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A Demotic Tablet or Two in the Persepolis Fortification Archive

Abstract

This article publishes two tablets in the Persepolis Fortification archive, one of which is certainly inscribed in Demotic, and possibly the other as well. They join a small number of tablets written in Old Persian, Neo-Babylonian, Greek, and Phrygian, alongside the vast majority of tablets written in Elamite or Aramaic or left uninscribed.²

Keywords

Persepolis Tablets, Demotic, Egypt, Seals

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Part 1: the texts

Ernst Herzfeld's excavation conducted in 1933 on behalf of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago on the northeastern corner of the terrace of the Achaemenid capital Persepolis unearthed thousands of sealed clay tablets in chambers in the fortification wall. The remarkable discovery was later recognized to be the remnants of a complex administrative archive of the Persian Empire, recording the storage and disbursement of commodities mostly in the Pārsa region and dated to the regnal years 13-28 of Darius I (509-493 BCE).³ To date, the Persepolis Fortification archive counts about 20,000 to 25,000 tablets and fragments, the majority of which, comprising circa 70 percent of the archive, are written in cuneiform Elamite (Azzoni *et al.* 2017). A few thousand, constituting circa 20 percent of the archive, are uninscribed but sealed (Azzoni *et al.* 2017; Garrison 2008). A small group, amounting to only circa 5 percent of the archive, consists of tablets written in Aramaic script and language (Azzoni *et al.* 2017).

The Persepolis Fortification Aramaic tablets (PFAT) are mostly written in ink, but many are also incised, and some were written in ink while the clay was still wet; in the last case, the stylus sometimes left in the clay tablet marks still clearly visible even when the ink has mostly faded (Azzoni 2008: 256-257). A couple of tablets were originally assigned to the small Aramaic corpus, simply based on the fact that they were written in ink. Upon closer inspection, one of them, Fort. 2131-401 (originally numbered PFAT 671), revealed that the writing was not Aramaic but rather Demotic script and language.⁴ This unexpected discovery led also to the review of another tablet, Fort. 0839-401 (originally numbered PFAT 000), that carried only one inked symbol which did not appear to be Aramaic at the time of cataloging (hence the number PFAT 000). In light of Fort. 2131-401 clearly carrying inked Demotic, it is now possible to suggest that Fort. 0839-401 may be written in Demotic as well.

³ Although excavations at Persepolis, conducted in 1934 and 1938 by Eric Schmidt on behalf of the Oriental Institute, also uncovered another smaller administrative archive, the Persepolis Treasury archive (PTA), this article will concern only the tablets and seal impressions from the Persepolis Fortification archive. For information about the PTA, see Azzoni *et al.* 2017.

⁴ For an announcement of the discovery, see Stolper 2017: 155.



“People of many tongues”

While the two Demotic tablets are certainly unique in their kind and do not appear to have any parallels to date, they can be added to a small corpus of other *unica* attested in the Fortification archive. It has long been known that the archive has yielded one incised tablet (Fort. 1771) written in Greek script and language (Hallock 1969: 2; Balcer 1979; Schmitt 1989: 303-304; Tavernier 2008: 63; Rougemont 2012: 121-2), one cuneiform tablet (Fort. 11786) in Neo-Babylonian language,⁵ and one tablet (A 29797) in Phrygian language and script (Brixhe 2004);⁶ another cuneiform tablet (Fort. 1208-101) was recently identified as written in Old Persian language (Stolper and Tavernier 2007); and finally, one tablet (PF-NN 2334A) is written in an unidentified language (Stolper and Tavernier 2007). A similar variation in languages is also attested in the inscribed seals, where we find Elamite and Aramaic, as expected, but also Old Persian (only in trilingual inscriptions), Babylonian, Greek, and hieroglyphic Egyptian (Garrison and Ritner 2010: 34).

The presence of different languages and scripts in the administrative archive of the Achaemenid capital has been variously discussed elsewhere (e.g. Tavernier 2008; Garrison and Ritner 2010; Henkelman 2017a). The multilingualism reflected in the archive seems to be aligned with the stated vision of the Achaemenid rulers, known through their royal inscriptions, and is reflected by the documented presence of a variety of different people from the various parts of the empire coexisting in the imperial heartland. At least thirty different ethnonyms are attested in the archive (Henkelman 2017a: 273), and it is therefore not surprising to find different languages attested at Persepolis. However, the fact that we have only one tablet of each different language, perhaps only with the exception of Demotic, remains puzzling, and one cannot simply conceive that the *unica* were written by foreigners using their native language.

The Greek text, for example, is qualitatively similar in content and terseness to texts found in the Aramaic corpus. It has only four words and one number. Two words (*οἶνος*, “wine,” and *δυο* “two,” also reiterated by the presence of two numeral strokes) are Greek. The month name (*τεβητ*) is a Greek transliteration of

⁵ While the tablet was found at Persepolis, it is a legal, rather than administrative, document and is extraneous to the rest of the archive. See Stolper 1984: 304.

⁶ The text cannot be read with any certainty; it is thus difficult to determine how this document relates to the archive, though it appears to be economic in nature and contains an Old Persian month name. See Stolper and Tavernier 2007: 4; Tavernier 2008: 63.



the Babylonian month name *Tebētu*. Like the Aramaic corpus, the Greek text thus follows the Babylonian calendar (rather than the Old Persian). Lastly, the unit of measurement is a transliteration of the well-known Persian word **mari* - (Schmitt 1989: 33-34; Tavernier 2007: 449), also attested in the Elamite and Aramaic tablets in the Persepolis Fortification Archive.

Complete fluency in the language or native level of knowledge were not required for the writer of the Greek text, but he probably expected that the person receiving it would have been able to read this document (Tavernier 2008: 63). A similar situation appears to have been the case in the Aramaic corpus, where the writers' knowledge of the language was flawed (Azzoni 2017: 460-461), and their spelling of Iranian words and names often displays clear interference of Elamite spelling, possibly suggesting a better familiarity with that language (Azzoni and Tavernier, forthcoming). While at Persepolis the scribes writing in Aramaic on parchment were probably bilingual or even multilingual, the question remains open regarding the scribes of cuneiform (Tavernier 2008: 64). The former, called *teppir* (probably a translation of Babylonian *sēpiru*), were probably very fluent in Aramaic, but unfortunately the parchment evidence has been lost (Tavernier 2008: 264). When these scribes are named, the names are Iranian, not surprisingly (Tavernier 2008: 64). The individuals who wrote Aramaic on clay tablets were not necessarily the same as the ones who wrote Aramaic on parchment; one assumes that former's knowledge of Aramaic did not have to be as fluent as the latter's. It is likely that the fluency of writers of the Demotic tablet(s) was similar to the fluency of the writers of Aramaic on clay tablets and the writer of the one Greek text.

