *tuni-*) to that god, or that god is asked to be favourable (formula with *tela-k-ni*), it is added ‘of the Sian-kuk’ to the name of the god⁷⁹. Coming back to the MNAO brick, there is no mention of a temple of Išnikarap, but it is written that a temple was offered to such deity of the Sian-kuk. ‘Išnikarap of the Sian-kuk’ seems to be a reference more to a human institution (which receives something and should be favourable) than to a celestial god. Obviously, this institution was involved in the cult and maintenance of the cult building and therefore also in economic affairs. A parallel could be found perhaps in the Sumerian term *èš* pointing to a cult precinct with several temples and including

⁷⁷ Vallat 1981, 28 and fn. 5.

⁷⁸ Already Scheil in MDP 11, 13 (‘ceux de Siyan kuk’); cf. Scheil as quoted in EIW 1095, s.v. si-ya-an.ku-uk.pa. Note Roche’s translation ‘Le *siyan kuk*, je l’ai donné à Inšušinak’ (Roche 2006, 31-33, nos. 5-7) versus ‘j’en ai fait don au Grand-dieu et Inšušinak du *siyan kuk*’ (p. 36, no. 8, and similarly pp. 38-40, nos. 9-12).

⁷⁹ The instances are many: e.g. IRS 27 with the formula *tuni-*; e.g. IRS 25 with the formula *tela-k-ni*. The textual units having one or both formulas and not mentioning a god of the Sian-kuk in one of them are relatively few: e.g. TZ 11-12 (without the formula *tela-k-ni*), TZ 38 (with Napiriša in the formula *tela-k-ni*), TZ 44 (with Nusku in the formula *tela-k-ni*), TZ 45 (without a god in the formula *tela-k-ni*).

administrative and economic buildings⁸⁰. Waiting for in-depth clay analyses and formal and palaeographic comparisons⁸¹, the hypothesis of the inscribed bricks brought from Chogha Zanbil would not be necessary, since it is possible that the Sian-kuk had a seat also in Susa. Moreover, from a methodological point of view, we have to distinguish between the moving of stelae or statues and the displacement of brick inscriptions, even if surely many inscribed bricks were left unused in the storerooms of Chogha Zanbil.

kuši-: verb widely attested in the Middle Elamite inscriptions. The general meaning is ‘to build’. In Achaemenid Elamite this meaning is attested only in the royal inscription DPF/AE on the southern terrace wall of Persepolis⁸². This probably marks a major change in the lexicon of the royal ideology under Iranian influence. In the Elamite administrative tablets from the so-called Persepolis Fortification archive, *kuši-* is attested only with the meaning ‘to bear (children)’⁸³. This meaning was known already in Middle Elamite, as attested in a brick inscription of Šilhak-Inšušinak (IRS 48:A32-33) where a list of personal names is followed by *puhu-kuši-k-u-p* ‘my (*u*) born (*kuši-k*) children (*puhu-p*)’⁸⁴.

While it is possible to devise a common meaning ‘to make’, suitable both for a building and a child (‘to make a building’ and ‘to make a child’), I think it is preferable to postulate a polysemy like the one of Biblical Hebrew *bayit* or Akkadian *bītu*, meaning both ‘house’ and ‘household, lineage’ (‘casa’ and ‘casata’ in Italian).

in: usually interpreted as a resumptive pronoun formed by the demonstrative pronoun *i* followed by the inanimate suffix *-n*.⁸⁵ The reference is to the whole syntagm *sian upat husi-p-me*. In similar contexts, in (e.g. TZ 33:3 and TZ 34:4, both without *Sian-kuk-r-a*), i (e.g. TZ 55:8 and TZ 58:7) and it[?] (TZ 57:3) are attested.⁸⁶

I suggest the following translation:

I, Untaš-Napiriša son of Humpan-umena, king of Anšan (and) Susa, built a temple of baked (?) bricks. I offered it to the god Išnikarap of the Sian-kuk.

I present also an Italian translation:

Io, Untaš-Napiriša figlio di Humpan-umena, re di Anšan (e) Susa, ho costruito un tempio di mattoni cotti (?) (e) lo ho offerto al dio Išnikarap del Sian-kuk.

⁸⁰ Szarzyńska 2011, 2.

⁸¹ In the meantime, see Ruben/Trichet 1980, even if not related to inscribed bricks.

⁸² DPF/AE:8,10,11-12,15 (2 times) and 16.

⁸³ See now Romagnuolo 2012.

⁸⁴ On the polysemy of *puhu*, see Giovinazzo 1995.

