

THE MONUMENTS AND INSCRIPTIONS OF TANG-I SARVAK

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When Baron C. A. de Bode, then First Secretary at the Russian Embassy in Tehran, passed through Behbehān¹ on his tour through Fārs and Khūzistān, in January 1841, the local *de facto* governor, Mirza Kūmo,² drew his attention to the existence of sculptured stones with inscriptions in a mountain gorge a few dozen miles to the north of Behbehān. Realising that no news of these antiquities had as yet reached the learned world, de Bode duly visited (on January 29) the beautiful but desolate valley, whose name he spelt *Tengi-Saulek*, described the remains, made drawings of some of the reliefs, and copied the inscriptions he noticed, all in the course of an afternoon; see his *Travels in Luristan and Arabistan*, London 1845, Vol. i, 351 sqq.

De Bode's report attracted little attention. It is true, the reliefs were briefly mentioned in handbooks; thus by Spiegel in his *Erânische Alterthumskunde*, Vol. iii (1878), p. 820 (the name misspelt as *Teng-i-Salek*); or by Justi in an annotation in the *Grundriss der Iranischen Philologie*, Vol. ii (1896-1904), p. 486, n. 5, where the astonishing assertion³ is made that *Tenk-i Saulek* (*sic*) is *ohne Zweifel* identical with the Seleucia/Soloke of Strabo, xvi, 1, 18, p. 744; but the inscriptions fell altogether into oblivion. Although the reliefs obviously belong to Parthian times, indeed constitute the principal series of Parthian rock-sculptures, even so well-informed a scholar as E. Herzfeld could write "there are no other Arsacid sculptures [than those at Mount Bisutūn] of any importance known in Iran" (*Archaeological History of Iran*, 1935, p. 57); similarly K. Erdmann, *Die Kunst Irans zur Zeit der Sasaniden*, Berlin 1943, p. 46. R. Ghirshman, in his discussion

¹ The district of Behbehān (the successor of the ancient town of Arragān) was counted sometimes to Persis (Fārs), sometimes to Elymais (Khūzistān). In Muslim times it mostly belonged to Fārs, the frontier being formed by the river *Tāb-Mārān/Kurdistān/Jarrdāh*, but now it is part of Khūzistān. The valley of Tang-i Sarvak belongs naturally to Khūzistān, but sometimes even *Rām-hurmus* was included in Fārs (see Muqaddasi, 421, 16-7; so also at the time of de Bode's visit).

² Properly *Mirzā Qavāmā* (short for *Qavām-ed-dīn*), the uncle of the *de jure* governor, *Mirzā Sultān Muḥammad Khān* (whose father's name was *Mirzā Manṣūr Khān*, cf. de Bode, i, 338). See *Fārs-nāme*, i, 297; ii, 268 sq.

³ Following a modest suggestion by de Bode, i, 365, footnote.

of the stele of Khwāsak (found at Susa), does not refer to the reliefs of Tang-i Sarvak, in spite of their affinity in style and their proximity in place and time; see *Monuments Piot*, xlv (1930), 97-107.

The official name of the valley is *Tang-i Sarvak*, i.e. "the gorge of the little cypresses" (*saulek* is merely the local dialect form). Under this name, which is evidently of recent origin, the valley is mentioned several times in the invaluable Persian geographical handbook, the *Fārs-nāme-yi Nāṣirī*, which was completed in 1886-7 and printed in Tehran in 1895. The second volume, p. 263, carries the following description:—

"In the county of *Hūme-yi Behbehān*¹ at a distance of nine leagues to the north of the town of Behbehān there is a mountain gorge, a quarter of a league long, known as Tang-i Sarvak. Passing through the gorge one enters a stretch of hills and hollows, extending for half a league by three-quarters of a league; they are covered with many wild-growing 'noble cypresses' (*saru-i āzād*), which almost form forests; they subsist on rain water; their size ranges from half a cubit to fifteen cubits. The people of Behbehān use these cypresses for pillars and roof coverings. There one finds three monoliths, each seven or eight cubits long and five or six broad and high, on which pictures of many persons, in various postures, are sculptured. In beauty, these pictures compare with the reliefs of Persepolis; each is accompanied by a few lines written in an antique script. Together with His Highness Prince Ihtishām-ed-daule Sulṭān Uwais, I, the author of this *Fārs-nāme*, have visited Tang-i Sarvak several times. Drawings of the pictures and inscriptions, by the hand of His Highness, are reproduced on the next page."

The drawings by Ihtishām-ed-daule, which are dated November 1864, are remarkable for their impressionism rather than for accuracy; yet, the first word of the most important inscription (No. 1), which was not even noticed by de Bode, is correctly represented. The name of Ihtishām-ed-daule² (appointed governor of Fārs in 1888), the son of Farhād Mīrzā (an uncle of Nāṣir-ed-dīn Shāh, twice governor of Fārs between 1840 and 1880), will be familiar to those who enjoyed the privilege of acquaintance

¹ The sub-province of *Kūh-Gilūye* was divided into halves, *Pušt-i Kūh* and *Zir-i Kūh*. At the time of the *Fārs-nāme*, the latter comprised three counties, *Hūme-yi Behbehān*, *Zaidūn*, and *Lirāwī-yi Dašt*; in earlier days there had been five counties, *Hūme-yi Arrājān* in place of the first. The author of the *Fārs-nāme* prescribes *hūme* as pronunciation, not *haume* (*Haīm haume*=suburbs, environs; Arabic *haumah*=quarter of a town, see Dozy; cf. G. Le Strange, *Description of the Province of Fars* (1912), p. 13, n. 1).

² His full name (*Sulṭān Uwais Mīrzā*) is so given in an inscription Ihtishām-ed-daule caused to be engraved at Persepolis (in the *taḡara* of Darius) in 1879, to commemorate excavations ordered by Farhād Mīrzā on his visit to Persepolis in 1878; the name of Andreas is mentioned in it (موسیو اندراس).

with F. C. Andreas, whom the prince befriended; he is mentioned more than once also in E. G. Browne's *A Year amongst the Persians*.

It will be seen from the description that the name of Tang-i Sarvak properly appertains only to the defile by which one enters on the western side of the plateau where the monuments are situated. The mountains that enclose the gorge are known as *Kūh-i Sarvak* "the mountain of the little cypresses"; at their (western) foot lies the track that leads from Behbehān northwards to the plain of Māl-Amīr, *via* Tāshān and Bābā-Aḥmad, see *Fārs-nāme*, ii, 263, last line. In the early part of the last century Tang-i Sarvak had belonged to the Yūsufi, one of the four divisions of the Lirāwī-yi Kūh, which belong to the Lurs of Kūh-Gilūye (the other three divisions are the Bahme'i, the Shīr-'Alī, and the Tayyibī, see *Fārs-nāme*, ii, 270, and cf. O. Mann, *Mundarten der Lur-stämme*, xx-xxi). The Yūsufi had their winter-quarters in "the regions of Tang-i Sarvak and Tang-i Māyar", while for the summer they retired to the much higher-lying mountains to the east of Tang-i Sarvak and had their *yailaq* in the neighbourhood of the *Barm-i Almān* "the lake of (the ruined village of) Almān"². By the time of de Bode's visit the power of the Yūsufi had declined and the valley was in the territory of the Bahme'i, who were apt to render a visit a dangerous adventure; it was still in the hands of this tribe in 1936.

A book worth consulting in a matter of this kind is the Persian manual of archaeology entitled *Āthār-i 'Ajam* and composed in 1892-3 by Furṣat-ed-daule (Furṣat-i Šīrāzi), a minor poet, whose tomb-stone can be seen in the Ḥāfizīyye, where he rests by the side of his great countryman. It has merely a brief notice:—

"Tang-i Sarvak is among the places worth seeing near Behbehān. It lies to the north of that town at a distance of nine leagues approximately. In the gorge there are springs, many trees, and countless cypresses. At its mountains several figures of kings and others are engraved on the stone. Close to the gorge one finds a natural mountain fortress, called Qal'eh-yi Nādirī; there are remains of ancient buildings on its summit"³ (Bombay, a.H. 1354, p. 411).

It is due solely to the tireless energy of the late Sir Aurel Stein that interest in the monuments at Tang-i Sarvak has been revived. In the course of his fourth and last Persian journey he spent three days at Tang-i Sarvak

¹ Twelve leagues to the north-west of Behbehān, according to the *Fārs-nāme*. "The river Mogher, coming from Tengi-Mogher" is crossed by the traveller on his way northwards from Bābā-Aḥmad, de Bode, i, 376. This defile must not be confused with the Tang-i Mughāra which, coming from the north, joins the Tang-i Sarvak near its western end (see Stein, p. 112).

² Four leagues to the east of Tang-i Sarvak, according to the *Fārs-nāme*, ii, 276. The lake is mentioned by Stein, p. 98, and shown on his map.

³ Stein was told that there were no ruined structures on this peak (p. 114).

(January 7-9, 1936) and examined the site with his wonted care. His description of the remains is easily accessible now (*Old Routes in Western Iran*, pp. 103-13); little can be added to it. Unfortunately, the wintry weather was unfavourable; snow, sleet, and rain made photography and even observation difficult, and the taking of paper squeezes almost impossible. Thus it came about that the photographs published in Stein's book were not uniformly satisfactory, and that the material so laboriously collected on the inscriptions did not lead to the hoped-for decipherment. Here I can speak from experience; for I was one of the two Iranists whom Sir Aurel Stein consulted. After some hesitation I provided a statement (printed in Stein's book, p. 110); but it belonged to the type of *expertise* that is almost devoid of meaning, and could not hide the plain fact that its author was unable to read the inscriptions.¹

When I was at Persepolis in the spring of 1950, I thought that, as I was comparatively near to Tang-i Sarvak — the distance is a mere two hundred miles —, I ought to make an effort to secure more adequate material on the inscriptions in order to repair my earlier failure. However, the work on the Sassanian inscriptions of Fārs, the object of my journey to Persia (which had been undertaken on the invitation of the Iranian Government), was not completed until the middle of June, a time of year that is not propitious for a visit to Behbehān ("in summer Arrajān is a hell" said al-Muqaddasi, 425, 10), which illness forbade in any case. But in spite of the difficulties the plan was not to be lightly abandoned; it seemed that what was needed was not so much another visit as rather a fresh set of photographs.

At the time I was allowed the services of the young, able, and energetic photographer of the Archaeological Museum (Musée Iran-i bāstān), Mr. Rustamī, who had accompanied me to Sar-Mašhad and Firūzābād and had worked for me at and near Persepolis. I now proposed to the Iranian authorities that Mr. Rustamī, who happily was willing to undertake the task, should be sent to Tang-i Sarvak by himself, and this proposal was accepted in that spirit of generous helpfulness with which all my requests were met during the whole of my stay in Persia. So when I left for Isfahān, Mr. Rustamī set out on the road to Tang-i Sarvak, provided with a set of precise instructions which my friend Mr. Muṣṭafawī, the Director-General of the Archaeological Service, and I had composed, on the basis of Stein's description; Mr. Sāmī, the hospitable Director of Antiquities at Persepolis, fortunately possessed a copy of his book.

