

# Susa and Elam. Archaeological, Philological, Historical and Geographical Perspectives

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FROM SUSA TO PERSEPOLIS:  
THE PSEUDO-SEALING OF THE PERSEPOLIS BRONZE PLAQUE

Gian Pietro Basello\*

Like other bronze objects from Elam (the statue of queen Napir-asu,<sup>1</sup> the “bronze aux guerriers”,<sup>2</sup> the “barrière de bronze”<sup>3</sup> and the model commonly called *Sit šamši*<sup>4</sup>), the bronze plaque found in the so-called Treasury at Persepolis is a unique discovery. According to Erich F. Schmidt, a single iron spearhead, three onyx eye stones, a faceted stone bead, a corrugated bronze strip, a slightly curved bronze disk pierced by three iron nails, a curved spouted bronze object and a green chert pestle were found in the same room.<sup>5</sup> Nineteen uninscribed but sealed clay tablets of peculiar oblong shape were also found there.<sup>6</sup> If the sacking of the building could explain such arrangement of things, the association of the Persepolis bronze plaque (henceforth PBP) with such objects rises several questions, especially on when and why it entered the Treasury.

PBP is inscribed on both sides with a long Elamite text. Some scholars cite PBP as “Ururu”,<sup>7</sup> after the personal name, written *u-ru-ru*, that appears at least eight times in the text.<sup>8</sup> After the discoveries of the Persepolis Treasury and Fortification Wall administrative tablets, the documentation of Elamite language in Persepolis is no more surprising. Yet, PBP stands out

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<sup>1</sup> Louvre Museum number Sb 2731, 1.29 m tall, 1750 kg, fragmentary cast bronze statue (the head and the left arm are missing) discovered in 1902, from Susa, temple of Ninhursag. Published in MDP VIII: 245–250 (‘Statue de la reine Napir-Asu’ by G. Lampre) and pls. XV–XVI; inscription published by Scheil in MDP V 65: 1–6 = EKI 16. Dated to ca. 1340–1300 BC. See also Tallon in Harper & al. 1992: 132–135, no. 83, and Potts 1999: 218–220.

<sup>2</sup> Louvre Museum number Sb 133, 1.02 × 0.62 m, fragmentary bronze relief with seven extant warrior gods, from Susa, pit 15. Published in MDP I: 163–164 (‘Bas-relief de bronze’ by de Morgan) and pl. XIII (heliogravure). Inscription summarized in MDP XI 105: 86 and fig. 18 (autograph), published in EKI 69. Dated to 14th–12th cent. BC. See also Potts 1999: 217, pl. 7.2, and the brief discussion in Steve & al. 2002–2003: col. 466 (‘Ce monument n’est certainement pas susien’).

<sup>3</sup> Two hollow bronze cylinders, one 3.12 m long and 0.18 m in diameter, the other shorter, probably with the same inscription of Šilhak-Inšušinak I (ca. 1150–1120 BC), discovered in 1901, from the Acropolis of Susa. Described in MDP VII: 37. Inscription published in MDP V 77: 39–55 and pls. 6–8 (heliogravure), and in EKI 45.

<sup>4</sup> Louvre Museum number Sb 2743, base 60 × 40 cm, three-dimensional bronze model reproducing a cultual scene discovered in the 1904–1905 campaign, from Susa. Published in Gautier 1909 with transliteration and translation of the inscription of Šilhak-Inšušinak I (ca. 1150–1120 BC) by Scheil; text published also in MDP XI 93: 58–59 (‘Texte de Šilhak In Šušinak. Plateau votif de bronze’ by Scheil) and pl. 11, no. 1, and in EKI 56. See also Tallon in Harper & al. 1992: 137–141, no. 87, and Basello 2004.

<sup>5</sup> Schmidt 1953: 180.

<sup>6</sup> Schmidt 1957: 6–7 (‘clay labels’ in Schmidt’s terminology) and fig. 3; also Schmidt 1953: 180. The impressed seals are Schmidt 1957, no. 13 (on PT6 300), no. 48 (on PT6 303, PT6 316, PT6 320), nos. 62 and 75 (on PT6 291, PT6 293, PT6 298, PT6 301, PT6 306–309, PT6 311, PT6 314, PT6 317–318, PT6 323). On the uninscribed tablets from the Treasury, see Garrison & Root 2001: 33; on those from the Fortification Wall, see Garrison 2008. Other uninscribed tablets are published in Henkelman & al. 2004.