⁸⁵ Stolper 2004, 76-77, §4.3.6.

⁸⁶ i could be a defective writing for *in*. In TZ 12:3, ú occurs in the place of *in*; it can be interpreted as a first person singular pronoun.

Besides the great collections published by Steve and Malbran-Labat, and waiting for the new edition of Chogha Zanbil bricks by Heidemarie Koch, the MNAO brick can be added to the stray ones published by Van Soldt (in the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden), García Recio (in the Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid), Kozuh (from the site of Bard-e Kargar), Michaud (probably pertaining to the Bard-e Kargar group, but found in the bazar of Peshawar), Roche (in the Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels) and Lafont (in the Archaeological Museum of the American University of Beirut)⁸⁷. Many other bricks remain unpublished and sometimes surface on the antiquities market. Some of them are indexed by the Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative⁸⁸. It is also hoped that more studies on the formulary, like the one by Tourovets⁸⁹, will be written in the future.

Many functions converged in an inscribed brick. First of all, the writing of the name is a kind of property mark, considering that the palace and temple institutions represented by the king were a sort of great public firm. Secondly, writing was a status symbol and having his own name written was a display of power⁹⁰. Moreover, the written text conveys an ideological message. But I think that memory was the main concern⁹¹, as showed by the brick inscription IRS 38 according to which the king Šilhak-Inšušinak respectfully wrote the name of one of his predecessors who had (re)built a temple of Inšušinak⁹², or by IRS 49 where an inscription of the same king was added to a newly copied Akkadian inscription of an ancient king. A similar attitude is found centuries later in the Cyrus Cylinder (line 43), where the discovery of an inscription of Ashurbanipal is reported⁹³.

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⁸⁷ Van Soldt 1982, 44-48 and pl. 2-6, nos. 3-8; Michaud 2000; García Recio 2000, 333-335 and figs. 1-3, nos. 1-3; Kozuh 2003; Roche 2006; Lafont 2011, 174-176, nos. 61-62 and 64.

⁸⁸ <<http://cdli.ucla.edu/>> (in the search page, type 'elamite' in the language text box).

⁸⁹ Tourovets 2005. See also Grillot 1982.

⁹⁰ See the comprehensive treatment in Radner 2005. See also Seminara 2004, especially §§3-4.

⁹¹ As thoroughly argued for the ancient civilizations in Assmann 1992.

⁹² IRS 38:5; see also IRS 43:6-7 and the inscriptions cited in Rossi 2000, 2081-2082, §4.3.5. For a survey of the epigraphic documentation related to Šilhak-Inšušinak, see Henkelman 2010.

⁹³ Text published in Schaudig 2001, 550-556, no. K2.1. A list of translations of the Cyrus Cylinder is provided in Basello 2013, 258-259.

Behzad Mofidi-Nasrabadi (Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz) inspired many parts of this research with his deeper insight and field knowledge of Chogha Zanbil.

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Abbreviations

- CAD The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, Chicago 1956-2010 (<<http://oi.uchicago.edu/research/pubs/catalog/cad/>>).
- DB/AE Elamite text of the inscription of Darius I at Bisotun, published in F. Grillo-Susini/C. Herrenschmidt/F. Malbran-Labat, La version élamite de la trilingue de Behistun: une nouvelle lecture, *Journal Asiatique* 281, 1993, 19-59.
- DB/OP Old Persian text of the inscription of Darius I at Bisotun, in: R. Schmitt, The Bisotun Inscriptions of Darius the Great. Old Persian Text (Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum, part I, 1, texts I), London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1991.
- DPf/AE Elamite inscription of Darius I on the southern terrace wall of Persepolis; the text is available in *Romagnuolo* 2012, 185-187.
- EKI Elamite royal inscriptions (König 1965).
- EIW W. Hinz/H. Koch, *Elamisches Wörterbuch* (in 2 Teilen) (*Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran, Ergänzungsband 17*), Berlin (1987).
- IRS brick inscriptions from Susa (Malbran-Labat 1995).
- MDP 3 V. Scheil, *Textes élamites-anzanites. Première série* (*Délégation en Perse. Mémoires 3*), Paris (1901).
- MDP 10 V. Scheil, *Textes élamites-sémitiques. Quatrième série* (*Délégation en Perse. Mémoires 10*), Paris (1908).
- MDP 11 V. Scheil, *Textes élamites-anzanites. Quatrième série* (*Délégation en Perse. Mémoires 11*), Paris (1911).
- MDP 18 G. Dossin, *Autres textes sumériens et accadiens* (*Mémoires de la Mission Archéologique de Perse 18*), Paris (1927).
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MDP 41 M.-J. Steve, Tchoga Zanbil (Dur-Untash), vol. III, Textes élamites et accadiens de Tchoga Zanbil (Mémoires de la Délégation Archéologique en Iran 41), Paris (1967).

