THE YASNAS

Excerpts from the Manuscript, J2,
The Yatha Ahu Vairyo Prayer, the Ashem Vohu Prayer, and
the Gathas.

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Introduction.

We have reproduced here, parts of an ancient manuscript of the Yasna. Scholars call it J2. The parts reproduced here, consist of the Yatha Ahu Vairyo prayer (Yasna 27.13), the Ashem Vohu prayer (Y27.14), followed by the Pahlavi Introduction and the standard Avestan invocation that appears before the Gathas (yanim mano, yanim vacho..... et cetera), and then the Gathas themselves, starting with Yasna 28. A table of contents has been provided to the web pages, for easy access, and was prepared using Geldner's compilation which is not identical to J2 in all respects. In this manuscript, each line of a Yasna verse in Avestan, is followed by one or more lines of text in Pahlavi, which are a translation / commentary on the preceding Avestan line. Avestan lines are almost always separated from the Pahlavi translation by a symbol of three or more circles, that look like a small bunch of grapes. In other ancient manuscripts, (such as L17), the copyist separates lines and verses with drawings of little flowers.

In ancient times, Zoroastrian priests preserved ancient manuscripts by copying them, and making copies of copies, down through the centuries. This particular manuscript, J2, was written in Cambay, India, in the year 692 AY (1323 A.D.), by Ervad Mehraban (or Mihr Apan) KaiKhusro. Although such copyists often identified the manuscripts from which they were making their copies, J2 does not identify any parent manuscript.

The last Zoroastrian priest to own the manuscript, J2 was Dastur Jamaspji Minocheherji Jamasp Asa. In 1892, he declined many lucrative offers to purchase the manuscript, and instead donated it to Oxford University, to ensure that it would be preserved and available for scholarly study. The original is in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, but has now grown so dark, that it is practically illegible. In 1892, Dastur Jamasp Asa wanted to copy the manuscript before giving it to Oxford. However, the manuscript was in such fragile condition, that Professor Lawrence H. Mills persuaded the Dasturji to allow the University to make and publish a facsimile copy of the manuscript in book form, to preserve it for posterity, and to enable scholars to study it. The excerpts from J2 on this website are copied from Dr. Mills' facsimile, published in 1893. It is tragic indeed, and an inestimable loss, that the manuscript was not copied again before 1892, before parts of it were allowed to deteriorate so badly. But we are lucky indeed that Professor Mills had the dedication and foresight to publish a facsimile copy in 1893, thus preserving at least what was then left of the manuscript, for future generations. We owe him a deep debt of gratitude. In conclusion, the excerpts from J2 on this website are precious indeed, and are offered here by the California Zoroastrian Center (thanks to a generous expenditure of time and talent by Shahbahram Pooladzandi), in the spirit of Dastur Jamasp Asa's donation of the original manuscript, to preserve this precious heritage for posterity, and to enable research and study by anyone who may be interested.

Dina G. McIntyre

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ایدون آن هر دو گوشن خایشن هورمزد