<sup>7</sup> ‘Ururu’ in Hinz & Koch 1987; ‘Ururu’ in Waters 2000; ‘Ururu Bronze Tablet’ in Tavernier 2004. Other conventional name: ‘Elamite bronze plaque’ in Schmidt 1957; ‘Hub Pe’ (abbreviation for Huban-Šuturuk, Persepolis) in Vallat 1993.

<sup>8</sup> According to Cameron apud Schmidt 1957: 64: Ururu son of Dununu in PBP:33, 37, rev.11, rev.15 and rev.18. According to the unpublished transliteration by Steve: *u-ru-ru* in PBP:11, 28, 50, 53, 57–58, 60; *u-ru-ru DUMU šá-du-nu-nu* in PBP:28–29, 32. According to Hinz & Koch 1987: 1249, s.v. ‘u-ru-ru’: PBP:34, 36, 38, 40, rev.8 (= PBP:50S), rev.11 (= PBP:53S), rev.15–16 (= PBP:57–58S), rev. 18 (= PBP:60S).

as an exceptional piece in Persepolis: the fact that it is an inscribed bronze plaque makes it clear that it is not a standard administrative document; nor is it comparable to the gold and silver plaques (DPh) found below the so-called Apadana,<sup>9</sup> being far from themes and lexicon of the royal Achaemenid inscriptions. At its discovery, the text was labelled as 'neo-Elamite' or 'late Elamite', i.e. 'pre-Achaemenian'.<sup>10</sup>

# 1. FIND-SPOT AND PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

PBP was found during the excavations of the Persepolis Treasury led by Erich F. Schmidt in 1938. It lay covered with charred matter on the floor near the South-East corner of room 56.<sup>11</sup> Room 56 leads to room 55 to the North and to room 57 to the South, both being dead ends. No windows seem to be opened on the external wall.<sup>12</sup> The walls of the rooms are scorched by fire.<sup>13</sup> No traces of doors were found except for the one between hall 41 and room 56, swinging into the room; Schmidt remarked: 'this doorway had frequent use, as shown by the patched strip of floor'.<sup>14</sup> In room 57 four Elamite tablet fragments were found;<sup>15</sup> one of these fragments has possibly been published as PT 84,<sup>16</sup> a fragmentary 'list of names of individuals belonging to the army' without parallel among texts from the Treasury.<sup>17</sup>

PBP measures ca. 21.0 × 32.5 cm and is 0.6 cm thick.<sup>18</sup> The length of the long side of the plaque is approximately comparable to the lengths of the sides of square metal plaques and stone tablets bearing Achaemenid foundation inscriptions, e.g., the gold and silver plaques from the so-called Apadana of Persepolis (DPh) measuring 32.5 × 33.0 × 0.2 cm,<sup>19</sup> and the stone tablets from the Apadana mound of Susa (DSz and DSaa) measuring 33.6 × 33.6 × 8.7 cm.<sup>20</sup> It is noteworthy that ca. 34 cm was a standard Persepolitan unit of length, probably derived from Mesopotamia.<sup>21</sup>

From the ends of the upper edge of PBP project 'two tabs, pierced by remnants of bronze wire, which terminate on the obverse of the object in pronounced lobes'.<sup>22</sup> Remnants of the bronze wire were found in the vicinity, in at least five curved pieces.<sup>23</sup> If a 'looped wire' really hung the

<sup>9</sup> Except partly for the size (see below).

<sup>10</sup> 'Neo-Elamite': Schmidt 1953: 180; 'late Elamite, pre-Achaemenian': Schmidt 1957: 64.

<sup>11</sup> Schmidt 1953: 180, and photograph on p. 154, fig. 80 E. Field number PT6 297.

<sup>12</sup> Schmidt 1953: 158.

<sup>13</sup> Schmidt 1953: 180.

<sup>14</sup> Schmidt 1953: 180, also p. 178.

<sup>15</sup> Schmidt 1953: 180; Schmidt 1957: 5 and fig. 2.