Egyptian language and Egyptians in Persepolis

As mentioned earlier, the newly found Demotic tablets are not the only evidence of Egyptian language at Persepolis. In fact, Egyptian writing and iconography have been identified on seals preserved as impressions on tablets from the Fortification archive. Two seals (PFS 0284* and PFS 1434s) on Elamite tablets published by Richard T. Hallock (Hallock 1969) display Egyptianizing iconography, one of them (PFS 0284*) carrying a Greek legend (Garrison and Ritner 2010: 5-6). While researching among the yet unpublished tablets of the Fortification archive, Mark B. Garrison identified “no fewer than six seals carrying Egyptian hieroglyphic inscriptions, and one that may use hieroglyphic signs in a decorative manner” (Garrison and Ritner 2010: 7).



Likewise, the presence of Egyptians in Persepolis is known from a variety of documents mentioning Egyptian skilled dependent workers, such as goldsmiths, wood-carvers, and painters (Henkelman 2017a: 274). Remarkably, according to Wouter F. M. Henkelman, “Egyptian” is the only ethnonym associated with people working with gold, whenever that distinction is present (*ibid.*). As for wood-carvers, they are attested in the Persepolis Treasury archive.⁷ They appear to be specialists from Egypt, and the presence of a “centurion,” presumably at the head of a hundred of them, points to the likelihood of an internal hierarchy (*ibid.* 276). This institutional arrangement may find a parallel with the noted presence of a “scribe of the Egyptians” at Susa, who apparently had an Egyptian personal name, Harkipi (Tavernier 2008: 64; Henkelman 2017a: 276; Henkelman 2017b: 120-121). Finally, the terminology “Egyptian painters” in the Persepolis tablets may not refer to painters in general but to craftsmen working with glazes,⁸ or, in Egyptian context, faience. Other Egyptian skilled workers included stonemasons, brewers, and others whose profession is difficult to identify (Henkelman 2017a: 274-97). Finally, Egyptian ducks are recorded in the archive in animal inventories and receipts of fodder (*ibid.* 297-8).

The demotic tablets

Fort. 2131-401

The small tablet (29mm length; 25mm width; 12mm thickness) is similar in shape to many of the Aramaic and uninscribed tablets. It is tongue-shaped, molded over a knotted string, the holes of which are barely visible on the flat edge. The pattern of the writing, in two lines on the obverse on the long axis from the flat edge to the round edge, is similar to one of the most common patterns in the Aramaic corpus. While the tablets written in Aramaic share similar shapes with some of the tablets written in Elamite, the text works in a different manner. Where the flat edge would always be on the left in the Elamite tablets (hence the nomenclature left edge in publications of texts and seals occurring on the Elamite tablets), the Aramaic, written from right to left in the majority of instances when written on the long axis, will

⁷ See above, note 3.

⁸ According to Henkelman (2017a: 278), the context in the Susa Charter suggests the possibility that they might have been “specialized in producing and placing vitreous materials.”



keep the flat edge on the right. The present Demotic tablet appears to follow this expectation.

Fort. 2131-401 resembles the Aramaic monolingual tablets not only in the orientation of the text but also in the terseness of the text. As this text contains only two lines, it is in fact quite similar to many Aramaic texts, which often display one or a few words, and never more than twelve lines. They are characterized by the lack of (what to us seems to be) essential information and were unlikely used as primary or independent records (Azzoni 2017: 256). As mentioned before, the single Greek text in the Fortification archive also appears to conform to this pattern.

Transliteration and Translation

- 1) $n^3 \underline{hr}.w$ the youths/servants
- 2) $pgt \frac{1}{4}$ $\frac{1}{4}$ (unit) of pgt

Commentary

- 1) $n^3 \underline{hr}.w$, ‘the youths/servants’:

- The initial sign could be the feminine singular article b^3 or the plural article n^3 . The plural article is favored because the long vertical sign at the end of the word appears to be the plural marker.

- The first sign after the definite article appears to be an \underline{h} although the expected loop is rather small and the downstroke must be reconstructed.

- The third sign after the definite article appears to be a child determinative, which supports the reading hr , ‘youth/servant’. The base of the sign seems too broad to read β , preventing the word from being read $hr\beta$, ‘rations’.

- In support of the reading $n^3 \underline{hr}.w$ ‘the youths/servants’ is the fact that this could correspond to terms found in both Elamite and Aramaic texts in the Fortification archive. The Elamite *puhu* (Hallock 1969: 93-94; Henkelman 2008: 206) and its Aramaic counterpart *’lym(y)n* (Azzoni 2008: 261), similarly used to identify “boys, servants,” are widely attested in the Fortification archive.

- 2) $pgt \frac{1}{4}$, ‘ $\frac{1}{4}$ (unit) of pgt ’:

- The first two signs of the word are clearly p and g . The third sign that is read t might also be an r plus diagonal stroke, but the ligature and slightly wider following space suggest that both elements belong together. The fourth sign is tentatively read as a pot determinative, but the resulting word pgt is unattested. It would be intriguing to propose an Iranian **Baga-* name in this second line, as that would make sense from the perspective of what we would likely expect in a text from the Fortification archive



and given that a Demotic rendering of the theophoric **baga-* as *pg* is possibly attested in the Demotic *pgprny* for **Bagafarnaya-* (Tavernier 2007: 134), but the tentative reading of the final sign as a pot determinative, and of the following sign as a number, argues against reading *pgt* as a personal name.

- The final sign in the line is tentatively read $\frac{1}{4}$, presumably indicating the quantity of *pgt*. It could also be read 100, but the long tail slopes downward more than is usual for 100. The uncertainty about the meaning of *pgt* adds to the uncertainty about the reading of the final sign. It does not seem possible, however, to take it as a foreign name or an animal determinative governing the entire line.