MDP 46 M.-J. Steve/H. Gasche, L'acropole de Suse. Nouvelles fouilles (rapport préliminaire), (Mémoires de la Délégation Archéologique en Iran 46), Leiden / Paris (1966).

MDP 53 M.-J. Steve, Nouveaux mélanges épigraphiques. Inscriptions royales de Suse et de la Susiane (Mémoires de la Délégation Archéologique en Iran 53), Nice (1987).

TZ inscriptions from Chogha Zanbil (MDP 41).

XPa/AE Elamite text of the inscription of Xerxes (in four trilingual exemplars) on the great gate of Persepolis, published in Weissbach 1911, 106-109, 'Xerx. Pers. A'.

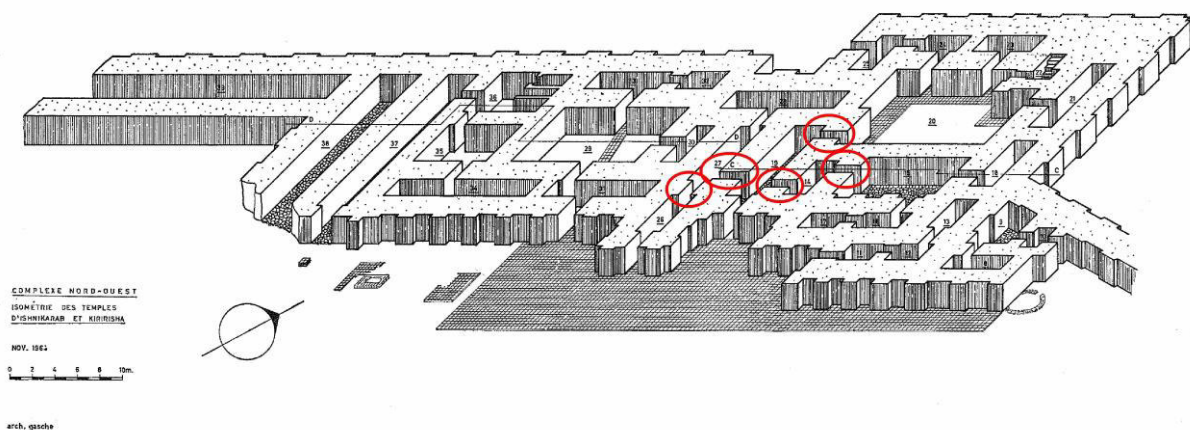


Fig. 1: Axonometric plan of the north-west complex (after MDP 39, 89, fig. 52), inside the inner precinct of Chogha Zanbil. The known passages with inscribed bricks (according to MDP 39, 88-94) are marked with circles.