About two months later I received in London copies of the photographs Mr. Rustamī had taken. I hasten to make them public, for the benefit of those who are interested in archaeology (a field in which I can claim no

¹ De Bode had obtained a somewhat similar statement from a French scholar, M. Eugène Boré (i, 359-60).

competence), although the study of the inscriptions is as yet not far advanced. The excellent quality of the photographs is due partly to Mr. Rustamī's skill, partly to weather conditions. The perfect dryness of the stone surfaces in high summer makes it possible to see many details that remained invisible in January, the time of year when de Bode and Sir Aurel Stein visited Tang-i Sarvak. Thus the person standing to the right of the couch in ANa, of which Stein wrote "there survive the feet of an attendant figure", is now visible in full; or of the inscription No. 1, on which Stein reported that "only very few characters . . . are recognizable with any clearness from below", scarcely a letter remains in doubt now.

In order to facilitate reference, a list of the monuments and inscriptions is given here, with fresh numbering. It was felt unnecessary to give again a full description of the remains; but remarks are made on points which the new photographs clarify. The relief throughout is fairly low; what Herzfeld said of the Arsacid rock sculptures at Bisutūn holds good also for Tang-i Sarvak — "the ground is chiselled out, but the outlines thus produced, instead of being modelled, are simply engraved" (*Arch. Hist.* 56); it is also true of the stele of Khwāsak, and of the earliest¹ Sassanian rock-reliefs (the battle with Ardashir, at Firuzabad; the investiture of Ardashir, at Naqš-e Rostam; and Salmas). The engraving was rich, in some cases excessively so (see Monument D); most of it has fallen off, so that mere outlines remain now. Another general feature of Tang-i Sarvak is the preference for representation full-face, which contrasts with both Achaemenian and Sassanian practice, but is characteristic also of the stele of Khwāsak.²

Monument A, large detached rock with sculptures on three sides, north, west, and north-west. De Bode, i, 353-6; Stein, 105-9. General view: plate i, showing the western and (in part) north-western faces.

AN(orth). Reliefs in two registers, a above and b below. A drawing: de Bode, i, opposite p. 355.

ANa. King on throne-couch, etc.: de Bode, i, 355-6; Stein, 105-6 and Fig. 30. De Bode's drawing, although inaccurate in details, seems more useful than Stein's photograph. Our plates ii and iii. Stein drew attention to the feet of the couch, which are represented as birds (this had been seen also by Iḥtishām-ed-daule), now clearly recognizable as eagles. There are only three, not four. The two outside

¹ The transition from low relief without modelling to the very high relief which characterizes early Sassanian art seems to me as good an argument as any that can be used to determine the sequence of the rock-sculptures attributable to the time of Ardashir.

² And generally of the Iranian art of the Parthian period ("strict frontality of the human figures", Rostovtzeff, *CAH*, xi, 129); excluding, however, the majority of Parthian coins. See further, H. Seyrig, *Syria*, xviii (1937), 37 sqq.

eagles look towards each other. The one in the middle is smaller; it bears an ornament on its head (?); it is not correctly centred for lack of space (the lower panel interfered). Compare the throne of Ardavān on the stele of Khwāsak (which is carried by winged griffins according to Ghirshman), and the statue published by H. Seyrig, *Syria*, xx (1939), 182 sq.

The helmet worn by the three warriors resembles a *czapka*; that of the first warrior (counting from the observer's left) has six spikes, three on each side, in addition to the square guard over the crown of the head. The two seated warriors are diademed. The king, who wears neither crown nor diadem, is distinguished by his conical helmet (with a knob at its apex) and the enormous bunches of hair (reminiscent of the Sassanian kings) that rest on his shoulders; he is holding a fillet or diadem (without ribbons) in his right hand, as if he had just received it.

The deep, rounded depressions above the knees of the king and the seated warriors are intended to indicate the edge of the tunic or the robe (cf. stele of Khwāsak, Ardavān seated). The robe is very long at the back; it trails on the ground behind the warriors' feet, which owing to the excessive length of the trousers appear ridiculously small. The fold of fabric that hangs between the warriors' legs, seemingly part of their robes, may constitute the end of the roll of cloth (?) sometimes carried over the shoulder, cf. AWa, ANW, BS, and the small bronze statue found at Shami (Stein, Fig. 48; A. Godard, *Āthār-e Irān*, ii, 1937, 300-1, 305). The warrior who stands behind the king wears, in addition to the loose, belted tunic (which reaches down to the calves), a mantle which hangs down the back from his shoulders and upper arms (similarly in ANW, and BS, lower figure). In his left hand he holds a curious object¹ with undulating edges, nine (eight?) holes set in a square, and a curved handle; his right hand is stretched forward and seems to touch the back of the king's head. All four persons wear necklaces.

Inscription No. 1 above ANa. Plates iv (whole), v (right half), and vi (left half). Its presence was noticed by Stein, and by Ihtishām-ed-daule before him. Stein thought it had three lines, but there are four.

Inscription No. 4 to the left of ANa (Stein inadvertently said "to the right", p. 106). Five lines, but only the first two or three letters of each line are preserved. Quite a good drawing by de Bode, folder at the end of Vol. i, No. 3. Our plate vii, see also plate ii, left-hand edge.

¹ Perhaps a banner? The Sassanian banner appears carried behind the king (cf. below p. 161); cf. also the banner shown on the reverses of the coins of the Fratarakas of Persis.

ANb. Three walking figures. Stein, 106 (in his description "right", and "left" must be interchanged). The two taller figures wear, on their left sides, a broad sheath, holding perhaps a club, cf. CN. To the left of this panel a "crude representation of a tree" (Stein 107, see his Fig. 30, bottom left-hand corner); a similar drawing is visible in the middle of ANb, over the eroded surface of the central figure; these drawings are clearly of later date, probably quite recent. Plate viii.

ANW (north-west). King worshipping before altar. De Bode, i, 353-4, with drawing opposite p. 353; Stein, 108-9 and Fig. 36. Our plates ix (king) and x (altar). The figure has been described as that of a "mobed" (de Bode) or "magus" (Stein), but almost certainly represents the king who is resting on his throne-couch in ANa and is killing a lion in AWb; his distinguishing marks (conical helmet and size of hair-bunches) have been pointed out before. Here the king apparently carries his diadem in his left hand in front of his chest; his attitude conveys that the diadem has been given him by the divinity in whose worship he is raising his right hand. The broad and ornate collar that encircles his neck and is held together by a large round cameo(?) brooch is part of the mantle or cloak mentioned above (end of ANa)¹; it is shorter than the loose tunic, which has long sleeves and is girdled with a sash, the ends of which hang down in front. On the cult symbol, see below, BN.

Inscription No. 3, of five lines, on the lowest stone of the altar. Drawing by de Bode, folder at the end of Vol. i, No. 1 (the first two lines quite successful). Photograph of a squeeze (Stein, Fig. 36A). Our plate xi, supported by ix, x, and ii (bottom right-hand corner).

AW(est). Relievos in three registers, a above, b middle, c lowest. The middle register consists of two independent parts, ba to the left side, bβ to the right. De Bode, i, 354-5, drawing opposite p. 353; Stein, 107-8.

AWa. Court assembly in the throne room. Stein, Fig. 33. Our plate xii. All nine figures (except possibly No. 9, counting from the observer's left) are bare-headed; their hairdress resembles that of the satrap on the stele of Khwāsak (except for No. 8 whose hair falls down to the shoulders). The two principal figures, Nos. 1 and 8, are seated on elaborate throne-chairs, with steps, foot-stools, arm-rests, and high backs with elliptic projections (which may be responsible for Stein's suggestion that No. 1 was diademed); they wear long, transparent (silken?) robes. Figures Nos. 1, 8, and 9 hold staves in their right hands.

¹ For a mantle fastened in precisely the same way see the representation of Gennaos on the stele published by H. Seyrig in *Syria*, xxvi (1949), 230 sqq. and plate xi (cf. p. 231, n. 1). The function of the long thin roll (cf. ANa above), to which a shoulder-piece (a replica of the collar in its pattern) seems to be attached, is not clear.

The dress of figure No. 9 (a long skirt touching the ground) is perhaps of the same kind as that worn by the occupants of the thrones; it differs from the common Parthian dress which we see on figures 2 to 6 and probably 7 (tunic as in ANW, wide trousers tucked into boots, plus the roll of cloth(?) carried over the shoulder). Figure No. 1 is best seen in plate ix.

AWba. Four tall and two small persons. Stein, Fig. 42. Our plates xii and xiii. The four tall persons are turned towards the left (heads in profile, the bodies in front view); their right hands are lifted in supplication (the first person from the left seems to hold a ring); their left arms, which look as if they had been cut off, are perhaps tied(?) on their backs. As to the two small persons, the first (from the left) holds in his right hand, which is awkwardly turned to the observer's left, an indeterminate object (a ball to which a wedge is attached by its thin side — a chisel?), but his face is turned to the right, towards the other five persons. The second, even smaller person, who is shown full-face, wears a head-dress that resembles that of the king's consort at Sar-Mašhad, and probably represents a woman (or goddess).

AWbβ. King on horseback slaying a lion(?). Stein, Figs. 35 and 42. Our plates xii and xiii. The weapon used by the king is not a lance (Stein) but a sword. What Stein (and de Bode before him) regarded as a curved bow (to the right of the king's head) is merely the irregularly cut edge of the deepened rock surface (see plate xv). The rider is too large in relation to the size of his horse; his feet touch the ground; the ends of the bands with which the boots are tied at the ankle are clearly visible. His quiver is attached by a ring to the saddle; a strap fastens an object on his thigh, probably a dagger (cf. below D).

AWc. Man strangling a lion. Cf. Stein, Fig. 42. Plate xiv. The man wears a high tiara. Under his coat (so it seems) he carries a sword; only the tip of its scabbard emerges.¹ The lion sits dispiritedly on its hind legs (the posture of the animal in AWbβ is not clear; de Bode hesitated between lion, bear, and wild boar).

Inscription No. 2, under figure No. 9 in AWA, above the "lion" in AWbβ. It has five lines. Drawing by de Bode, folder at end of Vol. i, No. 2. Photograph of a squeeze, Stein, Fig. 36B. Both are fairly satisfactory for the last three lines. Our plate xv (supported by plates xii and xiii).

Inscription No. 5, under the hind legs of the horse in AWbβ continuing in a single line towards the head of the man in AWc. As it is almost

¹ As the sword was normally worn on a hip-belt over the tunic, the coat, when added to the costume, necessarily covered it in part. On this coat or vest, a garment seldom worn (this is the only example in Tang-i Sarvak), see H. Seyrig, *Syria*, xviii (1937), 22-4; his plate iv shows a beautiful specimen of such a coat covering a sword (lower panel, centre figure; only the handle emerges).

entirely destroyed (perhaps it was erased by the stone-masons), it has not been noticed previously. Unmistakable letters are visible under the interstice between the fifth and the sixth figures (counting from the left) in AWba. No special photograph available. See plates xii and xiii.

Monument B: small detached rock a mile to the west of A. Not noticed by de Bode. Stein, 111-2. Sculptures on three sides, south, west, and north (according to Stein: north, east, and south; his directions do not accord with our photographs). All the surfaces are badly weathered. The monument bears some general resemblance to the sculptured monolith near the rock of Bisutūn (cf. L. W. King and R. C. Thompson, *The sculptures and inscriptions of Darius the Great*, pp. xxv-xxvi and plates x and xi).