Fort. 0839-401

Larger than the previous tablet (34mm length; 31mm width; 12mm thickness), Fort. 0839-401 is also a tongue shaped tablet and clearly shows two string holes on the flat edge. The tablet contains only one graphic element, which could be read as a ligature of two Demotic signs, for example *ir=w*, '(it/them) were/is/are done.' It is unclear what such a reading would mean, however, which makes it speculative and doubtful that the text should be read as Demotic.

Summary

The one or possibly two Demotic tablets in the Fortification archive are extremely terse. Among the thousands of texts in the archive, they clearly are exceptional. Nonetheless, they do contribute to the previously attested evidence of Egyptian language at Persepolis, and they document a community where some individuals were familiar with the Egyptian language and scripts; perhaps some of these individuals were even literate in Egyptian and at least partially integrated into the administration of the site.



Part 2: the seals

Seals and sealing were critical parts of the administrative apparatus at Persepolis. For all types of documentation in the Fortification archive, seals provide an additional layer of administrative coding; indeed, in many cases it is only through the application of seals that we are able to clarify both individual texts and overarching administrative procedures.⁹

Fort. 2131-401

The tablet carries one seal, PFUTS 0250, applied to the reverse (Figs. 5-6).¹⁰

Owing to the rarity of a Demotic document within the archive, it is difficult to know whether normal sealing protocols are applicable. Among the Elamite, Aramaic, and uninscribed documents, there are four types of sealing protocol: single-seal; counter-seal (two seals, one seal only on the left edge, the other on any surface other than the left edge but most commonly the reverse); parallel-seal (two seals, but not following the counter-seal protocol); multiple seal (three-six seals applied to a tablet).¹¹

The single seal applied to one surface on Fort. 2131-401 would thus fall into what we call the single-seal protocol. In many cases, the single-seal protocol signals an official of high administrative authority, but we are able to make that inference only with a robust set of applications of any particular seal.¹² Fortunately, PFUTS 0250 occurs also on two uninscribed documents, PFUT 0155-201 (Figs. 7-9) and PFUT 0167-205 (Fig. 10). In both cases, it is in the single-seal protocol; on PFUT 0167-205, the seal is applied to the obverse; on PFUT 0155-201, it is applied to the obverse, reverse, upper, bottom, and right edges. The left edge of this tablet is destroyed; most likely the seal in fact covered all six surfaces of the tablet.

⁹ Seals and sealing within the Fortification archive have been addressed in numerous publications; see most recently the overview, with bibliography, in Azzoni *et al.* 2017; Garrison 2017: 15-116. With the exception of Figs. 6 and 23, all collated drawings of the seals from the Persepolis Fortification archive are by Garrison. The photographs were produced under the auspices of the PFA Project. We thank PFA Project director Matthew W. Stolper for permission to publish the photographs.

¹⁰ For glyptic sigla within the Persepolitan archives, see Garrison 2017: xii and 30-32.

¹¹ Garrison 2017: 52-67.

¹² See also the comments below; for the single-seal protocol in particular, see Garrison 2017: 53-55.



Given that in all three instances, Fort. 2131-401, PFUT 0155-201, and PFUT 0167-205, PFUTS 0250 is applied in the single-seal protocol, and given that in one instance, PFUT 0155-201, the seal covers all six surfaces of the tablet, we suspect that the user of PFUTS 0250 was of some considerable administrative authority.¹³ The striking visual qualities of the seal imagery suggest the same.

PFUTS 0250 (Fig. 6) is a remarkable glyptic artifact, a testament to the vibrant and creative visual environment at Persepolis in the early years of the reign of Darius. The scene is a lion hunt from a chariot. The chariot, in which two figures ride, is pulled to the left by a team of four animals (most likely lions). The figure (top of his head not preserved) in the front of the cart faces to the left; his body appears to be depicted in profile. He holds his arms straight and extends them downward diagonally to grasp a set of reins (four in number). His garment cannot be determined. He has a thick square beard that rests on his chest. The figure (top of his head not preserved) in the back of the cart faces to the right. He holds his one arm straight and extends it upward diagonally to grasp the paw of a rampant lion. He holds his other arm bent and extends it upward behind his head, the hand grasping a spear that he drives into the chest of the rampant lion. His garment cannot be determined. He has a thick pointed beard that rests over his chest; a rounded coiffure is at the back of his neck.

The cart is rectangular in shape and carries cross-hatching on its side, perhaps a decorative patterning or to indicate wicker. A yoke-pole runs from the front lower corner of the cart to the back of the shoulder of the first draft animal. The reins that the driver holds are four in number; they run from his hands downward to the back of the neck of the first animal. The axle and eight spokes of the wheel are indicated; on the outer rim of the wheel at the end of each spoke is a nub. The animals are arranged one on top of the other, each offset to the left. They hold their forelegs

13 It is rare for a seal to be applied to more than two surfaces of a tablet; almost always, seals that occur on more than two surfaces of a tablet belong to high-rank users. The only seal that consistently is applied to all six surfaces of a tablet is PFUTS 0018*, a seal that carries a royal-name inscription of Darius (Garrison 2014a: 75-76, figs. 7.9-18). It is almost universally the case in the Fortification archive that individuals of high rank and/or status (e.g., the royal women Irtašduna and Irdabama, the director and deputy-director of the agency, Parnakka and Ziššawiš) use only the single-seal protocol. As Hallock (1977: 127-29) noted, in those cases we may assume that a counterseal was unnecessary due to the high authority of the individual. So, too, letters and letter-orders, representing administrative activity at a very high level, employ, with only rare exceptions, the single-seal protocol, the seal always representing the addressor of the letter (Garrison 2017: 53-55).



straight and extend them outward together as if in full run. The hindlegs of only the first two animals from right are preserved, extending backward together. A tail is preserved on only the first animal from right, extending downward diagonally (tip not preserved). The muzzles of the animals are not well preserved; they could be leonine or caprid; both are attested as draft animals in other chariot scenes from the archive. Our inclination is to identify them as lions. A short triangular-shaped ear emerges from the top of each animal's head.

A rampant lion is behind the cart, facing to the left. It raises one hind leg to place the paw on the lower back corner of the cart. It holds one foreleg straight and extends it downward to place the paw on the upper back corner of the cart. It holds the other foreleg straight and raises it upward diagonally toward the figure in the back of the cart. The claws are indicated by drill marks (lower foreleg) or triangular elements (upper foreleg). A short tail curls upward with tufted termination. The mane is indicated by a serrated edge along the back of its neck. The mouth is open.