<sup>16</sup> The 'Index of tablet numbers and locations' in Cameron 1948: 213–214, lists only four tablets whose field number begins with PT6 (corresponding to the 1938 campaign): two from hall 41 (PT6 75, see Schmidt 1957: 20, table 'Tablets with Impressions of Seal No. 5'; PT6 279, see Schmidt 1957: 19, table 'Tablets with Impressions of Seal No. 3'), one from room 48 (PT6 50, see Schmidt 1957: 5, fn. 12); the field number of the fourth tablet, PT6 325 (= PT 84), reminds of PT6 324 (Schmidt 1957, pl. 41, no. 16), PT6 329 (idem, pl. 81, no. 36), PT6 330 (idem, 41, no. 26), PT6 332e (idem, 43, no. 25), all from room 57. Against my hypothesis, see Schmidt 1953: 180: 'The fragments are not well enough preserved to show whether the tablets differed in text or seal from those uncovered in the archive room (33) and in other units of the Treasury'. Unfortunately, no field number is available for the tablets published in Cameron 1958 and 1965 (as remarked in Cameron 1958: 172, and Cameron 1965: 189).

<sup>17</sup> Cameron 1948: 199, no. 84.

<sup>18</sup> Schmidt 1957: 64 provided only the thickness.

<sup>19</sup> Size according to the silver exemplar found under the wall at the North-East corner of the main hall as given by Curtis & Razmjou in Curtis & Tallis 2005: 57; 33 × 33 cm is the measure in Schmidt 1953: 79.

<sup>20</sup> Vallat 1971: 54.

<sup>21</sup> Roaf 1978: 77–78. See also the discussion in Bivar 1985: 627–628, with further references; for some evidence from the Apadana of Persepolis, see Schmidt 1953: 72.

<sup>22</sup> Schmidt 1957: 64.

<sup>23</sup> The number of pieces is deduced from the photographs in Schmidt 1957, pl. 27 A–C.

plaque on a wall,<sup>24</sup> the visible face should have been the obverse, i.e. the face where the lobes protruded. In the photograph of the find-spot,<sup>25</sup> cracks are visible at the junctures of the tabs; in subsequent photographs, the tabs are missing.<sup>26</sup>

PBP lay on the floor with the obverse face up, so the reverse, protected by the floor, suffered less damage. The beginning of the text on the obverse, at least a dozen lines, is wholly lost under a patina of oxidation;<sup>27</sup> the text of the following 46 lines is partly visible among several encrusted areas. The reverse is nearly entirely preserved with 46 lines of text, followed by 5 blank lines, then a final line of text; several stained areas hamper the reading.<sup>28</sup> After the last isolated line, the image of a sealing, turned upside down, follows. Each line of text is framed by a horizontal rule.

In some way PBP recalls an administrative tablet from Persepolis: we have the holes on the short side edge, the wire in place of the string and the sealing parallel to the short side. The text direction is different, being parallel to the short side and not to the long side as in the small tablets, but similar to that of the so-called account tablets.<sup>29</sup>

## 2. BRIEF OVERVIEW ON PREVIOUS TREATMENTS

In March 1940, PBP was sent to the Oriental Institute of Chicago as a loan from the Iranian Ministry of Education for ‘cleaning, study and publication purpose’.<sup>30</sup> There the plaque was chemically cleaned.<sup>31</sup> In May 1942, PBP was returned to the Imperial Legation of Iran in the USA. PBP is now in the Inscription Department of the National Museum of Iran in Tehran.<sup>32</sup>

The first passing reference to the discovery is given by Schmidt in *Persepolis I*.<sup>33</sup> A first study on PBP was published by Schmidt in *Persepolis II*, embedding a summary of the text by Cameron;<sup>34</sup> according to Cameron ‘from the signs upon it, the bronze plaque may be dated approximately anywhere between the early years of the 7th century BC and the third quarter of the 6th’. The text is still unpublished; a synopsis can be found in the *Survey of Neo-Elamite History* published by Waters in 2000.<sup>35</sup>

Stolper, Steve, Vallat and Tavernier all placed the text in the historical framework of the late Neo-Elamite period. According to Stolper, PBP ‘is, as its paleography suggests, approximately contemporary with the late Elamite tablets from Susa’<sup>36</sup> i.e. the so-called Acropole tablets, administrative documents mainly dealing with clothing and weapons.<sup>37</sup> Steve, whose

<sup>24</sup> ‘A looped wire for suspension’ is mentioned in Schmidt 1953: 180.

<sup>25</sup> Schmidt 1953: 154, fig. 80 E. The two protruding lobes are not visible in the photograph and must have been removed.

<sup>26</sup> E.g. Schmidt 1957, pls. 27 D and 28.

