First text on rock wall by A Vương river in Tây Giang (C. 199), 6th/7th century CE

Arlo Griffiths

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Identifier: DHARMA_INSCIC00199_1

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Language: Old Cham [Cam]

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Palaeographic description

Archaic script with long descenders on *ka*, *ra*, *A*, etc.

Edition

〈1〉 karvvāv· jmāy· la〈2〉lo nīy·

Translation

Buffaloes must not pass (or: be too numerous) here!

Commentary

The word *karvvāv* must be a variant of the word that appears as *kravāv* or *kruvāv* elsewhere in Old Cham, meaning “buffalo” (Modern Cham *kabau*, *kubau*; Malay *kerbau*).

On the word *jmāy* that expresses a negative imperative (prohibitive) meaning in Old Cham, see Griffiths 2025, pp. 62, 65. The word *lalo*, with its apheretic equivalent *lo*, is recorded in Modern Cham (Aymonier & Cabaton 1906, pp. 439, 448) to have meanings like "in great numbers, excessively". It is obviously cognate with the Malay base *lalu* "pass", from which is derived *terlalu* "excessively". We can thus interpret *lalo* here in two ways, either as "to pass" or as "to be excessive in number".

Bibliography

The inscription was tentatively deciphered, though not translated, in Wittayarat 2004. It is re-edited here from photographs and after autopsy of the stone in March 2026.

Primary

Wittayarat, Daoruang. 2004. "Les inscriptions rupestres de Samo (inédites) : une tentative de déchiffrement, de traduction et de datation." *Lettre de la société des amis du Champa ancien* 11, pp. 14–17. Page 14, item A.