اوستا زند که چه آگاه دانا اش

ایربدستان کنشن

که ستایشن هورمزد ویزشن

بهمن اجش پیدا آن اوستا زند

که هومنیدار فه اشهی آن چه که

فراردن منید اش گرفه یرشن مه بید

کشان اندر روشنش فه وینشنش

کوشان که مینو اشان

رامشن بید

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ایدون چه فه آن

دهشن فه تن پسین او اوشان ودناهکاران

رسید کوشان پاده فراه کنند

ایدون هورمزد

که او تو خداش اش بهمن به دهید مزد

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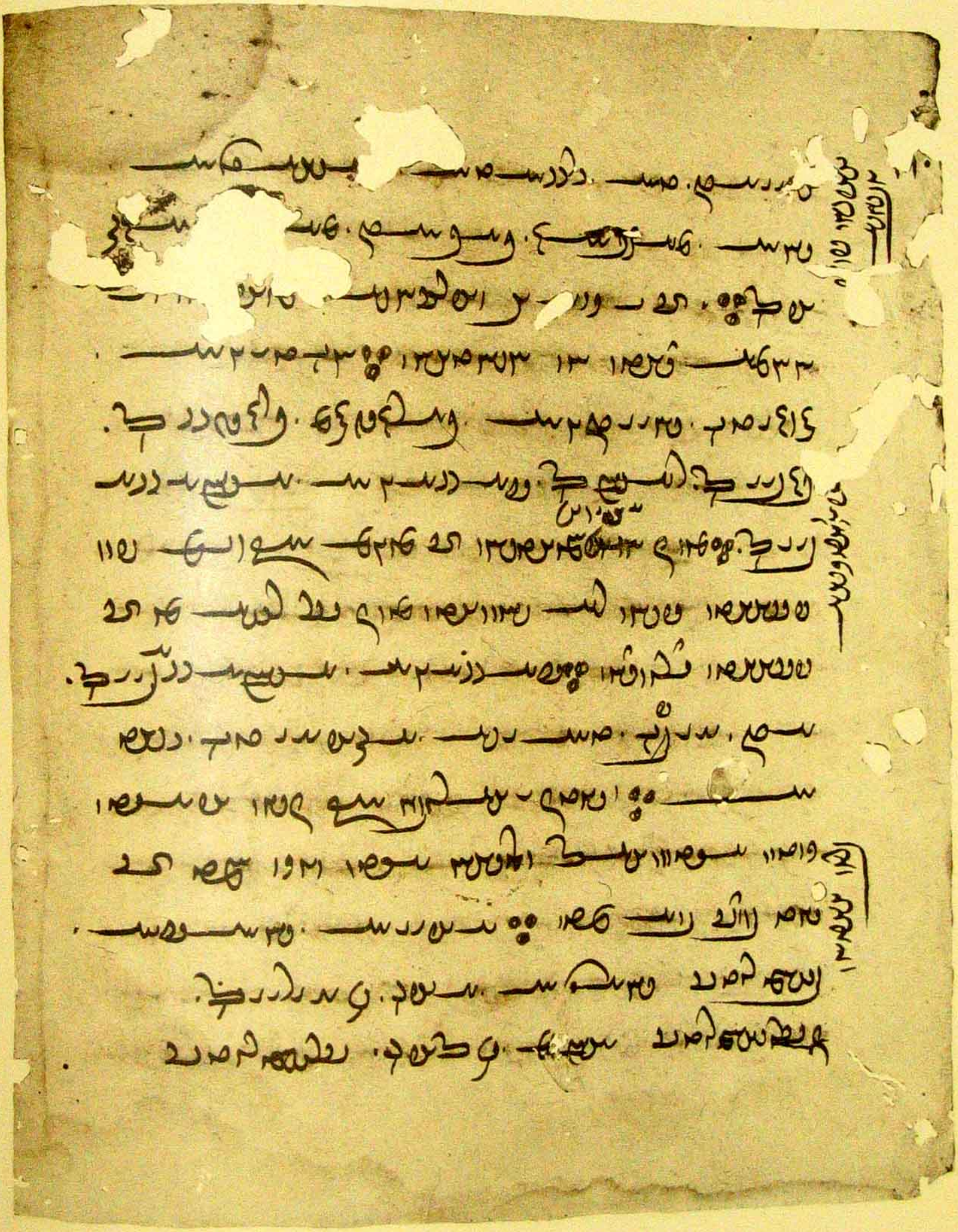