The edge of the seal is preserved at the top of the design.

The carving is a robust modeled style. The deep carving and broad forms are seen especially in the figure in the back of the cart and the rampant lion. We would classify the carving as one strain of the richly varied Persepolitan Modeled Style.

The seal is large by Persepolitan standards: the length of the design is 3.80 cm (yielding a diameter for the original seal matrix of 1.20 cm); the height of the preserved design is 2.10 cm.¹⁴

In this venue, we are unable to provide an exhaustive analysis of either chariot scenes in Persepolitan glyptic or the imagery on PFUTS 0250. In general, we may note that chariot scenes are very common in Persepolitan glyptic, numbering to date almost ninety examples. There are two principal types of scenes, one in which there is only one figure in the cart (e.g., PFS 0591, [figs. 11-12](#)), another in which there are two figures, a driver and an individual who engages in some manner with an animal/creature behind the cart (e.g., PFS 0308, [figs. 13-14](#)). There are some noteworthy features of these chariot scenes. Firstly, in no example does an individual use a bow and arrow from a chariot, as on the famous London Darius cylinder.¹⁵ Secondly, in

¹⁴ Cf. the size of seals published in Garrison and Root (2001: 471-83), where seals with a height of more than 2.00 cm and a diameter of more than 1.20 cm are very rare.

¹⁵ On this seal, see Garrison 2014a: 82-84, fig. 7.25. The one exception may be PFUTS 0603; although poorly preserved, the seal appears to be a copy, or perhaps even an impression, of the London Darius cylinder (Garrison 2014a: 90, figs. 7.28-29).



no scene are the draft animals horses or equids; rather, the menagerie includes lions, bulls, caprids, and various types of leonine creatures.¹⁶ Thirdly, in many scenes, such as that on PFUTS 0250, the individual in the back of the cart grasps the rampant animal/creature, producing a design that combines a “hunt” from a chariot with a heroic encounter. Fourthly, court-centric iconography (e.g., the winged disk, Persian court robe, dentate crown, palm tree) is almost completely absent in chariot scenes. Fifthly, as far as we can determine, no chariot scene is rendered in the Court Style, the carving style that most directly and consistently evokes imperial rhetoric at Persepolis.

PFUTS 0250 stands out among the corpus of chariot scenes at Persepolis owing to its depiction of four draft animals; in almost every other case, only one draft animal is indicated. The arrangement of the animals, partially overlapping, stacked one above the other, and stepped forward in a cascading motion, strikes a virtuosic chord. There is nothing even closely comparable in Persepolitan glyptic; we can find nothing that is similar in the previous glyptic record of Elam, Babylonia, or Assyria. So, too, one is hard-pressed to find comparanda in later Achaemenid glyptic.¹⁷

16 PFUTS 0603 may again be an exception (see previous note).

17 The London Darius cylinder depicts two draft animals. Concerning the glyptic evidence for depiction of chariots in Assyria and Babylonia, see Collon 2001: 59-60; for royal chariots in monumental relief in New Kingdom Egypt and Assyria in the first millennium BCE, see Sacco 2013. Sacco (2013: 210-11) notes that two horses are almost universally depicted in both Egypt and Assyria, with a few exceptions (three horses) in monumental relief dating to Aššurbanipal and Sargon II; for the possibility of three- and four-horse chariots in Urartu, see Gökce, Işık, and Değirmencioğlu 2013: 116. Littauer and Crouwel (1979: 113-16) believed that the quadriga existed in Assyria based upon the number of reigns depicted (not horses). Three dimensional models of chariots (as distinct from representations on seals and monumental relief) indicate that the quadriga existed already in the early 1st millennium BCE (Littauer and Crouwel 1979: 113-16, 147, 150). The second most-commonly depicted element in the famous Achaemenid-era coinage of Sidon is a chariot. Elayi and Elayi (2004: 493-531) provide an exhaustive survey of chariots and the scenes in which they occur on Sidonian coinage. They indicate that the chariot appears only in coinage dating to their Groups II-IV (ca. 430-333 BCE). There are some difficulties in determining the exact number of horses that are rendered, the number of reins, horse heads, and legs often not corresponding. The authors suggest that on coins from Group II and III, the intention was to depict three horses; on those of Group IV, four horses. The four-horse chariot thus appears only in their last group, Group IV, dating ca. 401-333 BCE. In both the three- and four-horse chariots on these coins, the horses are stacked one directly over the other (as in Assyrian monumental relief), very different from the stacked and stepped mode seen on PFUTS 0250.



Chariot scenes such as that on PFUTS 0250, wherein an individual in the back of the cart grapples with and/or spears a rampant lion, vividly recall select imagery on Assyrian monumental relief and glyptic.¹⁸ Perhaps most striking in this regard are the famous lion-hunt reliefs of Aššurbanipal from his North Palace at Nineveh. PFUTS 0250 shares with several of those reliefs the theme of lion hunt from a chariot (driver and hunter[s]), the use of a spear, and the physical confrontation between hunter and hunted. Particularly noteworthy is an extended passage from Room C (slabs 20-28) in which there are two scenes of Aššurbanipal and attendants fighting lions from a chariot.¹⁹ In the one (slabs 20-21), a rampant lion has climbed onto the back of the chariot cart (Fig. 15); Aššurbanipal stabs the lion in the throat with a short sword or dagger, while two attendants thrust spears into its throat. In the other (slabs 23-25), the lion has pounced onto the wheel of the chariot and is biting down on it (Fig. 16); Aššurbanipal and an attendant spear the lion in the top of its head. The close proximity of the king and rampant lion on slabs 20-21 (Fig. 15) evokes the dynamic of another important visual trope of Assyrian royal imagery, the Assyrian king acting in the traditional role of the hero who grapples with lions. Two extended and vivid scenes of the king killing lions, laid out in three registers, occur in the reliefs from the North Palace at Nineveh: slabs 6-16 in Room S; slabs A-E in Room S¹.²⁰ In one vignette in Room S (slab 13), the king, standing, grasps a rampant lion by the throat while plunging a sword in its chest; in another in Room S¹ (slab C), the king grasps a rampant lion by the top of its head and drives a spear into its chest. Lastly, the various iterations of the so-called Assyrian royal-seal type also depict the king in the traditional pose of the hero killing lions.²¹

Adding to the spectacle of PFUTS 0250 (and underlining its Assyrian heritage) is the sense of movement conveyed by the yoked leonine draft animals – themselves conquered creatures of the dominant hunter in the chariot. The legs of the creatures are outstretched indicating a full gallop. They nearly catch the repeated hero and lion as the seal is continuously rolled out. The emphatic motion and episodic quality of the

18 One of the distinguishing features of many seals executed in the Modeled Style at Persepolis is a deep resonance with Assyrian art, both monumental and glyptic (see e.g., Garrison 2002, 2011, 2014b).

