

PERSEPOLIS FORTIFICATION ARCHIVE PROJECT

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Like other efforts in research and life, the Persepolis Fortification Archive (PFA) Project began to emerge from the caves of the plague years into uncertain present light. Trying to pick up the traces of familiar aims and procedures, we found that changed conditions still required us to adapt schedules, techniques, and equipment.

Graduate student worker Young Bok Kim (NELC), ever more effective under stressful circumstances, continued to clear the long-standing backlog of unprocessed polynomial texture mapping scans of Fortification tablets. He processed scans of about 1,350 surfaces of approximately 130 Elamite cuneiform tablets before pausing to complete his dissertation. He received his PhD—the tenth worker on high-resolution PFA images to do so—in June 2022. Then he returned to PFA Project work just as a resurvey of Project files relocated about 8,000 more scans awaiting processing.

Graduate student worker Teagan Wolter (NELC) imported, glossed, and parsed more than 80 new Elamite texts in the Online Cultural and Historical Research Environment (OCHRE). Most of the texts were first read by Chuck Jones under the tutelage of Richard Hallock before 1980, then collated and updated by PFA Project editor Wouter F. M. Henkelman (École des Hautes Études, Paris). Wolter's long experience and exact attention arouse frequent insightful questions about oddities of form and lexicon—a sort of editorial commentary that leads to unexpected improvements in other documents. Grace Clements (Center for Middle Eastern Studies), after compiling images of tablets being packed for return to Iran, shifted to importing Elamite texts during summer 2021. She processed about 40 others, most of them new documents recorded since 2006.

Henkelman returned to Chicago for a month in April–May 2022 to continue recollating the new Elamite texts recorded by the PFA Project since 2006. He made many improvements to my readings and identifications of about 200 texts. I collated or recollated about 200 others. Most of those texts are livestock accounts whose arithmetic needed to be rechecked in connection with an expanding study of their form, terminology, and accounting procedures. I added readings of about 35 such texts and a few texts of other kinds, for a running total of about 1,850 new Elamite texts and fragments recorded since the PFA Project began. The livestock accounts (figs. 1 and 2) are an example of the work's benefits: individually, they are repetitive, stupefying to read, and vexing to check, but increasing the published sample of them by about tenfold produces strong results regarding the form, accounting methods, and historical connections of the Fortification Archive as a whole.

Project editors Annalisa Azzoni (Vanderbilt University), Elspeth Dusinberre (University of Colorado, Boulder), and Mark B. Garrison (Trinity University, San Antonio) continued work on the catalog of seals impressed on the monolingual Aramaic Fortification tablets. They produced the first draft of an introduction by Dusinberre and Garrison; a general introduction to the Aramaic texts by Azzoni; commentaries on usage, style, and iconography by Garrison; and an iconographic index by Dusinberre.

With the help of the OI's museum archivist Anne Flannery, Azzoni confirmed that a group of 38 potsherds with inked inscriptions in Aramaic, relocated in 2014, were included in Fortification



Figure 1. Fort. 1271-101+1959-102, a 115-line account aggregating information on more than 17,000 sheep and goats. Photo by PFA Project.



Figure 2. PF-NN 2661, an 18-column tabulation breaking down information on 370 sheep and goats in 8 flocks. Photo by PFA Project.

material loaned to the OI in 1936. Azzoni and visiting student Mitchka Shahryari (Université de Lille and École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris) resumed work on these ostraca in May–June 2021 (fig. 3). Like the other components of the PFA, the ostraca are administrative records, adding yet another information stream to the already polymorphous and polyglot system of the PFA.

Recording and analysis of the seals impressed on the Fortification tablets continued to expand and deepen under Garrison's oversight. Delphine Poinot (Collège de France) continued the work she began as an OI postdoctoral fellow on more than 400 stamp seals impressed on Fortification tablets—those seals that represent single animals. This large thematic subcorpus bears formal resemblances to seals from Sasanian Iran (224–651 CE). Poinot added 20 final collated drawings from seals on about 50 Fortification tablets (fig. 4). After Christina Chandler defended her Bryn Mawr dissertation on inscribed seals in the PFA in December 2021 (Chandler 2021), she received a postdoctoral fellowship at New York University's Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, where she will revise the dissertation for publication by the OI. In mid-summer 2022, Emma Petersen (Iranian Studies, University of California, Los Angeles) returned to her interrupted work on seals impressed on uninscribed Fortification tablets. At the time this report was submitted, she had reviewed 400 tablets and recorded impressions of more than 60 new seals.

Garrison himself began a new analysis of the more than 100 seals that bear the so-called “Late Babylonian worship scene” (fig. 5). This scene type abounds in impressions on Late Babylonian tablets and unprovenanced seals in museums and collections around the world, but no other published collection of them is as large, varied, and rich as the PFA's.