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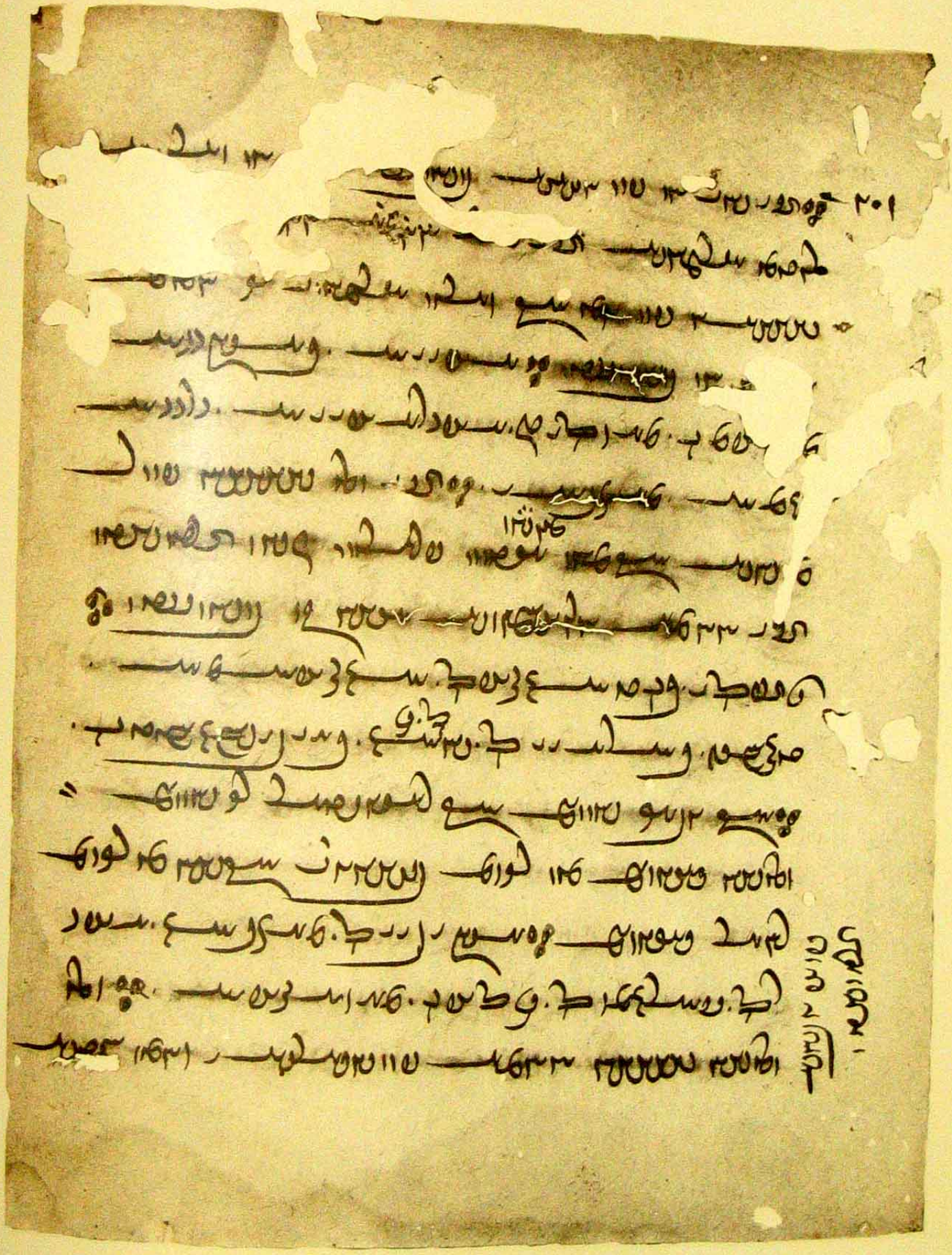

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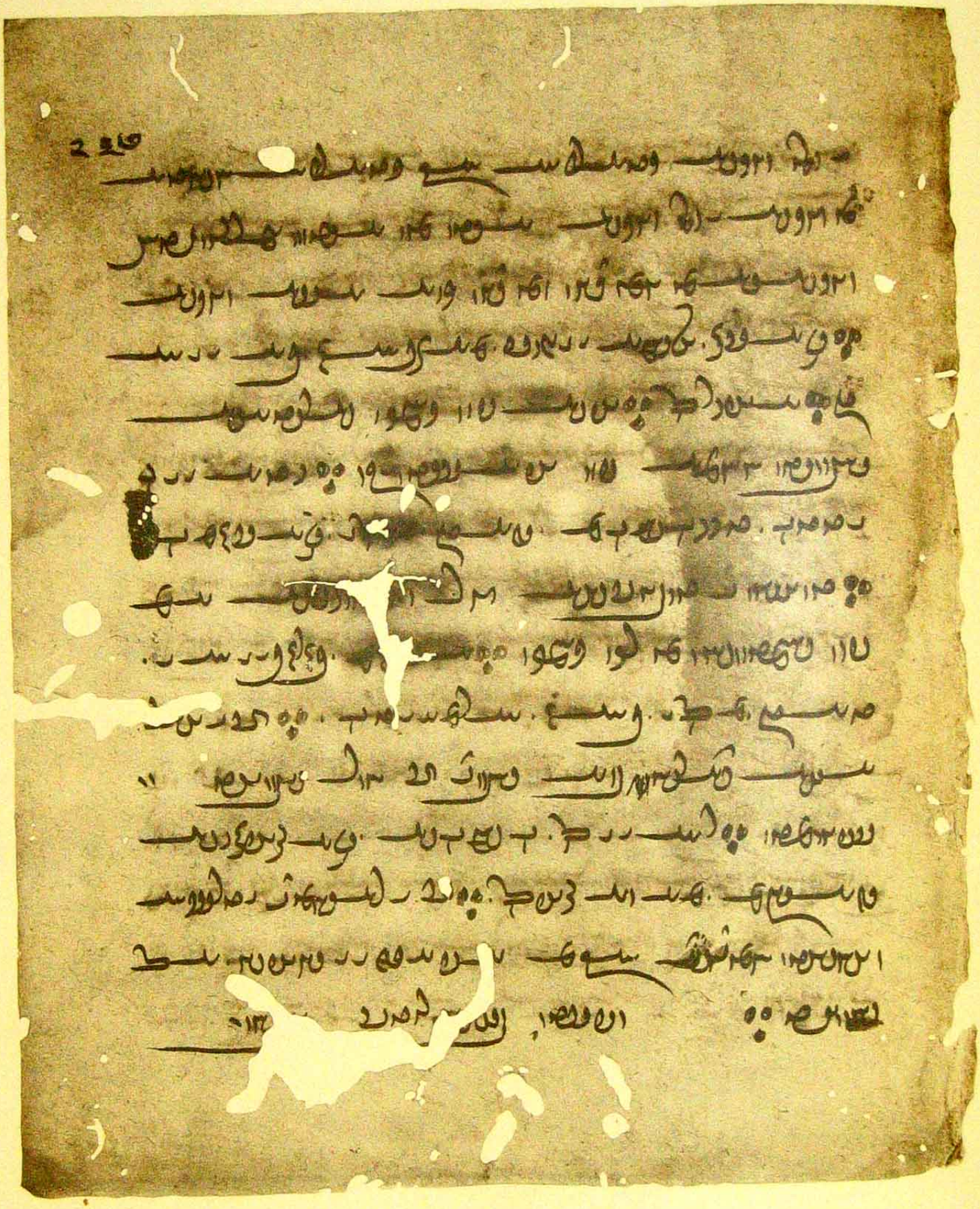