BS. Two worshippers. Stein, Fig. 32. Our plate xvi (the two photographs supplement each other). The first worshipper stands on a platform before a small fire altar resting on a stepped base. His raised right hand holds a bowl or round box; the irregular lines below the hand, a little to its left, suggested to Stein incense in the process of being dropped into the fire. The object held in the left hand is indistinct; the bulge in front of the right leg is not easily accounted for (a water jar?). The second worshipper stands behind the first, on a lower level; he is much taller (the relation of his size to that of the first worshipper is as 10 to 7). He wears a tiara and holds a ball-like object in his raised right hand. His tunic is a little lower at the sides than in the middle and the edges appear to be slightly pointed (so also the king's tunic in ANW and BN). Such pointed edges appear in Palmyra (where the pointing is often exaggerated) chiefly in the 3rd century; they belong to the tunic introduced in the middle of the 2nd century; see H. Seyrig, *Syria*, xviii (1937), 15 sq. — The description given by Stein, who probably wrote from memory, is not quite accurate here. He stated that the figure on the lower level (which he described as smaller) stood "before an altar resting on a ziggurat-shaped base"; but there is no altar, and the base belongs to the fire altar in front of the first worshipper.

Inscription No. 6 in front of the tiara of the second worshipper. Two lines, possibly more. Only a few letters are recognizable. Not previously noticed. No separate photograph available. See plate xvi. The presence of this inscription (all the others are at Monument A) proves that the Monuments A and B are approximately contemporaneous.

BW. Man in front view with outstretched arms, on the edge of the rock. **Plate xvii.** The relief is higher than elsewhere in Tang-i Sarvak. Hair in a halo around the head, cf. AWA. The right hand (palm upwards, and fingers splayed, perhaps holding a round object, cf. AWba and BS, second worshipper) can be best seen in plate xviii (right-hand side).

BN. This sculpture, only briefly mentioned by Stein ("two relieve figures very badly decayed"), is of great interest. **Plate xviii.** The right figure wears a crown, perhaps a mural crown; it is taller than the person on the left, who wears a tiara. Between their heads one sees the sacred stone or *maššēbā*, shaped like a sugar loaf, which stands also on the altar in ANW; here as there it is tied with a double band, the two ends of which float downwards on the left side (one end in front of the tiara, the other above it). Stein correctly described it as a βαίτυλος; the diadem, the symbol of royalty that encircles it, signifies that the divinity residing in this *bēl-Ēl* or "house of god" is the king of gods, the god who confers the kingship upon mortals.¹

The hands of the two figures seem to touch; perhaps the taller hands an object (a diadem?) to the other. Two children stand below their arms, facing each other, closely together; that on the right, whose back touches the crowned figure, is clearly visible; of the other only feeble traces remain. The scene immediately recalls the Sassanian representations of the divine investiture: Ahuramazdāh,² the king of the gods, wearing a mural crown, gives a diadem to the king; a symbol of worship between god and king (a fire altar at Firuzabad); childlike figures in between (two: investiture of Ardashir at Naqš-i Rājab, the earliest sculpture of this kind; one: investiture of Narseh at Naqš-i Rostam). We are thus entitled to the assumption that the crowned figure represents the local Ahuramazdāh; the child leaning to him may be his daughter, the local Anāhit. As, however, the cult symbol is distinctly non-Iranian and in fact points straight to Syria, the homeland of the baetyl, we should use Semitic rather than Iranian names. Now the recognized Semitic "equivalent" of Ahuramazdāh was Bēl. And it so happens that Bēl is the only male divinity mentioned for Elymais during the whole of Parthian times (on the occasion of the end of Antiochus Magnus). Therefore, we may plausibly call the crowned figure *Bēl*, and, though with less assurance, the child *Nanai*, who may perhaps be recognized also in the female figure of AWbā.

Monument C. Detached boulder 650 yards to the east of A. Not noticed by de Bode. Stein, 104-5. Sculptures on two sides, north and east.

CN. Stein, Fig. 31. Our **plate xix.** The two soldiers (plain tunic, trousers, and sandals) carry a broad sheath on their left sides, which seems to contain a club or mace with a curved top, cf. also ANb. A similar implement can be seen in the investiture of Ardashir at Naqš-i Rājab;

the attendant who holds the fly-whisk carries it there, but on his right side. Cf. Nöldeke, *Tabari*, 249, "*Keule, am Gürtel befestigt*".

CE. According to Stein, a badly damaged figure reclining on a couch (cf. ANa). No photograph available.

Monument D. Limestone block, connected with other rocks, to the north of A. Single relieve on its southern face. De Bode, i, 356-7, and drawing opposite p. 356. Stein, 110-1, and Fig. 37. Our **plate xx.** The two photographs are neatly complementary, having been taken with the light from almost opposite directions. The fight on horseback seems to have been a favourite subject for rock-sculptures in Iran in both Parthian and Sassanian times. Before Tang-i Sarvak: the victory of Goterzes at Bisutūn; after Tang-i Sarvak: the fight with Ardashir at Firuzābād, and four similar battle scenes at Naqš-i Rostam attributable to (1) Bahrām ii, (2) his son, Bahrām iii, before his accession (recognizable by the eagle that forms the front of his helmet), (3) Hormizd ii (uncertain, only the back of the crown having been preserved), and (4) Shapur ii. Certain features are common to all of them: both parties are on horseback, the only weapon used is the long lance, the victor is on the left side. All except one (Bahrām iii) show an additional figure or group on the left side, whose introduction was designed to bring the victor into the best place in the centre: a horseman at Bisutūn, three foot soldiers at Tang-i Sarvak, a young prince¹ with a prisoner at Firuzābād (where the chief scene is duplicated), a horseman with the royal banner at Naqš-i Rostam (Hormizd ii and Shapur ii; whether the rider at the back of Bahrām ii carries a banner, is doubtful). Consideration of the general history of this tableau causes one to expect a second rider, in the process of being overthrown, to the right of the *clibanarius*, where the rock has broken away. Indeed, there are ample traces of the defeated enemy, but these traces can scarcely be interpreted as those of a horseman; they rather appear to indicate a walking figure in full armour (both his feet in side view, walking towards the victor; that on the left side is touched by the horse's forefeet; the right arm hanging down in front of the horse's head; the apparent fifth leg of the horse may, in fact, be the curved end of a mace dropping from the enemy's hand), but there are many doubtful points.

The "cataphract" or *clibanarius* has been described by Stein. The helmet is broad, rectangular, flat on top, projecting at the sides; under it two fairly large hair-bunches emerge, which render it possible that the person here depicted is identical with the king of Monument A, in

¹ I owe thanks to Professor Sidney Smith for helping me with the explanation of the stone on the altar.

² Exceptionally Anāhit acts in his place (in the case of Narseh).

¹ The same prince (identifiable by the crest on his helmet) appears in the investiture of Ardashir at Naqš-i Rājab immediately behind the king.

spite of the difference in headgear (the small conical helmet would not afford sufficient protection in war.)¹ The typically Parthian dagger is clearly visible on the rider's right thigh, cf. the large statue found at Shami and A. Godard's remarks, *Athār-e Irān*, ii, 297 sq. (see also H. Seyrig, *Syria*, xx (1939), 177-81). The large object behind the rider's leg was recognized by Stein as a quiver; it is very broad and probably was bowcase and quiver combined² (cf. Nöldeke, *Tabari*, 249); it is divided lengthwise into three compartments (cf. the equally broad quiver of Ardavān at Firūzābād, which is bisected vertically). Portions of the rich surface ornamentation on the quiver and on the middle of the cuirass can still be seen. The rider wears a leather cuirass over a coat of scale armour with brassards of annulate plate armour (cf. the Parthian warriors at Firūzābād). The horse, too, is protected by plate (scale) armour; its suit has a projection before the chest, which gives it the appearance of a funnel (or oven) and may be responsible for the origin of the term *clibanarius* (differently Nöldeke, *Tabari*, 164, n. 5); the projection was open in front to allow some movement to the forelegs; the whole suit bore no resemblance to the Sassanian *bargustuvān* represented at Tāq-i Bustān.

Of the three soldiers sketched in the top left-hand corner of the panel, one is shown throwing a stone (correctly seen by de Bode), the second shooting an arrow, the third falling down backwards; their style of dress differs from that of the other figures in Tang-i Sarvak. The Bowman and the stone-thrower carry long swords, attached to shoulder belts in Roman fashion. Behind the stone-thrower's legs, a little above the butt of the lance, one sees an implement, which de Bode regarded as a hammer, while Stein took it for a ring and chain; perhaps it is a battle-axe, a *tabarzin*, with a ring for attachment to the belt.

A-D. The total number of persons represented in Tang-i Sarvak is forty; of animals: seven (two horses, two lions, three ornamental birds). The following weapons, etc., are shown: long lance, light spear, bow, arrow, quiver, quiver and bowcase combined, sword, dagger, mace, battle-axe, staff, and banner.

The theme of the rock-sculptures at Tang-i Sarvak is the investiture of a king or of several kings. We see a king receiving his diadem from the hands of a divine being, probably Bēl (BN), to whom he offers a sacrifice (BS). The same king, or perhaps his predecessor or successor, is shown holding the diadem in front of the altar of the same divinity, which is

represented by a cult symbol reminiscent of Syria (ANW). He then seats himself on the royal throne, holding aloft the symbol of his majesty before the eyes of the leaders of his state (ANa). At a public reception the king and another person, perhaps the high priest, are seen seated on throne chairs (AWa). The sacred enclosure where the investiture takes place is guarded by the royal troops (ANb and CN). A great victory over an alien enemy has laid the foundation of the royal power (D); and the new king's prowess in hunting has been shown on more than one occasion (AWbβ and AWc).¹

Such a reconstruction may well seem a little too fanciful; indeed, there are more doubtful than certain points in it; yet it is desirable that we should try to understand the meaning of the site before tackling the inscriptions, which owing to their brevity promise little information. As specimens of the stone-mason's art the inscriptions rank very low; not even the surfaces were always properly smoothed before the work began; the engraving is of the poorest, and the letters are straggling.

Reputedly, these inscriptions are written in an unknown script, but this reputation is undeserved and due chiefly to the growing departmentalization of learning. Looking back now, one sees that the drawings by de Bode or those made by Ihtishām-ed-daule were perfectly sufficient for the purpose of determining the nature of the script. The key is unsufferably obvious; one is ashamed not to have found it at once. The writing is simply the same as that found on the coins which the kings of Elymais issued in Parthian times.

The writing on these coins, which are allocated to the first and second centuries of our era, was in part deciphered already by A. D. Mordtmann, who recognized the word for "king" (*MLK'*) and the name of Orodes (*WRWD*). The decipherment was completed by the late Colonel Allotte de la Fuy, the father of Elymaean numismatics; see especially his paper "*Les Monnaies de l'Élymaïde*", *Revue Numismatique*, 4^{me} sér. t. xxii, 1919, 45-84. We owe a final and comprehensive treatment of the coins to G. F. Hill, *Cat. of the Greek coins of Arabia, Mesopotamia, and Persia*.

A curious and almost unaccountable feature is the appearance on the coins of two varieties of writing, which, although alike in a general way, differ from each other in the shape of quite a few letters; most striking is the employment of one and the same figure for different values (*D* in the one variety = *B* in the other). The distribution of the two varieties of writing is not by any means due to differences in date; queerly enough it seems to be

¹ I hesitate to make any use here of the relieve AWbα. Its style seems to differ from that of the other sculptures; but this impression may be due to its ruined state (or to its having been left uncompleted?). Its purport is not clear. A possible interpretation (namely, four prisoners approaching a priest to offer themselves as victims to Nanai, in order to celebrate the inauguration) is not very attractive; but the presence of prisoners in this relieve is suggested by the inscriptions (see below).

