

When a world ends, words remain...

*Kings and conquerors conquer, build and are conquered...
Fire, rain, decay, time and ignorance destroy and bury their splendid palaces
and cities...*

Their names remain, but their stories fade from living memory.

Thousands of years pass...

*Then, one day, a storeroom full of clay tablets is found under a heap of
ash and dirt and dust,*

*where once there had been magnificent palaces...
ancient markings reveal a glimpse of a glorious vanished empire.
They whisper quietly into our ears with their ancient tongue...*



Reverse of a previously unedited Persepolis Fortification tablet, showing the conclusion of an Elamite administrative record in cuneiform script, impression of a cylinder seal, and a one-word Aramaic note in ink.

Photo courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago

*The words long dead are interpreted, and we glean from meager fragments that
we are as they once were...*

They lived, loved and died, as do we...

*Everything has changed and everything has remained the same...
nothing has changed...*

www.pavasta.com

Persepolis (Pârsa) Fortification Archive

In 1933, archaeologists from the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute found clay tablets, fragments, and seal impressions in two buried storerooms in the northeast corner of the fortification wall at the edge of the great stone terrace of Persepolis.

There were tens of thousands of tablets and fragments, mainly of four different kinds:

- \ Pieces with texts in cuneiform script and Elamite language, the remains of about 15,000 - 18,000 original documents
- \ Pieces with texts in Aramaic script and language, the remains of about 1,000 or fewer original documents
- \ Pieces with no texts, but with seal impressions, the remains of about 5,000 - 6,000 original documents
- \ And some oddities (a tablet in Greek, a tablet in Phrygian, a tablet in Old Persian, tablets marked with Greek or Persian coins in lieu of seals, and others)

These were records produced by the operations of a single administrative organization in the years around 500 BCE, all bits and pieces of a single information system.

At first, the discovery of these clay documents, collectively known as the "Persepolis Fortification Archive (PFA)," created tremendous excitement among scholars. But the excitement soon faded when initial translations of the poorly understood Elamite tablets revealed the routine administrative nature of the archives: just everyday records of an ancient bureaucracy.

Most of the Fortification tablets came to the Oriental Institute in 1936, on loan for study and analysis. The results of long, painstaking work - especially the late Richard T. Hallock's magisterial analysis of 2,087 Elamite texts - were far-reaching.

These ordinary records of storage and outlay of food--grains, fruit, meat, poultry, beer and wine--to workers employed by the imperial administration, slowly have become a rich source of information on gods, art, language, culture, customs, and the fascinating interworkings of the complex and sophisticated administration of the Persian Empire. The PFA has fundamentally changed every aspect of the study of Achaemenid Iranian languages, art, institutions and history.

In 2004, a lawsuit was brought in the Federal Court in Illinois to collect on the judgment of a civil legal case, and the court was asked to confiscate the remaining "Persepolis Fortification Archive," still in care of the Oriental Institute, to compensate the plaintiffs with property of the Islamic Republic of Iran. After five years of legal wrangling, the Persepolis Fortification Archive is still caught in the net of American legal system.

Meanwhile, the measured academic pace of Oriental Institute's scholarly research on Persepolis Fortification Archive has finally turned into a feverish race against time.

Here is the story...

Persepolis Fortification Archive Project @ the Oriental Institute

The Oriental Institute is a research organization and museum devoted to the study of the ancient Near East. Founded in 1919, the Oriental Institute (OI), a part of the University of Chicago, is an internationally recognized pioneer in the archaeology, philology, and history of early Near Eastern civilizations.

The Persepolis Fortification Archive Project is a new phase in recording and distributing the documents of the PFA, using electronic equipment and media alongside the conventional tool-kits of philology and scholarship.