19 Barnett 1976, pls. 10-12, and A.

20 Barnett 1976: pls. 46-53, for the reliefs in Room S, pls. 56-59, for the reliefs in Room S¹.

21 Radner 2008 and Mitchell and Searight 2008: pp. 97-102, 294-95, nos. 212-220, for examples of the Assyrian royal-seal type. Garrison (2010b: 158-63) explores some of the interlocking visual dynamics of the lion-hunt scenes from the North Palace of Aššurbanipal and the Assyrian royal-seal type.



scene in extended rolling also vividly recall the continuous narrative style associated with select Neo-Assyrian reliefs (as, e.g., on slabs 20-28 in Room C).²²

The broad and deeply carved forms of the figure in the back of the chariot and the rampant lion on PFUTS 0250 evoke the modeling in late Assyrian monumental relief (Figs. 15-16). At least as preserved in the impressions from the Fortification archive, the modeling on PFUTS 0250 does not, however, have the distinctive patterned musculature of the Assyrian reliefs. That such conventions were continued into the Achaemenid period is documented, for example, in the exquisitely modeled carving on PFS 0016* (Figs. 17-18), belonging to the director of the agency, Parnakka.²³ PFUTS 0250 and PFS 0016* thus express different strands of the strong Assyrianizing tendencies in early Achaemenid glyptic in Fārs.

Fort. 0839-401

The tablet carries two seals, PFS 0048, applied to the flat (left) edge (Figs. 19-20), and PFS 3306, applied to the obverse and reverse (Figs. 21-23).²⁴

In the case of Fort. 0839-401, it appears that conventional sealing protocols within the archive are at play. PFS 0048 (Fig. 20), the seal applied to the left edge of Fort. 0839-401, is a well-known seal within the archive. The seal occurs only on the left edge of tablets, indicating that it represents a supply (Elamite *kurman*) office or official.²⁵ The seal applied on the obverse and reverse, PFS 3306 (Fig. 23), is as yet unattested on any other document within the archive.²⁶

Garrison and Henkelman (in press[a]) have recently discussed the administrative profile of PFS 0048. It has a surprisingly complex dossier for a seal that exhibits a relatively straight-forward and consistent sealing protocol.²⁷ The seal is documented on some ninety-three tablets to date, making it the fifth most commonly occurring seal in the archive.²⁸ Moreover, it appears on all three document types, Elamite,

²² For a discussion of the continuous narrative style, see Watanabe 2004 (esp. pp. 103-105).

²³ For PFS 0016*, see Garrison and Root 2001: 92-94, Cat.No. 22; Garrison 2014b: 496-500, fig. 7.

²⁴ For glyptic sigla within the Persepolitan archives, see above note 10.

²⁵ For supply (*kurman*) operations within the archive, and the sealing protocols associated with supply, see Garrison 2017: 33-34, 37-38, 42, 44, 52-53, 56; Garrison and Henkelman in press(a).

²⁶ There are many hundreds of seals that occur on only one tablet in the surviving archive.

²⁷ Garrison and Henkelman (in press[a]) provide an extensive analysis of the administrative context of PFS 0048; for the current purposes, we highlight only a few select issues.

²⁸ Currently, 3864 distinct and legible seals have been identified in the Fortification archive.



Aramaic, and uninscribed.²⁹ PFS 0048 occurs only on the left edge of tablets and, with one exception (PF-NN 1308), always in the counter-seal protocol.³⁰ It represents an important grain depot, perhaps located at Pirdatkaš, towards the eastern edge of the Fahliyān region. Two officials, Bakumira (Bakamira) and Katukka, run the depot.

There are two features of the dossier associated with PFS 0048 that may help explain its application on a potentially Demotic document. Firstly, as Garrison and Henkelman note, the texts that name Bakumira or Katukka include a relatively high percentage of unsealed memoranda with irregular shapes;³¹ this variety of tablet shape suggests that the supply depot with which they are linked had a high degree of flexibility in producing documents. Secondly, PFS 0048 occurs also on Aramaic and uninscribed documents; this phenomenon suggests that the supply depot “was an administrative centre of some importance and complexity, including scribes who could read and write Aramaic” (Garrison and Henkelman in press[a]) -- perhaps, we may surmise, apparently also Demotic!

PFS 0048 is one of the great masterpieces of Persepolitan glyptic. The seal is very large by Persepolitan standards; no impression captures the full extent of the design.³² The preserved length of the design is 2.20 cm, the height 1.30 cm. The scene, as preserved, is a humped bull marching to the left. Given its size, it seems highly unlikely that there were any other figural elements to the scene.

29 There are only some thirty-one seals to date that appear on all three document types (this count is an update to Garrison [2017: 31-32], which listed twenty-four seals); PFS 0048 would thus be outstanding in potentially occurring on four different document types (provided that Fort. 0839-401 is in fact written in Demotic).

30 Garrison and Henkelman (in press[a]) address PF-NN 1308.

31 For Elamite documents, single transactions/movements of commodities are recorded on tongue-shaped tablets that we call memoranda; compilations of multiple transactions/movements of commodities (journals and accounts) are recorded on rectangular tablets that we call registers. As is often the case with important supply depots such as that associated with PFS 0048, the memoranda consist of both sealed and unsealed documents.

32 In the same manner as the impression on the flat (left) edge of Fort. 0839-401, every application of PFS 0048, and there are many of them, is carefully rolled so that the bull is centered almost perfectly on the left edge of the tablet. No impression of the seal allows us to determine definitely whether there is more to the scene or, if just a humped bull, the spacing in the terminal field.