¹ The rider wore also a diadem; one of its free ends is floating behind his head.

² Cf. the stele of Castor-Abgal (*Syria*, xxvi, 1949, p. 236).

governed chiefly by the *size* of the coins. The one variety is reserved to *les monnaies de petit module* (small coppers), the other to *les monnaies de grand module* (copper "tetradrachms" – there is no silver); but this rule is not without exceptions; thus the writing of the larger coins is used also on the small coppers of Orodes iii (middle of the 2nd century). Allotte de la Fuÿe attributed the variation to local influence or conditions, see *Rev. Num.*, 1919, 69. However that may be, the point important for us at the moment is that the writing of Tang-i Sarvak is that of the tetradrachms. Thus, for the purpose of reading the inscriptions we should rely on the tetradrachms alone, disregarding the small coppers¹ which might mislead us.

It so happens that a single legend, that of the tetradrachm of Kamnaskires Orodes, contains all the letters that can be read with certitude; see Allotte, *loc. cit.*, p. 68 and plate i, No. 10; cf. Hill, plate xl, Nos. 20–23, liii, No. 15. The legend runs as follows:—

צנמזקיז ורודא (עסזז ורודא)

= כבשכיר ורוד מלכא בר ורוד מלכא

i.e., *KBNSKYR WRWD MLK' BR WRWD MLK'* "King Kamnaskires Orodes, son of King Orodes". This gives us eleven letters (ʿ, b, d, w, y, k, l, m, n, r, š), precisely half the Aramaic alphabet. A twelfth letter, appears on the unique tetradrachm of the British Museum which G. F. Hill attributed to Phraates, the son of Orodes (Hill, plate xli, No. 16); it is believed to represent the last letter of the king's name (which, on his coins with Greek legends, appears as Πραατης), namely 𐤌 *t* (the preceding letter is clearly Aleph; before that traces of *RD*(?), hence [p]rd't; the *P* is unfortunately lost); this reading is convincing, but not certain. Other letters that have been read on Elymaean coins (such as the *P* in "Queen Ulfân") are too doubtful to be taken into account.

A few words are necessary to defend the new reading I have introduced into the legend of the tetradrachm, *KBNSKYR*. Only the fourth letter is in dispute. Allotte de la Fuÿe gave his reading in the form of *KaBNa-HZKIR*, *i.e.*, he divided the letter I regard as into two and attributed to the halves the values which they would have had in ancient Aramaic (𐤌). Hill, no doubt sensing the inappropriateness of such a spelling, wrote כבנהכיר in Hebrew letters, but *KABNAH(Z)KIR* in Roman (as if *Z* and *H* were alternatives). We will show presently that the letter *H* had a different shape in the Elymaean script. Apart from that, between *N* and the second *K* of this name one would scarcely expect any letter other than either *S* or *Š*. On the coins with Greek inscriptions we find the

following forms: *KAMNIZKIPOY* (about 160 B.C.), *KAMNAZKIPOY* (normal form, 1st century B.C.), and once *KABNAΣ[KIPOY]* (Allotte, *loc. cit.*, p. 62 = pl. i, No. 4). The small coppers are said to have כומשכיר = *KWMŠKYR*, see Allotte, *ibid.*, 52–3; while this reading may seem uncertain, there is no doubt about its *Š*, which resembles the Parthian *Š*. The small coppers compel us to read *KBNSKYR* in preference to *KBNSKYR* (which the Greek spelling would equally admit), and this is in best accord with palaeographic considerations. The truth is that was one of the letters that possessed different forms in the two varieties of Elymaean script.

Another point worth making (although it should not be allowed to intrude into the process of reading the letters) concerns the origin of this curious name, *Kamnaskires*. It has always been regarded as a personal name, and indeed it is often used as if it were a proper name, but nevertheless, it seems possible that it was an old dynastic title. The strange legend *ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΚΑΜΝΑΣΚΙΡΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΕΓ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΚΑΜΝΑΣΚΙΡΟΥ*,¹ and, to a higher degree, the collocation of *KBNSKYR* with *WRWD*, which alone can reasonably be said to have been the king's name, may seem to support this suggestion. The pronunciation of the word was, approximately, *kabneškir*. It strikingly resembles the Elamite title *qa-ap-nu-iš-ki-ra* "treasurer", which occurs often in the treasury tablets discovered at Persepolis and published by G. G. Cameron (*cf.* Gershevitch, *Asia Major*, ii, 144); since the sign "nu" has the phonetic value *ni* and tenues and mediae are not distinguished, the spelling represents *kapniškir*- or *kabniškir*-. In Achaemenian times it was no doubt the chief duty of the satraps of Susiana to protect the royal treasures stored at Susa; thus they may have been called *kabniškir* in the local Elamite language, and this title may have clung to those who governed that province even in later times.

There are thus altogether twelve letters (including 𐤌) on which we may rely for the reading of the inscriptions. But before we can proceed, we must ask ourselves the question: in what language are the inscriptions written? Or, since the language of the inscriptions is likely to be the same as the language of the coin legends, we should ask: what is the language of the coin legends? In the present state of our knowledge, this question cannot be answered with assurance. On the face of it, of course, the language is Aramaic. Thus the legend of the tetradrachm produced above (p. 164) is in faultless Aramaic. Other coins, notably those with the legend *WRWD MLK' BRY WRWD* (*e.g.*, Hill, plate xl,

¹ *Rev. Num.*, 1902, plate v, No. 3 = Hill, plate liii, No. 8; and Hill, plate xxxviii, Nos. 5 and 6. So on an unpublished coin in my possession, a silver tetradrachm, which, while resembling the Paris tetradrachm, has the characteristic bust of an old man on the obverse; the date is almost entirely rubbed off (perhaps it was 817 = 1 B.C./1 A.D.). The letters *TOY EF* are quite clear on this coin (as they are also on the late coin, Hill, plate liii, No. 10); thus they cannot well be regarded as a mistake.

¹ Their script differs from Parthian script, if at all, only slightly.

No. 1

No. 2

No. 4

No. 5

No. 6

No. 3

The Elymaean Inscriptions of Tang-i Sarvak

partly because there is little left to choose from; another example of *Q*, *ibid.*, line 3; two other examples of *P*, *ibid.*, line 2 and Inscription No. 4 line 1(?). Now we have found all the letters of the Aramaic alphabet except one: *T*; a suitable shape does appear in the third line of Inscription No. 1 where, to judge by the parallel copy, no letter is called for. Hence, its identification with *T* is very doubtful. In view of the shortness of the inscriptions, to find instances of every single letter would be an extraordinary piece of luck.

The extent of the material is even less than it appears to be at first sight. The Inscriptions Nos. 4, 5, and 6 scarcely count. The text of Inscription No. 2 is embodied in No. 1. Thus we have, in effect, only two inscriptions, No. 1-2 and No. 3; between them they contain under 150 letters. Moreover, Inscription No. 3 is so badly engraved on an uneven surface that the forms of the letters cannot always be determined with assurance. We will begin with Inscription No. 1 (minus its first line) and No. 2:—

No. 1	No. 2
(2) בר בלדושא זי רבאני	בלדושא זי רבאני (1)
(3) ואסיריא ואחיטכא זי בתרעאבר	ואסיריא ואחיטכא (2)
(4) באסי נאסיב כורסא	זי בתרא בר (3)
	באסי נאסיב (4)
	כורסיא (5)

As in the two copies the text is broken into lines in different ways, the division into words is in part assured. The first word in No. 2, *BLDWŠ*, is presumably a proper name; its final Alef is not certain, nor is the following *ZY*. The next word is clear except for its ending; No. 1 favours *RB'NY*, in No. 2 it may be *RB'NY* or *RB'N'*. Since the latter is impossible in No. 1, we should give preference to *RB'NY*—a title? *Rab-+x?* *Rabbānē*, an east-Aramaic plural det. (with final *Yōd*?), would mean “teachers” and scarcely be suitable; another personal name (*Rabbānai*) is hardly appropriate.

The next line opens with the words “and the prisoners (captives) and . . .”. They are followed by *'tyk'* in No. 2, but *'tyk'(?)* in No. 1, which I do not understand; even *'tyk'* is not easily accounted for. Dalman gives *attikā* “hart” (Germ.), which is listed neither by Buxtorf nor by J. Levy; assumption of confusion between *k* and *q* (*'attiqā* “ancient”) is not inviting.¹ The tendency to prolong a final ascending stroke into a succeeding *Yōd*, which can be observed on the coins (*KY* in *KBNŠKYR*, Hill,

¹ Hebrew *attiq* (said to mean “gallery, porch”) need scarcely be considered here.

plate xi, Nos. 20, 23, perhaps 22), is neatly exemplified by *TY* here in No. 2.

The remainder is comparatively easy. If one trusts to the word-division recommended by the spacing in No. 2, one has "who (are) at the gate (court); Bar-Bāsi assuming the throne"; if one does not, "who (are) at the gate (court) of Abar-Bāsi assuming the throne". The second alternative seems preferable; the variant *TR*¹ *'BR* (*TR*² *BR*) is valuable; the third possibility ("who (are) behind, or after, 'Ābar-bāsi" etc.) can be discounted.¹ The one difficult point is the position of *BR*² (or *'BR*) at the end of a line in No. 1; for if, in fact, it constituted a name together with *B'SY*,³ it should have been placed at the beginning of the next line (there was ample space).

The fact that the full meaning of such an inscription does not become clear immediately should not be allowed to discourage us. We know as good as nothing of the conditions of life in Khūzistān in the first centuries of our era; there are no sources of any description except the coins, which provide the bare names of a few kings (the latest of the Greek inscriptions of Susa is from A.D. 21); and the possibility that we have gone wrong in determining the value of the letters must not be lost sight of entirely (there is very little that can be changed). Even so, however little we understand, that little is almost enough to destroy our whole case. The word that precedes *N'SYB KWRSY*, whatever its precise form, is certainly a proper name (henceforward as Abar-Bāsi); the first line of No. 1 contains another proper name, Orodes, also in front of *N'SYB KWRSY*. Thus we should find two persons mentioned as being invested in one and the same inscription; that is extremely unlikely.

To meet this difficulty with a convincing explanation is not easy. It is not as if Inscription No. 1, although it does consist of two distinct parts, could be regarded as constituting two separate inscriptions, engraved below each other at different times; on the contrary, its distinctive style of writing ensures that the whole of it was incised by one craftsman at one and the same time. Perhaps the answer to the problem lies in the word *BR* (line 2, first word) which connects the two halves of the inscription. As *BLDWS*⁴ is probably a proper name (a compound of *Ba'el/Bēl* with another word⁴),

¹ Because *bātar* would almost certainly be spelt *b'tr*.

² Nothing can be done with *bar*- "outside" here, it seems.

³ If it is *bar* "son of", the separation is to some extent justified; less so if the name is a compound name (e.g. with *תר*).