Early Phase of PFA Project Activities:

- ∨ Capture and edit conventional digital images of Elamite Fortification tablets
- ∨ Capture and edit high resolution digital images of Aramaic Fortification tablets and their seal impressions, as well as uninscribed, sealed Fortification tablets, using large-format scanning backs and Polynomial Texture Mapping apparatus built specifically for the PFA Project
- ∨ Explore advanced technologies for recording and conservation of Fortification tablets and fragments (3D scanning, subsurface laser scanning, CT scanning, laser cleaning and others)
- ∨ Prepare editions of Elamite and Aramaic Fortification tablets and studies of seal impressions, both those accompanying texts and those on uninscribed tablets, to be distributed on a real-time rolling basis along with images of the tablets
- ∨ Catalog, assess and sort thousands of tablets and fragments that remain to be recorded, to identify priorities for conservation, study and presentation
- ∨ Set up data structures for recording, linking, analyzing and presenting images and documents in the On-Line Cultural Heritage Environment (OCHRE)
- ∨ Cooperate with the Collège de France, the University of Southern California, and UCLA to distribute PFA data through other on-line sources
- ∨ Establish a weblog to collect news reports on the status of the PFA as well as on-line images, articles, and books connected with Persepolis and the Persepolis tablets

Matthew W. Stolper



Head of Persepolis Fortification Archive Project
Professor of Assyriology
John A. Wilson Professor of Oriental Studies
Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations
Oriental Institute, The University of Chicago

Primary Research & Publications

Elamite and Achaemenid Persia
Babylonia under Achaemenid rule

Archaeological Experience

Hasanlu (premier iron-age site of north-west Iran)
Hajji Firuz Tepe (early Neolithic site of north-west Iran)
Tall-e Malyan (ancient Anšan, the main pre-Achaemenid Elamite site of Fars region)

PFA Project Team

Editorial

Annalisa Azzoni (Vanderbilt University: Aramaic texts)
Elspeth R. M. Dusinberre (University of Colorado: seal impressions on Aramaic texts)
Mark B. Garrison (Trinity University: seal impressions on all items)
Gene Gragg (Oriental Institute: electronic analysis of Elamite texts)
Wouter F. M. Henkelman (Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, and École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris: final edition of Elamite texts from the papers of the late Richard T. Hallock)
Charles E. Jones (Head, ISAW Library Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, new Elamite texts)
Matthew W. Stolper (Oriental Institute: catalogue, new Elamite texts, project oversight)

Technical Support

Laura d'Alessandro (Oriental Institute: conservation)
Dennis Campbell (Oriental Institute: OCHRE wrangling and workflow)
Monica Hudak (Oriental Institute: conservation) Jeanne Mandel (Oriental Institute: conservation)
Marilyn Lundberg (University of Southern California: high-quality imaging of Aramaic and unscripted tablets)
Lec Maj (Humanities Research Computing, University of Chicago: advanced technology application, IT support and liaison)
John Sanders (Oriental Institute: IT support)
Sandra Schloen (Oriental Institute: OCHRE development and support)
Bruce Zuckerman (USC: high-quality imaging of Aramaic and unscripted tablets)



PFA Project Editors: Seated, left to right: Gene Gragg, Matthew Stolper
Standing, left to right: Dennis Campbell, Wouter Henkelman, Mark Garrison, Annalisa Azzoni
PFA Project photo by Sandra Schloen

Student Workers & Volunteers (2007-09)

Lori Calabria (graduate, NELC)
Dennis Campbell (post-doc, NELC)
Ivan Cangemi (BA [Anthropology & Classics], 2008)
Trevor Crowell (undergraduate, Classics)
Elizabeth Davidson (BA [Classics], 2008)
Andrew Dix (graduate, NELC)
Glenn Garabrant
Irene Glasner (volunteer, OI)
Louise Golland (volunteer, OI)
Jennifer Gregory (graduate, NELC)
Paul Gauthier (graduate, NELC)
Gregory Hebda (BA [History, Uof New Hampshire], 2008)
Fay Kelley (undergraduate, Classics)
Madison Krieger (undergraduate, Classics)
Joseph Lam (graduate, NELC)
Megaera Lorenz (graduate, NELC)
Elise MacArthur (graduate, NELC)
Titus Micolajczak (graduate, NELC)
Clinton Moyer (PhD, Cornell University)
Wayne Munsch (graduate, History of Religions)
John Nielsen (PhD [NELC], 2008)
Miller Prosser (graduate, NELC)
Joseph Rosner (volunteer, OI)
Foy Scalf (graduate, NELC)
Lise Truex (graduate, NELC)
John Walton (graduate, NELC)
Siwei Wang (graduate, Computer Science)
Emily Wilson (graduate, Classics)
Seunghye Yie (graduate, NELC)

Friends of Persepolis Fortification Archive (PFA) Project

To ensure the successful completion of the PFA Project and continuation of ancient Iranian studies at American universities, Friends of PFA Project have embarked on a campaign to generate grassroots support from the Iranian communities worldwide.