What we term single-animal studies, i.e., a scene that consists of only one animal/creature, are ubiquitous within Persepolitan glyptic, numbering almost 400 seals to date; with only a few exceptions, however, these single-animal studies are carved on small stamp seals. PFS 0048 is one of only a handful of cylinder seals whose scene consists solely of a single animal.³³

PFS 0048 is also noteworthy owing to its carving style, what we would call a baroque version of the Persepolitan Modeled Style. Volumetric mass is deep; musculature is nervous, indicated by the rising and falling of mass; in some passages musculature is tightly coiled. The carving is exceptionally accomplished. The style is most closely paralleled by the monumental PFS 0016* (Figs. 17-18), the second seal of Parnakka, the director of the agency.³⁴

Garrison and Henkelman (in press[a]) suggest that the administrative profile, unusual imagery, and virtuosic carving of PFS 0048 indicate that we have to do with a rather special office, one that far exceeds the conventional realm of responsibility (and, most likely, administrative rank) generally associated with commodity supply (*kurman*) in the archive.³⁵

As noted, PFS 3306 (Fig. 23) is to date attested only on Fort. 0839-401 (Figs. 21-22). If the counter-seal protocol is operative here, PFS 3306 would potentially represent: 1) the individual who physically receives the commodities (supplied by the *kurman* official/office associated with PFS 0048); 2) an oversight official (Elamite *šaramanna* and/or *damanna*) responsible for setting provisions for work groups; 3) some other official charged with receiving commodities for an individual, a group of individuals, or animals.

33 Interestingly, there is a cylinder seal in the Treasury archive, PTS 41 (Schmidt 1957: 33, pl. 11), which is strikingly similar to PFS 0048, both in theme, a humped bull marchant, and in carving style. Other single animal studies on cylinder seals include: PFS 0014, PFS 0732, and PFS 1317. We may also have single-animal studies on the cylinder seals PFS 1235, PFUTS 0256, PFUTS 0426, PFATS 0069, and PFATS 0322, but the full lengths of the designs are not preserved. PFS 1235 and PFUTS 0256 seem particularly close in subject, scale, and carving style to PFS 0048; we may have to do with products coming from a single workshop. We should note also that a single animal paired with a large paneled inscription on cylinder seals is a relatively popular theme among inscribed seals, numbering some sixteen examples to date (Chandler, in preparation). Given the large size of PFS 0048, it seems very unlikely that it also carried an inscription.

34 For PFS 0016*, see note 23.

35 Commodity supply (*kurman*) is the most commonly attested administrative activity in the Fortification archive.



The two impressions of the seal on Fort. 0839-401 (Figs. 21-22) are broken and poorly preserved, the surfaces having several cracks and lacunae. Although the impressions on the obverse and reverse of the tablet are clearly the same seal, we are unable definitively to reconstruct the full extent of the design. Nevertheless, in our opinion, the impressions capture most of the figural elements and clearly indicate that the seal design was well executed. The preserved length of the design is 3.20 cm; height 1.90 cm. As with the other two seals discussed above, PFS 3306 is large by Persepolitan standards.

The scene on PFS 3306 is a common one in the archive: an archer in a kneeling/running pose shoots toward a group of two animals, generally a predator attacking a caprid, bull, or deer.

The archer faces to the left. His body, legs, arms, and head are only partially preserved. One leg is sharply bent and held under his torso; the other leg is not preserved, but most likely was also bent and stretched out before his torso. He holds one arm sharply bent and brings it up behind his head to grasp the bowstring and arrow (neither are preserved in this passage).³⁶ He holds the other arm straight and extends it to the left, presumably to grasp the grip of the bow. Only a short section of the bow is preserved below the extended arm; it appears to have been a recurve bow, commonly depicted in Persepolitan glyptic. He wears a belted garment; too little is preserved to allow for a definitive identification of the type of garment. Possibilities include trousers, shorts, or the Assyrian garment consisting of a robe over shorts. Fringe or folds occur on the garment along the forward edge of the back leg. A short pointed extension at the front of his waist may in fact be the upturned end of the recurve bow. On his back he carries a quiver; parts of three arrows are preserved.

The caprid/cervid, of which only the forelegs, neck, and head are preserved, was most likely directly in front of the archer to left. It moves to the left. The two forelegs are bent, as if in a run. A single horn emerges from the top of the head and then bifurcates to two branches (the ends are not preserved). Two long pointed ears emerge from the back of the head. Two strands of a beard depend from the lower jaw. The mane is indicated by a serrated edge along the back of the neck. A thin pointed element (only partially preserved) in the field immediately below the ears of the animal may be an arrow in flight.

³⁶ Handedness in archer scenes is often difficult to determine; it is unclear whether we are meant to read the archer's torso as front or back.



The rampant lion is immediately to the left of the caprid. It moves to the right. It lifts its forward hind leg toward the caprid. It holds one foreleg straight and extends it upward diagonally before its head. It holds the other foreleg (only partially preserved) straight and extends it downward diagonally before its chest. The tail (the tip is not preserved) curls upward. A short pointed ear and two small tufts of hair emerge from the top of the head. The lion is ithyphallic and has its mouth open.

A crescent-shaped element, the ends of which are not preserved, in the field above the head of the archer may be a lunar crescent.³⁷

A short section of the edge of the seal is preserved at the bottom of the design.

Archer scenes within Persepolitan glyptic are very popular, numbering to date almost 300 examples.³⁸ They represent an exceptionally rich thematic category owing to the wide variety of compositional formats and the wealth of iconographic detail. An archer, often in a kneeling/running pose, shooting toward a group of one animal attacking another, is a well attested compositional type at Persepolis.³⁹ Noteworthy on PFS 3306 is the depiction of a quiver with arrows, an iconographic element that, curiously, rarely is depicted in archer scenes in Persepolitan glyptic.⁴⁰ If the element behind the head of the caprid/cervid is an arrow, it would indicate that the scene renders a sense of time via spent arrows.⁴¹

Given the uneven preservation of the impressions, it is difficult to conclude details about the carving style. In general, the human and animal forms appear rather deeply carved; there is a sinuous outline to both the archer and the rampant lion. We would suggest that the carving represents yet another version of the Persepolitan Modeled Style wherein carving is deep, but there is little attention to surface modulation (in comparison to the extravagant modeled carving exhibited by PFS 0048).

37 Alternatively, this element could be the distorted remnants of the top end of the bow.

38 For a preliminary discussion of archer imagery within Persepolitan glyptic, see Garrison 2010a.

39 See Garrison (2010a: 351-55), for examples of archers in the kneeling/running pose, scenes similar to PFS 3306, and possible linkages of the kneeling/running archer to the imagery on type II royal coinage.