<sup>27</sup> Cameron (apud Schmidt 1957: 64) believed that here there was ‘a frieze of seal patterns (or of a seal pattern)—indeterminate but for the probability that they were different from the seal shown on the reverse’.

<sup>28</sup> See the photographs in Schmidt 1957, pl. 28. The original lines were 50 on the obverse and 48 on the reverse according to Hinz & Koch 1987: 1326, s.v. ‘Oruru’.

<sup>29</sup> See for example PF 2009 (photograph in Henkelman 2008: 106, fig. 2.17).

<sup>30</sup> Loan-in folders LI-363. I owe the information on the loan to the kindness of Matthew W. Stolper (The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago) and Helen McDonald (The Oriental Institute Museum). See also Schmidt 1957: 64, fn. 141.

<sup>31</sup> Schmidt 1957: 64.

<sup>32</sup> Museum number B.K. 3721. I am thankful to Daryoush Akbarzadeh (Head of the Inscription Department) and to Simin Piran (National Museum of Iran) for providing information and new photographs.

<sup>33</sup> Schmidt 1953: 180.

<sup>34</sup> Schmidt 1957: 64–65 and pls. 27–28.

<sup>35</sup> Waters 2000: 87–89.

<sup>36</sup> Stolper in Carter & Stolper 1984: 55.

<sup>37</sup> Published by Scheil in MDP IX and re-edited in Jusifov 1963. See the general presentation in Waters 2000: 93–96.

unpublished autograph and transliteration circulate among scholars,<sup>38</sup> ascribed PBP to N III A (ca. 653–605 BC), i.e. slightly before the last Neo-Elamite phase (N III B, ca. 605–539) to which Steve dated the Acropole tablets.<sup>39</sup> Vallat, followed by Potts, supported Stolper's chronology, dating both the Acropole tablets and PBP to N III B (ca. 585–ca. 539), afterwards subsumed by Steve, Vallat & Gasche in an undivided N III period.<sup>40</sup> Tavernier, on the ground of broken writings in PBP, reached similar results, even if he slightly shifted back the dating of the Acropole tablets, suggesting ca. 590–ca. 555.<sup>41</sup> Henkelman, in his detailed study on the Elamite and Iranian acculturation, used repeatedly the textual evidence of PBP in connection with the Persepolis Fortification tablets, suggesting a range '585–539 or even 550–530 BC'.<sup>42</sup> A higher date (8th or 7th century BC) was advanced by Hinz & Koch.<sup>43</sup>

As to the function of PBP, according to Cameron 'it was a memorial plaque recounting the founding of a temple, the fixing of a temple offering or of temple offerings',<sup>44</sup> also Waters referred to PBP as 'Ururu's dedicatory inscription'.<sup>45</sup> According to Steve, Vallat & Gasche, the text is a royal charter which assigned some lands, estates and vineyards left by a man named Ururu, without filiation, to another Ururu, son of Šadanunu, as a consequence of the disappearance of Addaten, son of Huban-ahpi; the properties are located in two distinct areas, Hamun and Gisat; the text is closed by the mention of seven gods: Šašum, Napiriša, Dilbat, Laliya, Nahhunte, Šati and Nanna.<sup>46</sup> Henkelman linked PBP to the existence of a 'sanctuary' in Gisat where offerings are attested with continuity from Neo-Elamite to Achaemenid periods.<sup>47</sup>

### 3. THE PERSEPOLIS BRONZE PLAQUE AND THE PERSEPOLIS FORTIFICATION TABLETS

The main connection between PBP and the Persepolis Fortification tablets is provided by PF 352.<sup>48</sup> In this tablet we find a priest (<sup>d</sup>šá-tin), Ururu (<sup>HAL</sup>u-ru-ru) by name, who received 8 sheep/goats instead of 800 quarts of barley (80 ŠE BAR<sup>MEŠ</sup>) having made (<sup>hu-ut-táš-tá</sup>) something related to a divine service (<sup>d</sup>na-ap-na, apparently 'of god',<sup>49</sup> perhaps 'divine', i.e. an offering). The text ends with the location and the date: Gisat (<sup>AS</sup>gi-sa-at) in the 22nd year (of Darius I). The spellings of the names Ururu and Gisat are the same attested in PBP.