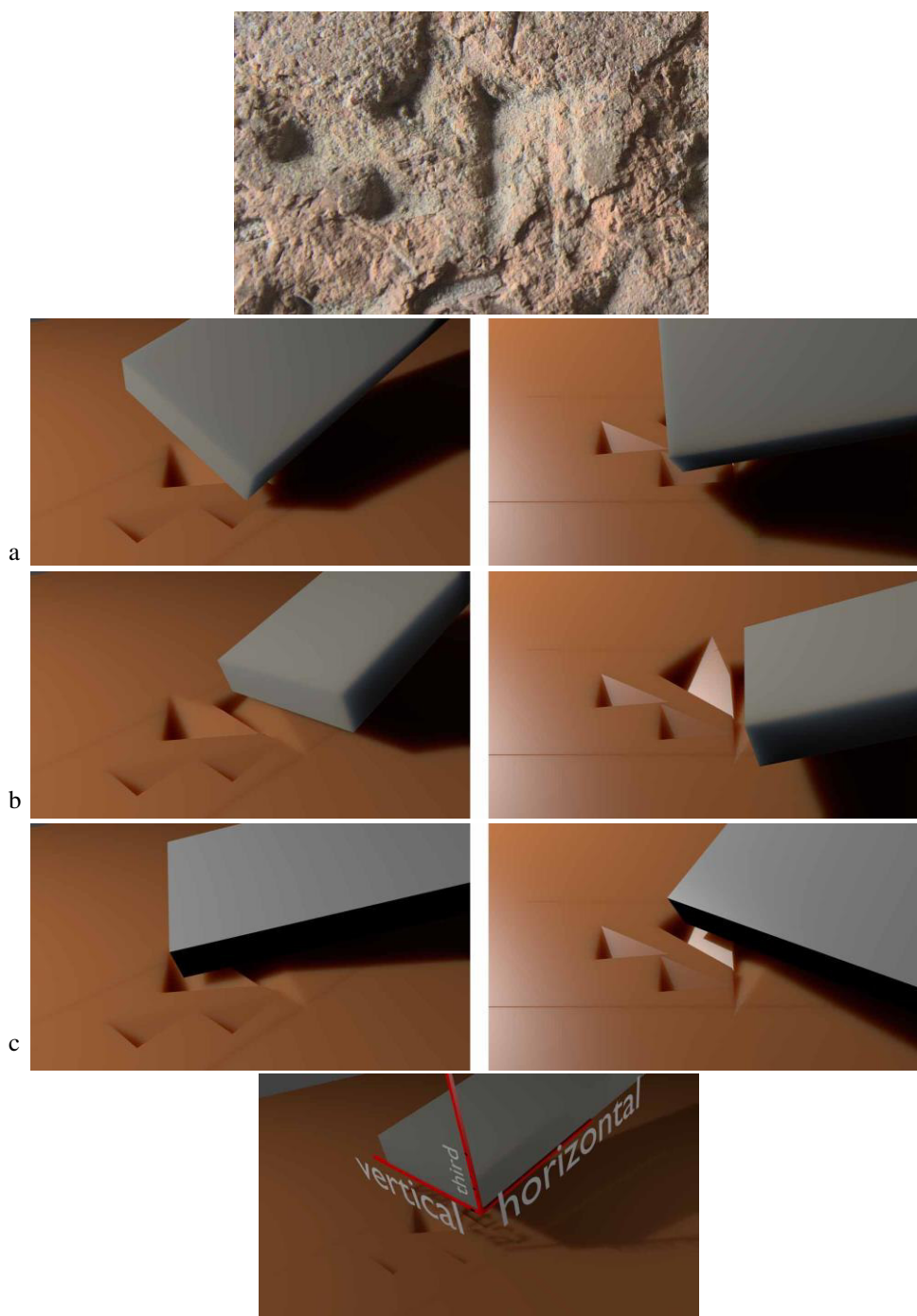


Fig. 2: Detail of the first extant sign DINGIR on line 1 (top; photo by the author) and ideal reconstruction of its writing process from two different points of view (left: oblique view from the left; right: front view; 3D graphic by the author). The simulation, made with the software Blender, involved a rigid parallelepiped stylus with sharp edges and a soft material surface. The figures (a-c) have been taken a moment after the impression of the following wedges: the second horizontal wedge (a), the vertical wedge (b) and the corner wedge (c). According to the reference figure (bottom), the main contact edges are: the 'horizontal' edge (a), the 'vertical' edge (b), the 'vertical' and 'horizontal' edges in balance (c). The same wedge-shaped impressions could be obtained with different-shaped and different-held styli: the essential element is a roughly rectangular vertex. The effect of clay displacement has been neglected.