40 A particularly striking (and rare) example of an archer wearing the Persian court robe and having a quiver with arrows is PFS 0071*, one of the earliest dated examples of court-centric iconography in Persepolitan glyptic (discussed in more detail in Garrison 2017: 71-75, fig. 2.23).

41 The conceit is discussed in some detail in Garrison and Henkelman in press(b).



Summary

While the possible Demotic texts on the two tablets that are the focus of this study are quite exceptional within the Persepolitan archives, the seals applied to the tablets firmly ground those documents within the context of Persepolis. Two of the seals, PFS 0048 and PFUTS 0250, occur on other tablets within the Fortification archive. PFS 0048 itself is one of the most frequently occurring seals in the Fortification archive and represents an important and well-known commodity supply depot. While two of the three seals, PFS 0048 and PFUTS 0250, present quite rare imagery, their style is well documented at Persepolis.⁴² PFS 3306 is mainstream Persepolitan glyptic in both its imagery and style.

Thus, we can say that whatever the nature of the transactions recorded in these Demotic tablets, they appear to be entrenched within the administrative system represented by the Fortification archive. PFS 0048, moreover, clearly contextualizes one of the documents within the orbit of the important grain depot, perhaps located at Pirdatkaš, in the eastern edge of the Fahliyān region.

We could perhaps speculate that the Demotic texts are related to travel rations. PFS 0048 frequently occurs on the left edge of travel rations, signally the supply of travellers from this important depot in Fahliyān.⁴³ PFS 0048 and PFUTS 0250 both occur also on uninscribed documents. The exact function of these documents remains unknown, but the linkages to travel via those seals that occur on both Elamite and uninscribed documents (as opposed to those seals that appear only on one document type) is well attested.⁴⁴ Lastly, PFS 0048 also occurs on Aramaic documents many of which clearly are concerned with travel rations.⁴⁵

⁴² Without doubt the most intriguing seal among the three is PFUTS 0250, which presents a wonderfully innovative design, unique, as far as we can tell, within Achaemenid glyptic. Given that the seal also occurs on two uninscribed documents, it seems unlikely that we may link the seal specifically to the appearance of the Demotic texts (i.e., the unique seal is not limited to unique Demotic texts).

⁴³ Garrison and Henkelman in press(a).

⁴⁴ Garrison 2008: 180-84; Garrison 2017: 30-32, 45-49.

⁴⁵ Azzoni 2008: 258, 260-61.



Abbreviations

- Fort. Unpublished Persepolis Fortification tablets and Elamite texts recorded by the Persepolis Fortification Archive Project.
- PF Elamite Persepolis Fortification texts published in Hallock 1969.
- PFAT Persepolis Fortification tablets with monolingual Aramaic texts and/or the Aramaic texts on them.
- PF-NN Elamite Persepolis Fortification texts cited from draft editions by Richard T. Hallock, collated and corrected by Wouter F. M. Henkelman.
- PFS Persepolis Fortification Seals, cited according to Garrison and Root 1998, with updates by Mark B. Garrison.

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Fig. 1. Obverse of Fort. 2131-401.

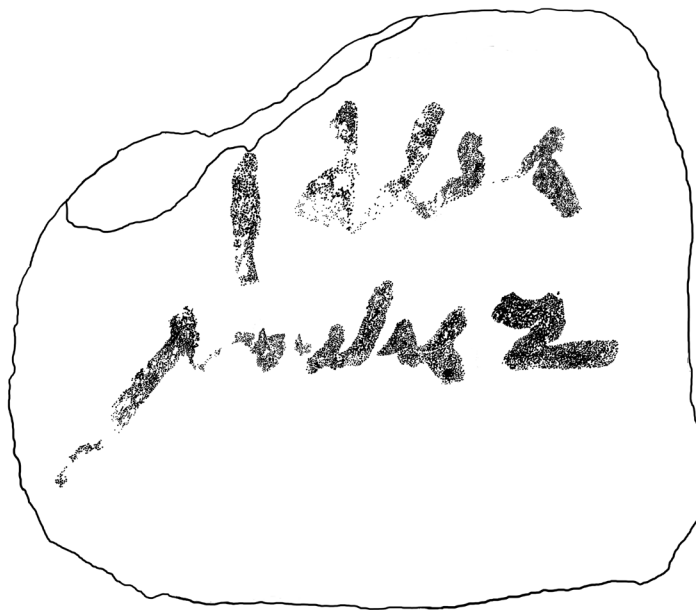


Fig. 2. Drawing of the obverse of Fort. 2131-401 (by Brian Muhs).



Fig. 3. Obverse of Fort. 0839-401.

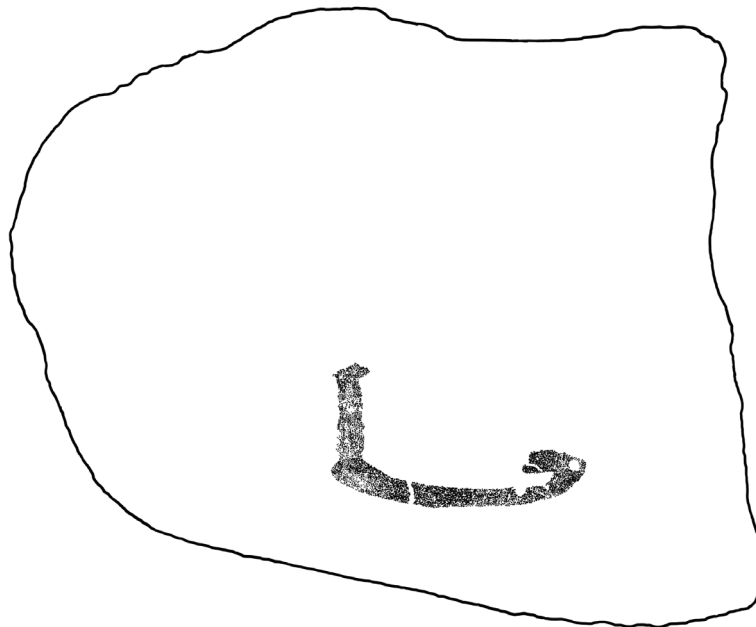


Fig. 4. Drawing of Fort. 0849-401 (by Brian Muhs).



Fig. 5. Reverse of Fort. 2131-401.