⁴ We are entitled to assume that, as in the neighbouring Mandaean dialect, so also in Elymaean (if that name be acceptable for the language of our inscriptions) there was some neglect of the laryngals; here, as there, it may be credited to the influence of Babylonian; as regards 'Ain, cf. *tr* (*tr'*) in the place of *tr'* (*tr''*).—Such transcriptions as *Abar-Bāsi*, *Bēl-dūšā* are intended to spare the reader the annoyance caused by the apostrophes; they are mere symbols.

BR will be *bar* "son of"; thus we learn from Inscription No. 1 that Orodes was the son of *Bēl-dūšā*. We may now put forward the following theory:—

Monument A belongs to two successive kings, Abar-Bāsi and Orodes. The reliefs and inscriptions on the western face (the best side of the rock, which would be used first) are due to Abar-Bāsi. The court assembly of AWa shows the installation of Abar-Bāsi; the figures seated on the thrones are Abar-Bāsi and the most powerful man in his kingdom, *Bēl-dūšā*, perhaps the high priest and grand vizier (*RB'NY?*); his name may indicate that he was a priest of *Bēl*. Inscription No. 2 describes AWa and the horseman in AWbβ is Abar-Bāsi.

After Abar-Bāsi had died or been killed, the high priest installed his own son, Orodes. To him belong the northern and north-western faces of Monument A and the whole of Monument B. The cult of *Bēl* (and perhaps Nanai) became more firmly established and more closely associated with the kingship; it was claimed that Orodes, the usurper, had been invested by *Bēl* himself. To his inscription, which ended with the words "son of *Bēl-dūšā* the high priest", the remainder of the earlier inscription, which began with "*Bēl-dūšā* the high priest", was added, half mechanically.¹ There was no particular objection to the addition (which merely stated truthfully that a part of the monument was due to Abar-Bāsi), perhaps because there had been no open enmity between Orodes and his predecessor; on the contrary their association in one inscription may have been intended to convey their equality of status.

In presenting this purely tentative hypothesis account has been taken of the remaining inscriptions. No. 5, it will be remembered, is under the horseman (AWbβ) whom we now regard as Abar-Bāsi.

No. 5

צלמא זנה זי נא[ס]יב כו[רסיא]

"This is the image of . . . assuming the throne." The name is destroyed. The length of the gap is too great for *WRWD*; *BRB'SY* or *'BRB'SY* would fill it (when I made the drawing I believed I could see the letter *B* after *ZY*; its existence seems to me very doubtful now). The only inscription on Monument B is No. 6:—

No. 6

(1) צלמא זנה זי ו[ר]

(2) ו[ר] נא[ס]יב כו[רסיא]

"This is the image of Orodes assuming the throne" (and weak traces of

¹ The outward appearance of the inscription supports the suggestion that its text was originally confined to the first two lines.

further lines). Here the name of Orodes is almost certain. It is certain in Inscription No. 3, which is on the altar in ANW:—

No. 3

(1) צלמא ונה פסקו

(2) מדאנאמופא

(3) בר בדאק מן באן כז[א]

(4) ורוד נאסיב כורטא ש[א]

(5) יוזן גחן עליה יעבד

The miserable engraving is perhaps chiefly responsible for our lack of progress with this inscription; many letters are doubtful. The first line is clear, "they cut this image"; *psaq* "cut, split, divide" is not quite the right verb; we need *psal*; but it would be foolhardy to emend the inscription. The next two lines may give the names of the artisans (we should have two at least — *MD'N'M* and *P'* the son of *BD'Q*, very unlikely), but the subject of *psqw* need not have been expressed. The reading becomes uncertain after *bd'q*¹ (*mnb'n? mzb'n?* one word or two?). At the end of the line I have restored *KZ* (reasonably clear) into *KZY*. This conjunction helps to bring some sense into the remaining words, which apparently describe the relief above the inscription:—"as Orodes, assuming the throne, feeds the . . . (and) does obeisance unto it". The word that presumably defines the object of worship depicted on the altar is unfortunately illegible; the traces suggest *šys'*, with a superscript Alef between *š* and *y*; may one think of a dissimilated form of *šaišā* (*šišā*) "marble, alabaster"? It is no use objecting that Orodes, in fact, does not feed anyone or anything; for *yšwn* is the only reading possible and it does mean "he feeds, nourishes" (at the most "sustains"). As to *ghn*, it is true that nouns are rarely formed from this root ("to bow or prostrate oneself"), although several occur in Syriac (*ghn-*); here a noun is clearly required (the verb is often construed with 'al'). However, it is better to leave the explanation of the details to the Semitists; the important point at the moment is that the inscription confirms that the person worshipping before the altar is Orodes.

It remains to give the text of Inscription No. 4 which is almost wholly destroyed. The style of writing differs slightly from that of the other inscriptions; the letter *M* has an older form; the engraving is more carefully done.

¹ *Br bd'q* conceivably = "outside the fissure".

² This could be a proper name, cf. MAZABBANAZ, *Syria*, xxvi (1949), plate xii and p. 236, n. 1 (a stele of A.D. 196).

No. 4

(1) שפ[א]

(2) א מא]

(3) ובר]

(4) אשנ]

(5) זי בכ[א]

The date of the monuments and inscriptions of Tang-i Sarvak can be determined only approximately. The earlier coins of the kings of Elymais (all named Kamnaskires), which bear Greek inscriptions and sometimes dates, run to the middle of the first century of our era; the latest dates found are A.Sel. 368 and 370+ (A.D. 56-7 and 58-9+, both uncertain, *Rev. Num.* 1919, pl. i, Nos. 1 and 2). The first coins with Aramaic inscriptions belong to Orodes (i); this later series is throughout undated. Allotte de la Fuÿe put forward the following scheme:—

- (1) Kamnaskires vi (time of Attambelus ii of Mesene).
- (2) Orodes i.
- (3) Kamnaskires Orodes = Orodes ii, son of Orodes i.
- (4) Phraates, son of Orodes i.
- (5) Chosroes.
- (6) Orodes iii.
- (7) X.
- (8) Orodes iv.
- (9) Y.
- (10) Z.

Of these, 1-5 should have ruled between A.Sel. 370 and 440 (A.D. 58-9 to 128-9), and 6-10 between A.Sel. 440 and the destruction of the kingdom of Elymais by Ardashir, which we may tentatively put in A.D. 220. G. F. Hill doubted of the validity of this scheme and admitted only the following:

Orodes i	Second half of first century A.D.
Kamnaskires Orodes	Late first century
Phraates son of Orodes	Early second century
Orodes iii }	Second century.
Orodes iv }	

The type of writing employed at Tang-i Sarvak does not admit a date earlier than Kamnaskires Orodes. That king, the son of Orodes, cannot be identical with our Orodes, the son of *BLDWŠ'*, who does not call himself Kamnaskires. Therefore, our Orodes is either Orodes iii or Orodes iv. The choice is difficult; for the existence of Chosroes, the predecessor of Orodes iii, is doubtful (the coins in question may have been issued by the contemporaneous Arsacid king of that name). If we relied on the scheme suggested by Allotte de la Fuÿe, we should have to identify our Orodes with Orodes iv and Abar-Bāsi with X. Then the dates of the Inscriptions Nos. 2 and 5

would be about A.D. 150 (accession of Abar-Bāsi), of the Inscriptions Nos. 1, 3, and 6 about A.D. 165-170 (accession of Orodes iv).

A date close to the end of the Parthian period is recommended also by the style of the reliefs,¹ which resembles that of the stele of Khwāsak. It may not come amiss to indicate briefly why I refer to that monument, which was discovered by Dr. R. Ghirshman at Susa in 1947 (*Monuments Piot*, xlv (1950), 97-107), as the stele of Khwāsak; M. Ghirshman reads the name of its owner as *Narge Hufar*. Its date, I submit, should be read in this way:—

ŠNT iii c | xx xx xx ii | YRHP |
spndrmtY YWMP mtry

"year 462, month of Spandāmat, day of Mihr"; the era, as I pointed out on an earlier occasion,² is the Arsacid era; accordingly, the date is September 14, A.D. 215. The central inscription³ reads as follows (the reading given by M. Ghirshman differs considerably):—

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| (1) 'rtbno MLKYN | Artabānu the king of kings, |
| (2) MLK' BRY wlgšy | son of Walagaši |
| (3) MLKYN MLK' BNYt | the king of kings, built |
| (4) hnsk ZK ZY ⁴ | this "erection" which (is that) of |
| (5) hwsak šwš | Khwāsak, ⁵ the satrap |
| (6) hštrp | of Susa. |

The word that designated the monument is unfortunately not quite clear; it may have been *hnsk*=*hansāk* "erection"="stele" (cf. Sogd. 'ns'-c-, 'ns'-yt-, 'ns''k-, etc., MPers. *hs'*-c-); but it may have been *hnsr*. The monument in question was presumably a tomb stele, and the date was the date of the death of Khwāsak.

Tang-i Sarvak was a sanctuary of Bēl (and perhaps Nanai), a sacred grove where the kings of Elymais were crowned in the second century. de Bode ("I was standing perhaps on the very ground once sacred to the Goddess *Anaitis*", etc.) came closer to the truth than Sir Aurel Stein, who thought the place might have been used as a royal "hill station" or summer residence—a suggestion defeated by the climatic conditions; for, as we have seen (p. 153), Tang-i Sarvak serves as a *qışlaq* and is abandoned at the beginning of the hot season. The identification with Seleucia/Soloke

¹ Whether the archaeologists will be able to give a more precise date is doubtful; the story of the attempts at determining the date of the remains at near-by Shami is not encouraging. Comparison with Palmyra may suggest a slightly later date, perhaps A.D. 180-200. Cf. below p. 178, n. 2.

² *Zoroaster*—politician or witchdoctor? (1951), p. 37, n. 4.

³ A treatment of the inscriptions on the margins of the stone (apart from the date) must be left to another occasion. The interpretation offered by M. Ghirshman, who reads such non-Parthian forms as 'BYDWNWT (recte 'BDt), YHBTW (recte YNTNt), PWN (recte pty), YWM (recte YWM'), is subject to correction.

⁴ ZY seems to be the only possible reading here; scarcely LY.

⁵ Vocalization uncertain; *Husāk/sak* or *Khusāk/sak* would be equally possible.

(above, p. 151), which rested merely on the apparent resemblance of the names, has to be rejected. Soloke was a μεγάλη πόλις: there was no room for it in Tang-i Sarvak and there are no considerable ruins either in the valley or near it. That town lay on a river, the Hedyphon=Jarrāhi: the springs that rise in the Tang-i Sarvak cannot be called a river, and the nearest point on the Jarrāhi is about twenty miles away.

Tang-i Sarvak lay in the centre of the small kingdom of Elymais, which arose in the second century B.C. and continued in existence until the end of the Arsacid period. The districts on the left (eastern) bank of the Karun may have belonged to it; but it principally consisted of the valleys of the Jarrāhi and its headwaters and the mountainous regions adjoining to the east and north-east. At times, when its kings were strong, they dominated the neighbouring lands as far as Massabatice and Gabiane; but even if they occasionally exercised sovereignty over Susiana, that is no reason for confusing that country with Elymais. However, by the second century of our era such aspirations were a matter of the past, and the kingdom was confined to the south-eastern corner of Khūzistān; the sorry state of its coinage testifies to its insignificance at that time.