Notable among PFA-related items published or sent to press are contributions to the long-awaited *Companion to the Achaemenid Persian Empire* (Jacobs and Rollinger 2021) by Garrison (minor arts, seals and sealing), Henkelman (roads and communication, local administration, heartland



Figure 3. Persepolis Fortification Aramaic Ostrakon 1, with terse administrative information: “Account, Šutkara [Iranian *Čutkāra-] . . . / year [2?]4.” Photo and drawing by Mitchka Shahryari.

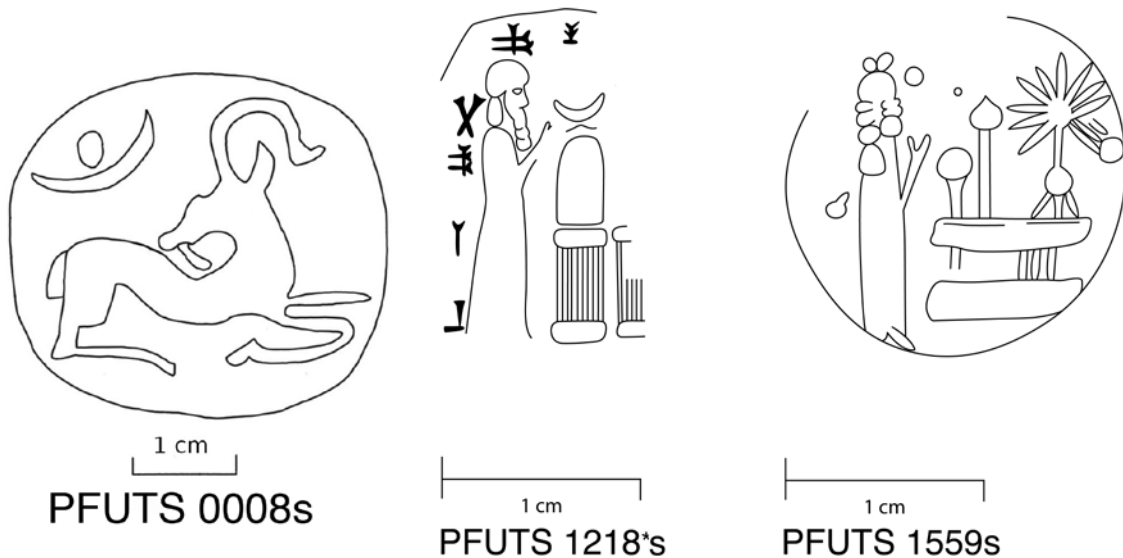


Figure 4. Stamp seal PFUTS 0008s, showing a horned animal posed to fit the seal’s oval surface and crouching with reversed head, as in later Sasanian seals. Collated drawing by Delphine Poinso.

Figure 5. Examples of the Late Babylonian worship scene. *Left*, PFUTS 1218*s, with an inscription invoking the Babylonian god Nabû. *Right*, PFUTS 1559s, with symbols of the gods Marduk and Nusku. Collated drawings by Mark B. Garrison.

pantheon), and me (Elamite sources); my treatment of new texts recording rations for specialized treasury workers supervised by one of the “treasurers” who bridged the Fortification and Treasury Archives (Stolper, forthcoming); and contributions by Garrison (forthcoming) and Henkelman (forthcoming) to the Festschrift they edited in honor of Bruno Jacobs. Henkelman’s article, as its subtitle promises, entails a radical correction of suppositions not only about the chronological relationship

of the Persepolis Fortification and Treasury Archives but also about their institutional relationship and the functional relationship between payments in commodities and payments in silver.

Especially poignant among PFA-related public presentations was Henkelman's "Beyond Datis: More Persians in Greek and Elamite," the 24th David Lewis Memorial Lecture at the Oxford Centre for the Study of Ancient Documents in May 2022. Forty-five years ago, the eminent Greek historian and epigrapher David Lewis gave another memorial lecture (Lewis 1977) that leaped across academic boundaries with some of the first deeply considered historical applications of PFA information, lighting a way beyond what Richard Hallock called "the picked-over bones of Achaemenid history" (Hallock 1985 [1971], 588).

The first stage of packing 3,500 Elamite and Aramaic tablets for return to the National Museum of Iran is nearly complete, thanks to the constant and mostly unassisted efforts of chief conservator Laura D'Alessandro. The exhibition of selected tablets returned in 2019 (see the 2018–19 and 2019–20 annual reports) traveled from the National Museum of Tehran to be remounted in the museum at Persepolis itself. Supplementing the exhibition are videos by Henkelman, Rhyne King (NELC PhD 2021), Hamaseh Golestaneh (University of Berlin), and me that explain the contents and significance of some of the items and reflect many of the improvements in comprehension that the PFA Project has achieved.

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