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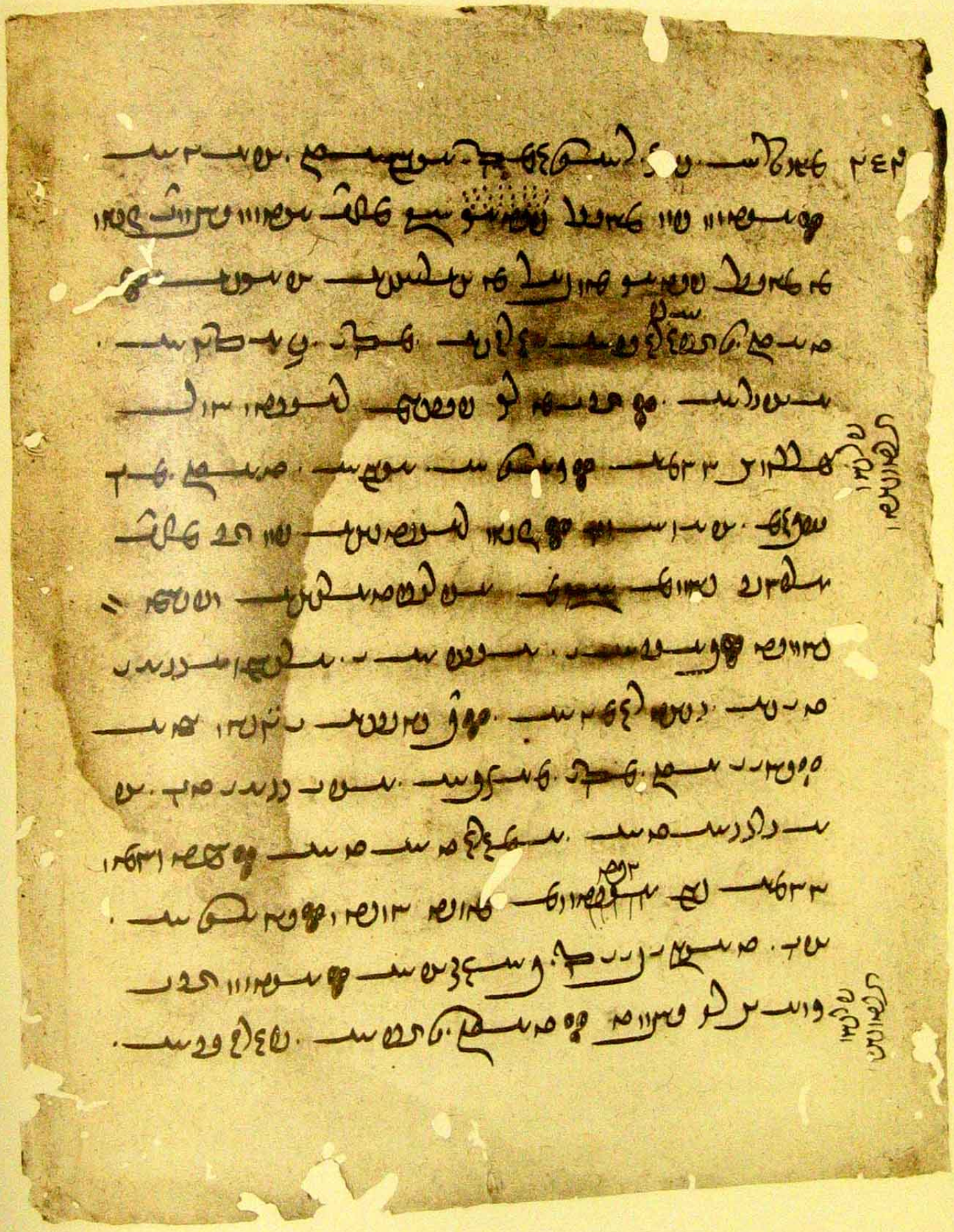