In the second century B.C., a Parthian king, believed to have been Mithradates i, invaded the kingdom of Elymais, which had just freed itself from Seleucid suzerainty, despoiled the temple of Athena and the sanctuary of Artemis Nanai, which was called τὰ Ἀζαρα, and took the "great town" of Seleucia, previously called Soloke, clearly the capital of Elymais. It would be wrong to identify Tang-i Sarvak with Azara; for the remains at Tang-i Sarvak are later by three hundred years than that ancient Nanai temple; but we may regard Tang-i Sarvak as the successor to the destroyed Azara, which no doubt lay nearby.¹ The true position of the centre of Elymais is clearly shown by the route taken by Ardashir, when he set out to punish the king of Ahwāz=Elymais for his presumption. He went first to Arragān, then by way of Sambīl (?) and Tāsān (both places in the immediate neighbourhood of Tang-i Sarvak) to *Surak*, arabicized as *Surraq*, and there the campaign ended; evidently, Surak was the capital, the ancient Soloke (in early Muslim times the name was applied to the district around the town, the later Dauraq). He went nowhere near Susa, which, as the stele of Khwāsak shows with sufficient clarity, was governed by a *satrap* (not a *king*) appointed by the Parthians.² There can be little doubt that, as Mithradates before taking the capital, Soloke, had destroyed

¹ So correctly G. Hoffmann, *Martyreracten*, 131-3. Differently W. W. Tarn, *Greeks in Bactria*, 463 sqq., who identifies the chief sanctuary of Elymais (around which "barbarians" lived, acc. to Polybius) with the city-temple of the Greek *polis* of Susa.

² M. Ghirshman, after first quoting with approval the views of F. Cumont, who stressed the distinctness of Susiana from Elymais, surprisingly identifies the king of Ahwāz whom Ardashir attacked with the satrap of Susa (*loc. cit.*, 105 sqq.).

the temple of Azara, so Ardashir before taking the capital, Surak, destroyed¹ the shrine which symbolized the kingship of Elymais, Tang-i Sarvak.^{1,2}

¹ At Tāsān a mere three hours' ride would have brought Ardashir to Tang-i Sarvak (time taken by de Bode). That village, which lies halfway between Arragān and Tang-i Sarvak, appears sometimes as Tāsān; thus in the *Fārs-nāme-yi Nāqiri* (ii, 277 with *t*;³ on the map ii, 18 with *t*- as in the text of Tabari). Sarnbil (first stage on one of the two roads from Arragān to Rāmihurmuz) is merely conjecture in the Tabari passage. The MSS. have ساران, ساسان, and سيسان (i, 818, 9). Marquart, *Addenda et Emendanda*, p. dxc, proposed بيسان *Bunyān* instead, without giving any reasons.

Several villages of that name (properly *Bunyān*) exist in Fārs (the *Fārs-nāme-yi Nāqiri* lists three), but none of them is in the neighbourhood of Behbehān. Presumably the place Marquart had in view is the one mentioned by Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*. This was a district lying between Fārs, Isfahān, and Khūzistān, but counted as part of the last; it adjoined Sardan. The position of the region called Sardan or Sardān is comfortably fixed; its capital was Lūrdagān/Lūrfān (Istakhri 103, 3-4) and this town exists even now (lat. 31°30', long. 50°49'). As Yāqūt's Banyān can have lain only to the north (or north-east) of Sardan, it cannot be considered as a place touched on by Ardashir in his campaign. A possible alternative to Nöldeke's conjecture is to read بستان = *Bustān* (with MS. C) and identify it with the first stage on the second road from Arragān to Rāmihurmuz, which otherwise was called *Bustānak* (thus to be read Muqaddasi 453, 3 and note c; see *Nuzhatu-l-Qulūb*, transl. 129, 179; the reading is guaranteed by the spelling in the *Fārs-nāme-yi Ibn-i-Balkhī*, 162, 19).

² It remains to say a few words about the name of the last king of Elymais acc. to Tabari (i, 818, 9=Nöldeke, *Tab.*, 13). Nöldeke edited it as *Nyrwfr*=Nirōfarr with a question mark; such a name does not exist. It seems to me that we should put *Nyrw* into Tabari's text; a variant reading begins with *nyrw*-, another ends with *-yrw*. If now one transcribes *Nyrw* back into the script in which Tabari's source was written (as naturally one should do in such a case) and then contemplates the resulting Pahlavi word, one can scarcely fail to read it as *Wyrw*/*Wyrwōd* (in Pahlavi the letters *N* and *W* are identical in shape). It so happens that *Wyrwōd*=*Wērōd*, later *Wyrw*=*Wērōy*, is the Pahlavi form of the name "Orodes". Thus the last king of Elymais, too, bore the name which his predecessors had preferred to all others. It may be difficult to say why Orodes appears in Pahlavi as *Wyrwōd*, but that it does is a fact: in the trilingual inscription of Shapur I at the Ka'be-i Zardušt, one and the same man is called *Wrwōd* in Parthian (line 28), Οὐρορῶδ in Greek (line 67), but *Wyrwōd* in Pahlavi (line 35); and the appearance of Ἡρώδης as variant of Ὀρώδης, Ὑρώδης, and Οὐρορῶδης is perhaps significant (see the instances collected by Justi s.v.; this may affect a much-discussed point in the history of Palmyra, cf. H. Seyrig, *Syria*, xviii, 3, n.1). Possibly the name was *Wērōd* originally, shortened to *Werōd* in some parts of Iran, where this form finally was pronounced *Wōrōd* (by assimilation); but the original form persisted locally and alone was used in Pahlavi. The ancient and oft-repeated but wrong derivation of Orodes from *hurauda* should have been abandoned when the Aramaic spelling *Wrwōd* (Palmyra and Elymais) became known.—The name *Wērōd*/*Wōrōd* is a typically Parthian name. It became fashionable in the 1st century B.C. and continued in common use until the middle of the 3rd century of our era, when it suddenly disappeared (with insignificant exceptions). The prominence given to it (in its Pahlavi form, *Wērōy*) in *Vīs u Rāmīn* constitutes a powerful argument in favour of the attribution of Parthian origin to that romance, which was lately so ably advocated by V. Minorsky.—It will be seen that, if indeed the name of the last king of Elymais was also Orodes (=Orodes v), a different dating of the inscriptions will become possible: "Abar-Bāsi"=Allotte de la Fuée's "Y" (accession in about A.D. 180), Orodes="Z"=Orodes v (accession in about A.D. 200); I see no way of deciding between the alternatives. [Irregular shortening of initial *wē*- (*wai*-) has previously been noticed in Sogdian and Pashto, see *BSOAS.*, xi, 717.]



