



KURĀNGUN

KURĀNGUN, site of an Elamite rock relief located on the north face of the lowest spur of the Kuh-e Pātāva, a mountain ridge rising about 80 m above the Fahliān river, near the village of Seh Talān, in central-western Fārs ([Plate 1](#)). According to Moḥammad-Taqi Moṣṭafawi (p. 137; tr., p. 89), the relief at Kurāngun was first mentioned by [Forṣat-al-Dawla](#) (q.v.; 1854-1920), who made a vague reference to it without providing any details (Forṣat-al-Dawla, II, pp. 498-99). The site is less than 2 km west of Tall-e Espid, where a Middle Elamite brick from a temple to Kilahšupir, built by Šilhak-Inšušinak (ca. 1140 BCE), was found sometime before 1924 (Herzfeld, 1926, p. 258; idem, 1935, pp. 4-6, pls. II-III), and approximately the same distance north of the Achaemenid way-station at [Jenjān](#) (q.v.)/Sarvān (Atarashi and Horiuchi).

From the summit of the hill, three flights of steps descend to a 5-m long, 2-m wide area oriented northwest/southeast that was cut into the vertical rock face overhanging the river. The main scene is carved in low relief into a roughly 1.60-m high, 3.64-m wide rectangle situated at the back of the resultant ledge ([Figure 1](#); Álvarez-Mon, 2014, p. 748; idem, 2019, p. 16). A fragmentary frieze of swimming fish, located below this central panel, was probably carved at the same time, but staggered sets of kilted male supplicants shown approaching the main scene from the left, as if descending a hill (sloping from the upper left to the lower right), are thought by most scholars to represent Neo-Elamite additions. Close parallels with the Kul-e Farah IV (9th/8th cents. BCE), III (8th/7th cents. BCE) and II (7th/6th cents. BCE) suggest that efforts to add these rows of supplicants was an ongoing process carried out over several centuries



(Álvarez-Mon, 2019, p. 19).

The focus of the main scene is an 82-cm high, seated god, facing left, with an 81-cm high, seated goddess, also facing left, to his right. Both wear horned crowns with two pair of horns on each. The god is bearded and has a long, single plait between his beard and headgear. He wears a long, robe-like garment and is seated on a snake throne, made up of the body of a snake wound back and forth. The neck of the snake rises up from the body of the throne and is grasped by the god in his left hand. His extended right hand clasps the rod and ring, symbols of authority (Spycket; Herzfeld, 1935, pl. II), which hover above a brazier or fire altar, from which flames rise. The goddess, who also wears a single, long plait, appears to be seated on an animal, which is too badly preserved to permit identification. She seems to be grasping the necks of two snakes, the heads of which are clear, in her left hand. Her garment is long, and there are indications of folds around her left shoulder.

On either side of the deities stand a pair of bearded attendants (each 0.95-1 m high), into or from whose hands water flows, in streams, joined to the rod and ring. The right-hand stream frames the figures of the two seated deities. These male figures, dressed in long robes, wear hornless, peaked headgear identical to that worn by the Neo-Elamite figure at [Naqš-e Rostam](#) (q.v.). Behind each is another pair of worshippers with raised hands but without the headgear. They appear to be female. Finally, behind these, is a third set of males, one on each side, wearing peaked headgear and long robes. The figure on the left appears to be clasping his hands in reverence, his elbows thrust outward, while the figure on the far right holds up his right hand in devotion.

The snake throne, horned headgear, and long robes of the principal deities appear in Elamite glyptic of the *sukkalmaḥ* period, more precisely that of Kuk-Našur II (ca. 1620 BCE) and Tan-Uli (late 17th/early 16th cent. BCE; Binder, 2013; Álvarez-Mon, 2019, p. 18; see [ELAM i. The History of Elam](#)). The male and female deities have been variously identified as Humban (see [ELAM vi. Elamite Religion](#)) and Kiririša or Parti (Hinz, tr., p. 52); Napiriša and Kiririša (Amiet, p. 17; Vanden Berghe, p. 159); or Inšušinak and an unidentified goddess (de Miroschedji, 1980, p. 139; idem, 1981, p. 15). Interestingly, François Vallat has shown that “Ea” was sometimes used at Susa as an epithet of Inšušinak (Vallat). Further, in the Mesopotamian incantation *Šurpu* II, line 163, Napiriša (Naprušu) is called “Ea of Elam” (Reiner). Since Kiririša was Napiriša’s consort, and both were considered the most important divine couple in Anshan (q.v.), Kurāngun probably represents Napiriša (= Ea =



Inšušinak) and his consort Kiririša (Potts, p. 153). The water imagery evokes the flowing waters of the Fahliān river below it, with overtones of the divine Apsû, a subterranean, cosmic body of water in Sumero-Babylonian mythology (Lambert, p. 75).

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