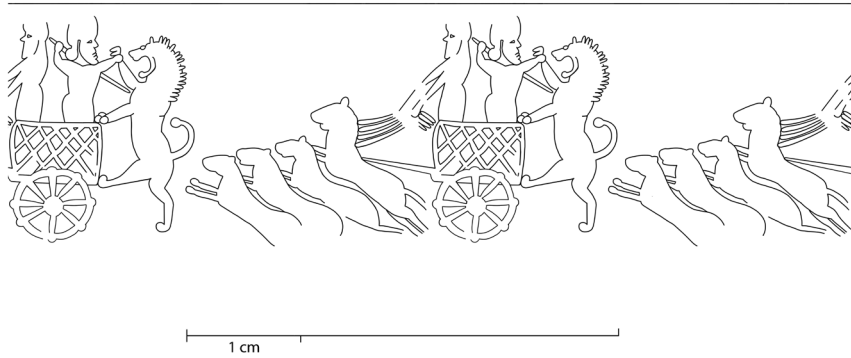


Fig. 6. Collated line drawing of PFUTS 0250 (by Erin Daly).



Fig. 7. Obverse of PFUT 0155-201.



Fig. 8. Reverse of PFUT 0155-201.



Fig. 9. Bottom edge of PFUT 0155-201.



Fig. 10. Obverse of PFUT 0167-205.



Fig. 11. PFS 591 applied on the reverse of PF 0341.

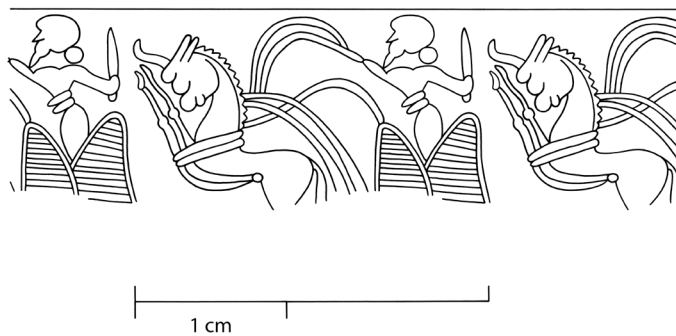


Fig. 12. Collated line drawing of PFS 0591.



Fig. 13. PFS 308 applied to the left edge of PF 1117.

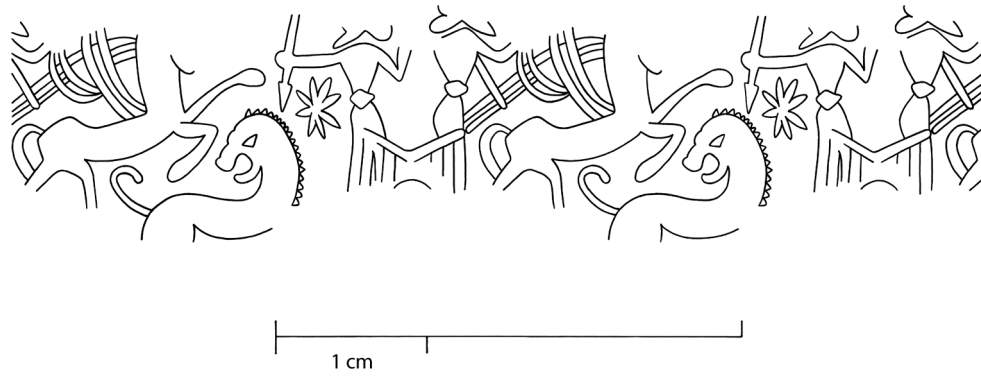


Fig. 14. Collated line drawing of PFS 0308.



Fig. 15. Slabs 20-21, Room C, North Palace of Aššurbanipal at Nineveh (BM 124850) (©Trustees of the British Museum).



Fig. 16. Slabs 23-25, Room C, North Palace of Aššurbanipal at Nineveh (BM 124853-54) (©Trustees of the British Museum).



Fig. 17. PFS 16* applied to the left edge of PF 0665.

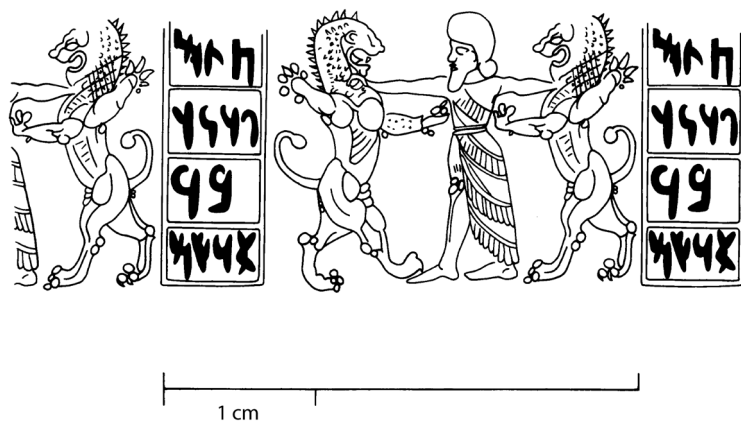


Fig. 18. Collated line drawing of PFS 0016*.



Fig. 19. Flat (left) edge of Fort. 0839-401.

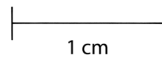
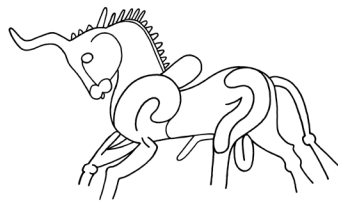


Fig. 20. Collated line drawing of PFS 0048.



Fig. 21. Obverse of Fort. 0839-401.



Fig. 22. Reverse of Fort. 0839-401.

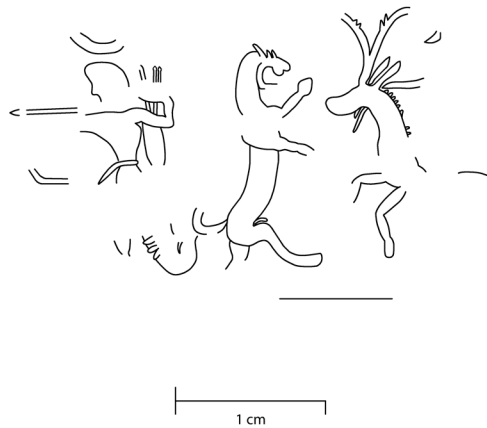


Fig. 23. Collated line drawing of PFS 3306 (by Christina Chandler).

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