Monument A

Tang-i Sarvak

Plate I

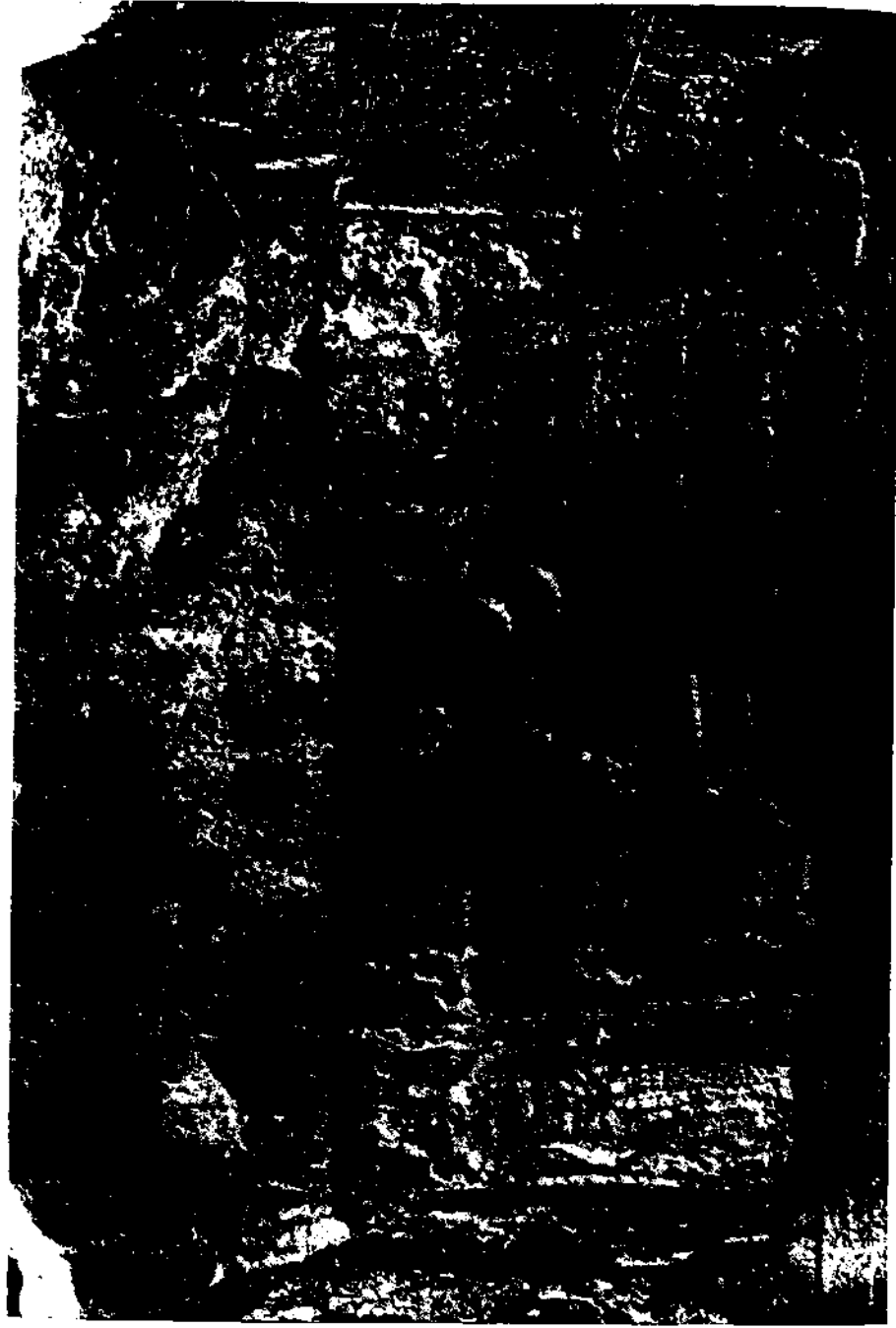


Plate II

Monument ANa

Inscriptions Nos. 1, 3, and 4



Plate III

Monument ANa

Inscription No. 1

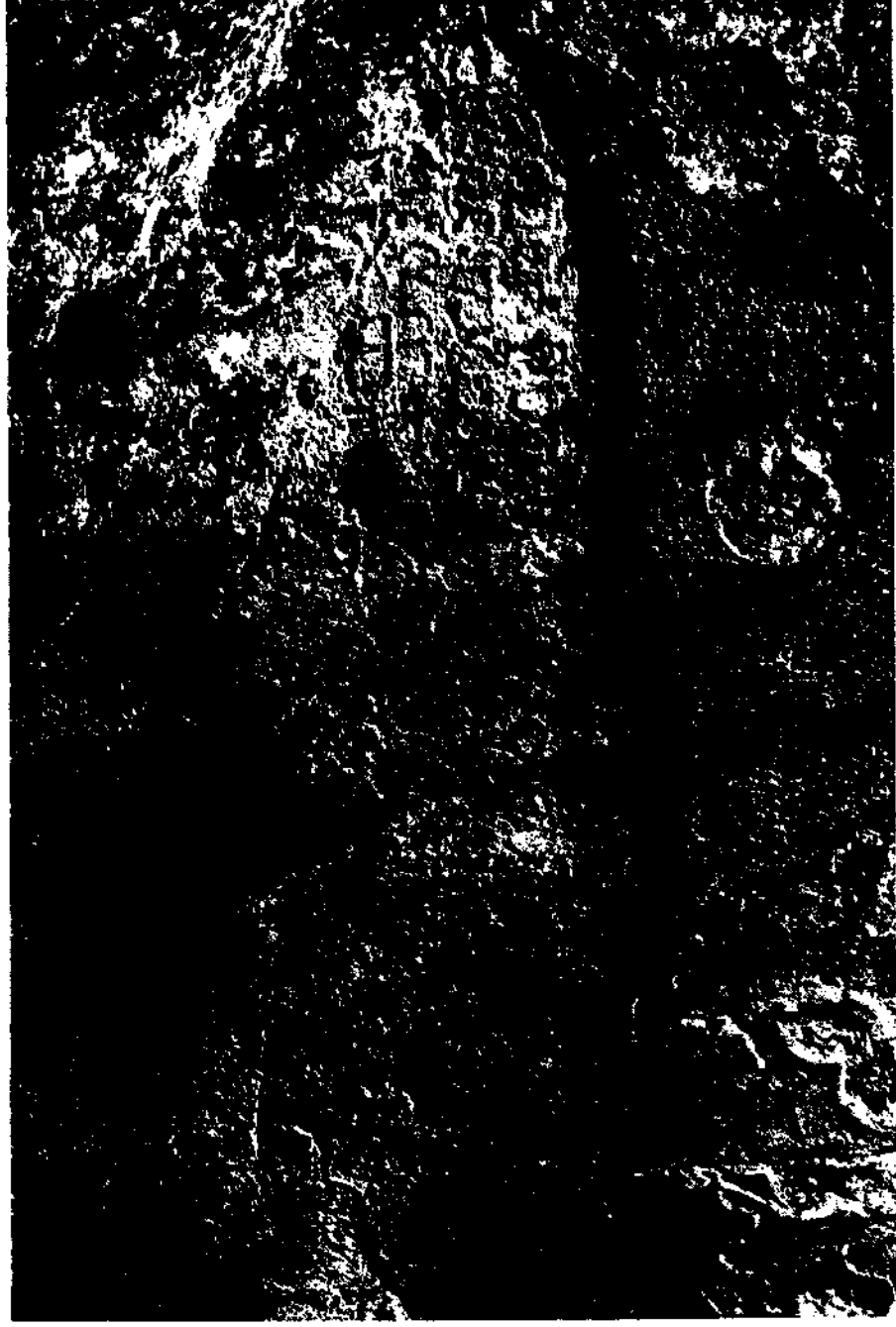


Plate iv

Inscription No. 1

Monument ANa



Plate v

Inscription No. 1

Monument ANa

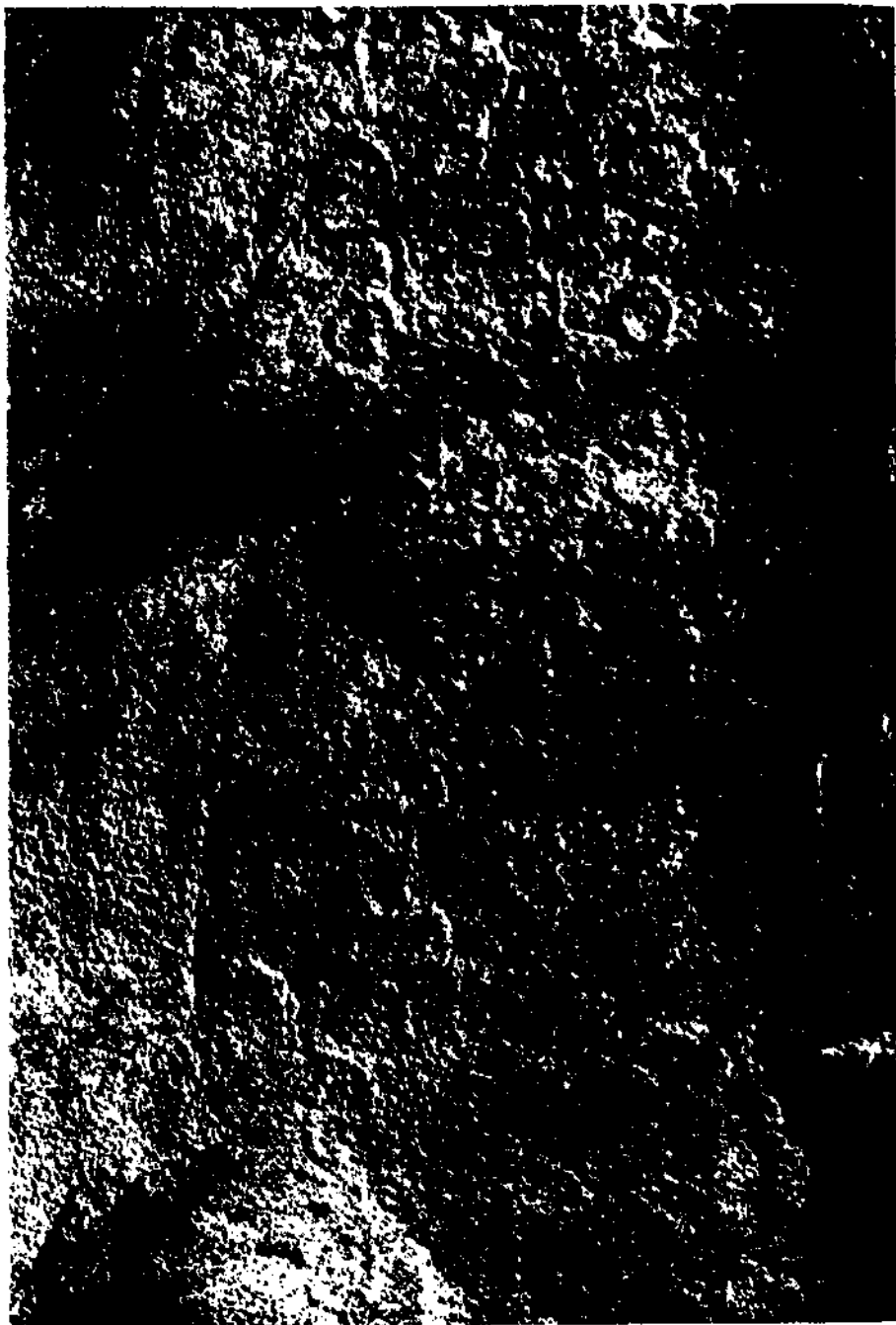


Plate vi

Inscription No. 1

Monument ANa



Plate vii

Inscription No. 4

Monument ANa



Plate vii

Monument ANb



Plate ix

Monument ANW

Inscription No. 3



Plate x

Monument ANW