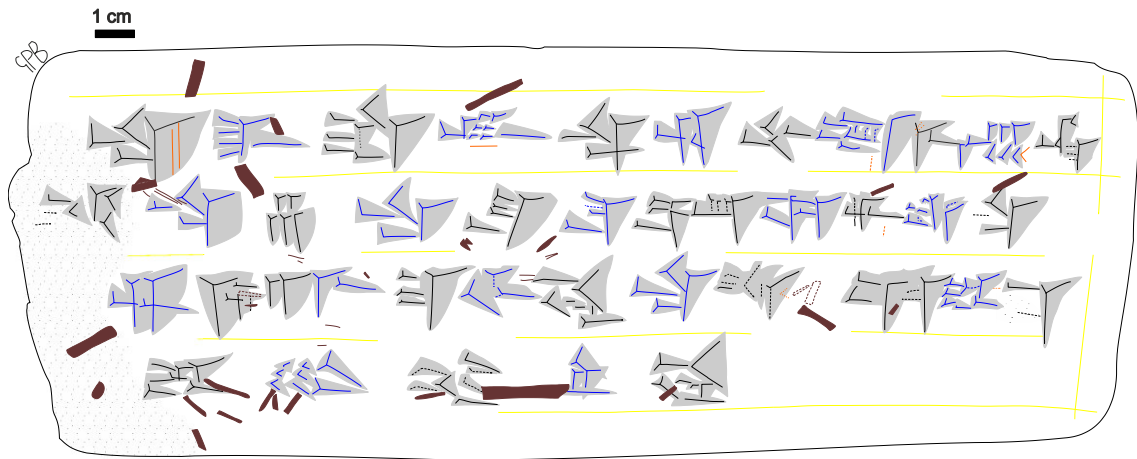


Fig. 3: Drawing of the inscribed face of the MNAO brick (vector graphic by the author). Gray fill: impressed wedges. Black and blue lines: contact lines of the stylus edges (grouped by colour to distinguish each sign); dashed lines: partially guessed contact lines. Orange lines: accidentally impressed or traced lines. Dotted pattern: effaced surface. Brown fill: hollows left by burnt inclusions. Yellow lines: traced lines.

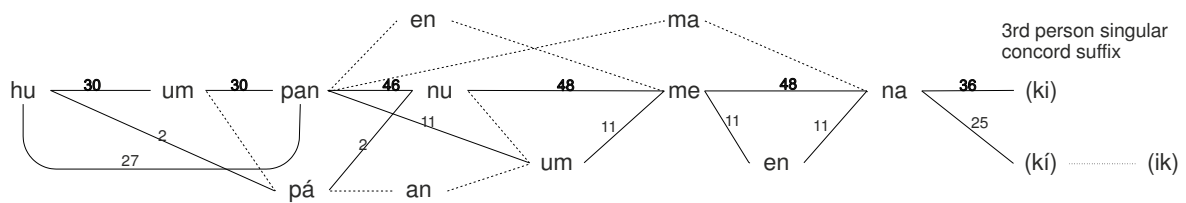


Fig. 4: Spelling flow chart of Humpan-umena (vector graphic by the author). The number of occurrences of each couplet of signs are counted according to MDP 41, 129, s.v. Hu-um-ban-nu-me-na-gi, which refers probably to textual units, not to single exemplars, even if variants in the exemplars of the same textual unit are common and given by Steve in the text. Dashed lines connect further spellings given in EIW 679, s.v. hu-ban.nu-me-en-na, and Roche 2006. The spelling with final -kí-ik is attested in IRS 26, exemplar Br. 789.

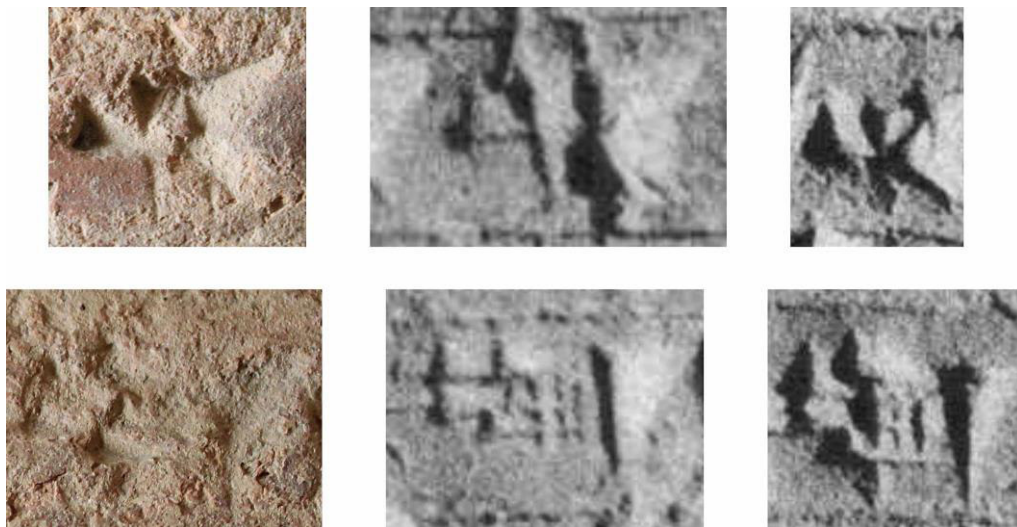


Fig. 5: Comparison of the signs hu (top) and um (bottom) in the MNAO brick (photo by the author), TZ 33 (after MDP 41, pl. XIV.3) and TZ 5 (after MDP 41, pl. III.3) (from left to right).



Fig. 6: The MNAO brick (photo and digital editing by the author).



Fig. 7: The inscribed face of the MNAO brick (photo by the author).



Fig. 8: Detail of some wedge impressions on lines 2-4 (photo by the author).

Note also the hollows left by burnt organic inclusions.

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Elam and its Neighbouring Regions

Editor
Behzad Mofidi-Nasrabadi

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Editor

Behzad Mofidi-Nasrabadi

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