The campaign aims to create awareness of the need for coordinated private funding in three key areas:

- Creation of PFA Project Fund (\$5M) to support the budgetary requirements of Persepolis Fortification Archive Project for the duration of the project
- Creation of Endowment Fund (\$25M) to support the continuation of educational and historical research on ancient Iranian history, languages and archaeology at American universities by endowing Chairs of Iranian Studies at American academic institutions and building graduate programs, fellowships, and global faculty exchanges around them
- Encourage active participation of Iranian-American scholars and students in PFA Project



**Friends of Persepolis Fortification Archive Project (PFAP)
& World Association of International Studies (WAIS)
Cordially Present:**

The Story of the Persepolis Fortification Archive

Sunday, October 11th, 2009
4:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
Four Seasons Hotel
Silicon Valley at East Palo Alto, CA, USA

Speakers

Matthew W. Stolper

Head of Persepolis Fortification Archive Project
Oriental Institute, University of Chicago

Nema Milaninia

President
Iranian American Bar Association (IABA)

Glenn Schwartz

Professor of Archaeology, Johns Hopkins University
Member of Archaeological Institute of America

Roundtable Discussion

Moderated by: **Richard Saller**
Dean of Humanities & Sciences
Stanford University

Partial List of Roundtable Participants in alphabetical order

- Mitra Ara**, Founding Director, Persian Cultural Heritage Studies (PCHS)
San Francisco State University
- Touraj Daryae**, Professor of the History of Iran and the Persianate World
University of California, Irvine
- Renée Dreyfus**, Curator in Charge of Ancient Art and Interpretation
Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Legion of Honor Museum
- Babak Hoghooghi**, Executive Director, Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian Americans (PAAIA)
- Fredun Hojabri**, Former Academic Vice-President of Sharif (Aryamehr) University of Technology
- Gita Kashani**, Board Member, National Iranian American Council (NIAC)
- Ali Mousavi**, Assistant Curator of Ancient Iranian & Near Eastern Art
Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Member of Academic Committee of Farhang Foundation
- Martin Schwartz**, Professor of Iranian Studies, University of California, Berkeley

PFAP '09 Event Program

Pre-Event Talk

- 3:30 - 4:00 Arrival & Registration
- 4:00 - 5:00 Matthew Stolper
Cracking the Code: using language to unlock ancient history

PFAP '09 Event

- 5:00 - 5:30 Arrival & Registration
- 5:30 - 5:45 Welcome & Overview
- 5:45 - 6:15 Matthew Stolper
*Persepolis Fortification Archive Project:
Preserving the Legacy of the Achaemenid Persians*
- 6:15 - 6:45 Nema Milaninia
Overview of Legal Issues and Latest Legislative Developments
- 6:45 - 7:00 Glenn Schwartz
*Legal Threats to Cultural Exchange:
An Archaeologist's Perspective*
- 7:00 - 7:30 Break & Light Refreshments
- 7:30 - 8:45 Roundtable Discussion moderated by Richard Saller
- 8:45 - 9:00 Concluding Remarks
- 9:00 - 10:00 No-host bar

Please join us!

Please join the Friends of PFA Project and show your support for the rich ancient history of Iran by making a gift to the Persepolis Fortification Archive Project through the Oriental Institute's Website: <https://oi.uchicago.edu/getinvolved/donate/>. You may use the Electronic Gift Form or print and fax or mail the Paper Gift Form. Gifts to the PFA Project are tax deductible under applicable rules. For tax information and other giving options, please contact the Oriental Institute directly.

Thank you.