Inscription No. 3



Plate xi

Inscription No. 3

Monument ANW

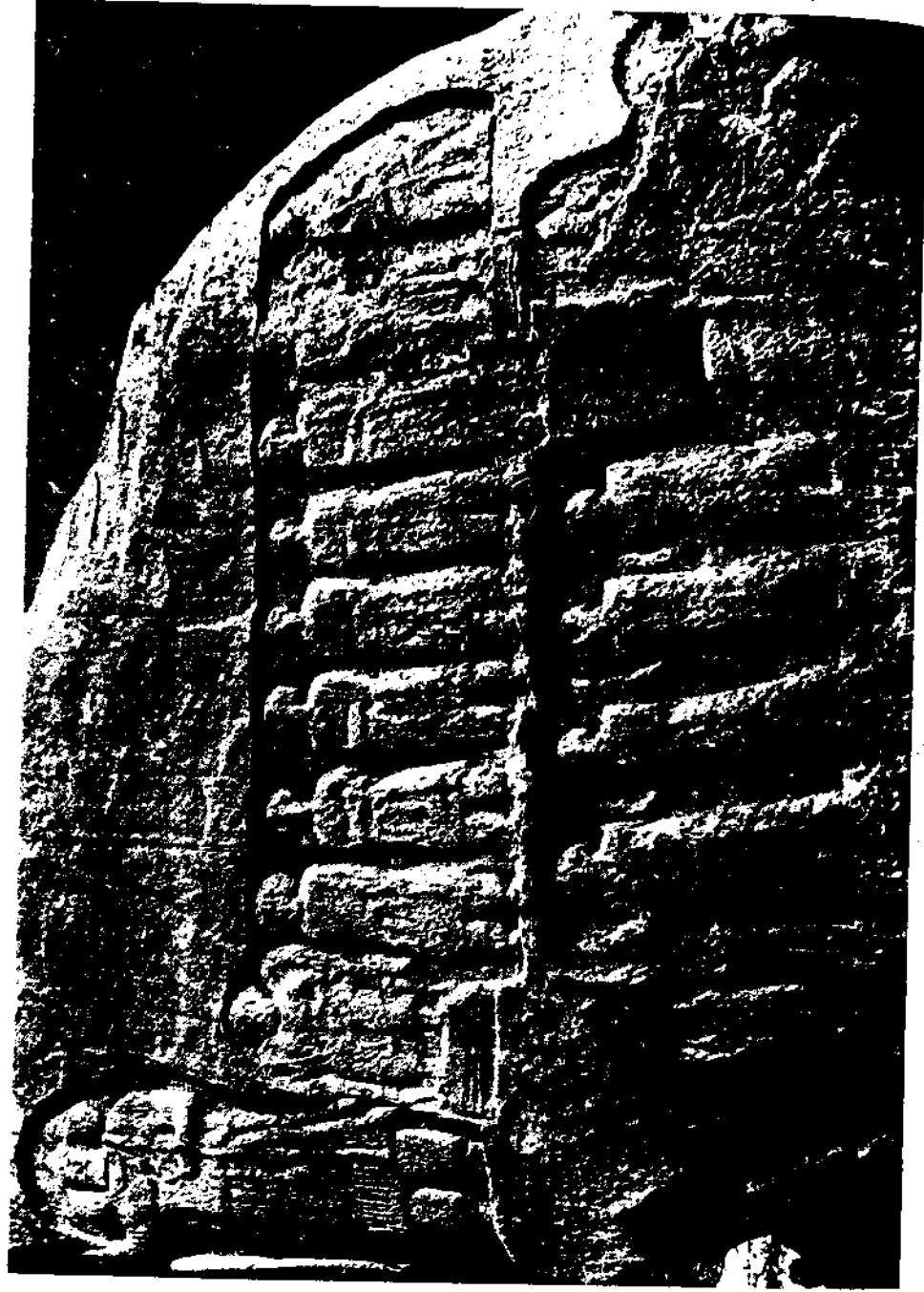


Plate xli

Monuments AWa and AWb

Inscriptions Nos. 2 and 5



Plate xlii

Monument AWb

Inscriptions Nos. 2 and 5



Plate xiv

Monument AWe

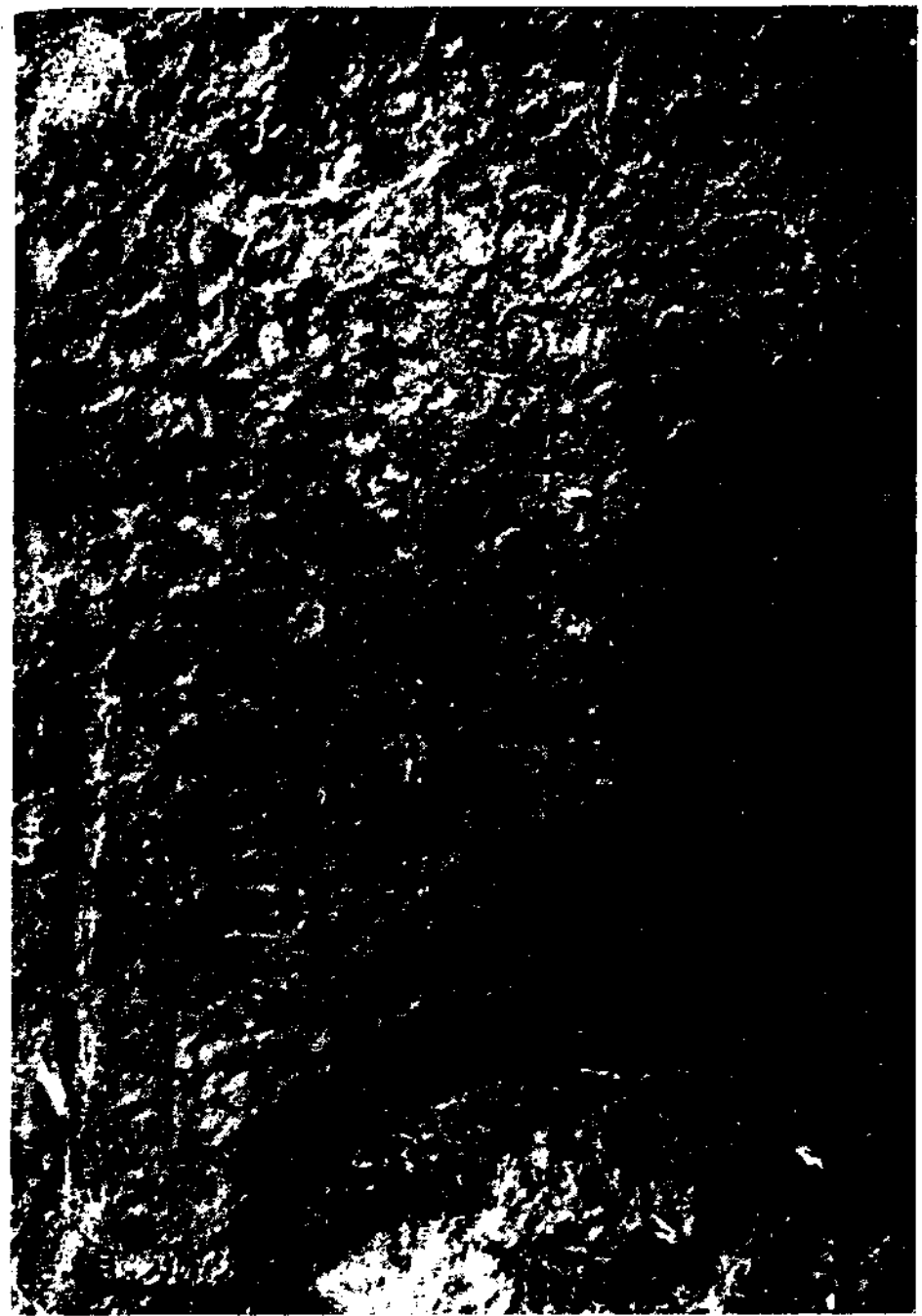


Plate xv

Monument AWe

Plate xvi

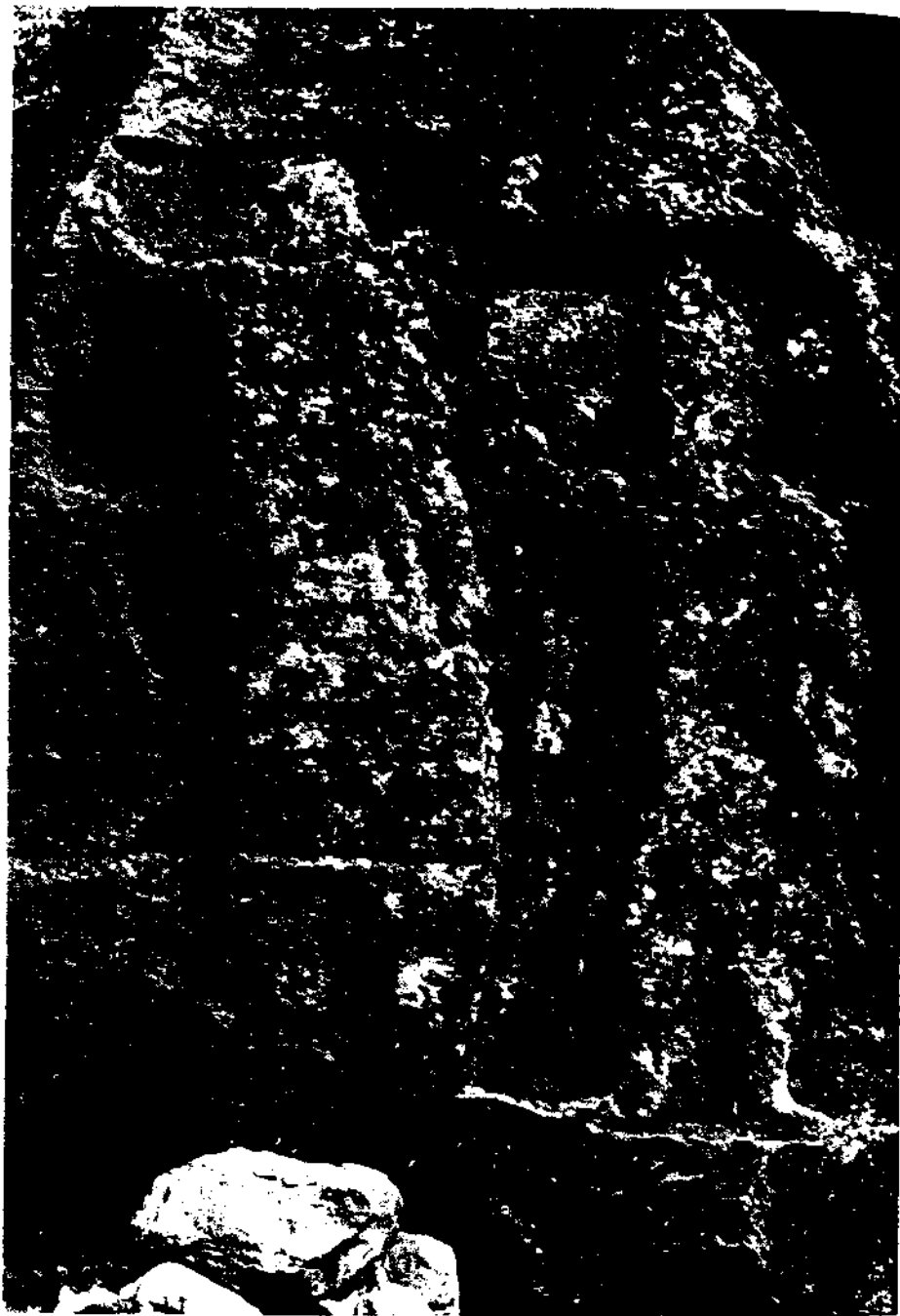


Plate xvi

Monument BS

Inscription No. 6



Plate xvii

Monument BW



Plate xviii

Monument BN



Plate xix

Monument CN

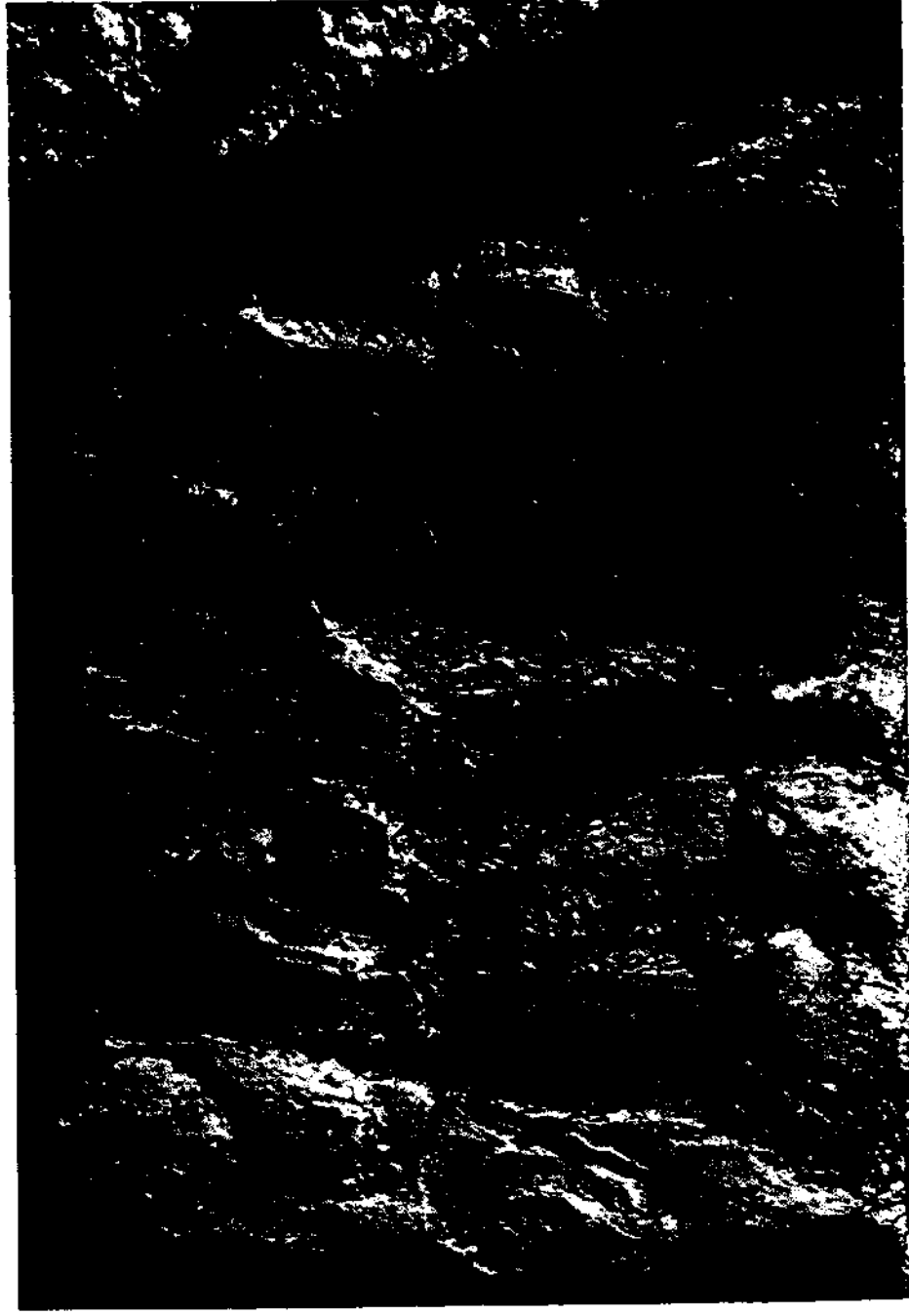


Plate xx

Monument D