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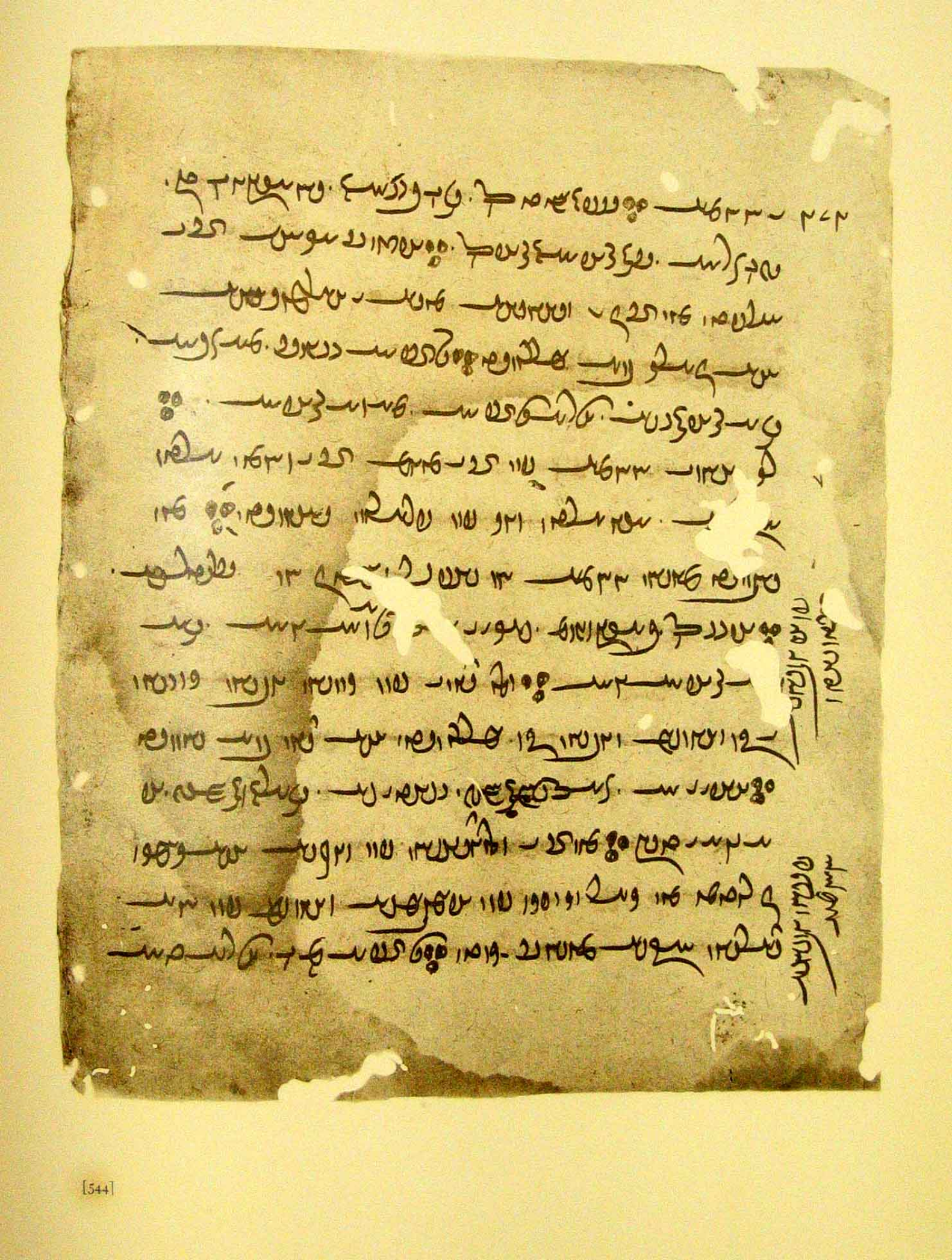

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