<sup>38</sup> As indicated in Vallat 1996a: 386, fn. 14; see also Steve 1986: 14, fn. 27: 'nous avons collationnée [la plaque] à deux reprises (1963 et 1968) au Musée de Téhéran'. Henkelman 2008: 315, fn. 728, attributed the unpublished transliteration to Steve & Reiner.

<sup>39</sup> Steve 1992: 22, sub 'N III A', no. 1, and 'N III B', no. 1. This opinion was already expressed in Steve 1986: 14; cf. Mirošchedji 1990: 79, fn. 33: 'Sans donner ses raisons, Steve 1986: 14 et 20, date la plaque entre "653 et 605" et la juge "antérieure de quelques décennies" aux tablettes de l'Acropole'.

<sup>40</sup> Vallat 1996a: 393 (N III B), Vallat 1996b: 22; Potts 1999: 295 and 301; Steve & al. 2002–2003, cols. 483–484 (N III). See also Vallat 1995.

<sup>41</sup> Compare Tavernier 2004: 36, and the final overview on p. 38.

<sup>42</sup> Henkelman 2008: 8.

<sup>43</sup> Hinz & Koch 1987: 1326, s.v. 'Oruru'.

<sup>44</sup> Cameron apud Schmidt 1957: 65.

<sup>45</sup> Waters 2000: 87.

<sup>46</sup> Steve & al. 2002–2003, col. 483: 'Ce document ... se présente comme une charte royale qui redistribue des biens fonciers (territoires, immeubles et vignobles) d'un nommé Ururu (sans filiation) à un autre Ururu, fils de Šadanunu, à la suite de la disparition d'un certain Addaten, fils de Huban-ahpi, dans deux régions distinctes ... le pays de Hamun ... et ... le pays de Gisat ... Cette charte se termine par des imprécations envers les contrevenants et des invocations à différentes divinités: Šašum, Napiriša, Dilbat, Laliya, Nahhunte, Šati et Nanna'. On Dilbat and Šati, see also Vallat 1996b: 22.

<sup>47</sup> Henkelman 2008: 8: '[PBP] mentions offerings at a sanctuary in Gisat'.

<sup>48</sup> See an abstract of the text in Henkelman 2008: 545.

<sup>49</sup> Probably to be interpreted as a plural form, i.e. 'for the gods' (Henkelman 2008: 556).



Some similarities can be found between the Fortification tablets and PBP in lexicon<sup>52</sup> and onomastics. The verbal form *tumanra* (*du-man-ra*) is attested only in PBP and the Persepolis tablets.<sup>53</sup> Šati, mentioned as god in PBP, is attested as theophoric element in the onomastics of Persepolis.<sup>54</sup> In particular, the addressee of one of the texts mentioning Gisat (PF 1849:1), Šati-Dudu, is a man whose theophoric name is composed with Šati. Another theophoric name with the name of the god Šati, Šati-hupiti, father of Huban-šuturuk, is known from PBP. Also Huban-ahpi is attested in other sources. It occurs in the inscription of seal PFS 4\* impressed on 36 Persepolis Fortification tablets for a total of 102 impressions.<sup>55</sup> In the inscription, Huban-ahpi is son of Šati-hupan,<sup>56</sup> again a theophoric name with the god Šati. The spelling, *hu-pan-a-ah-pi*, is the same attested on PBP. In seal PFS 77\*, impressed on 5 Persepolis Fortification tablets,<sup>57</sup> Huban-ahpi is the father of a woman Šeraš.<sup>58</sup> Since the name Huban-ahpi is not otherwise attested at Persepolis, both Hinz and Koch suggested that seal PFS 4\* was an heirloom from the Neo-Elamite period.<sup>59</sup>

Actually, Huban-ahpi is well attested in the tablets from the Acropole of Susa. According to Steve, Vallat & Gasche, several elements link PBP to the Acropole tablets from Susa.<sup>60</sup> First of all, the onomastics: tablet MDP IX 144 mentions Ururu and Huban-ahpi. Tablet MDP IX 167 mentions Addaten, the woman Ammaten and Huban-ahpi [*DUM*]*U sunki* ‘son of the king’; all these names are attested also on PBP where Addaten is the son of Huban-ahpi.<sup>61</sup> In sum, Huban-ahpi is attested 12 times on the Acropole tablets.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>62</sup> MDP IX 24 (two times), 29, 37, 119, 123, 132, 137, 144, 156, 167, 197.

Among the seven gods evoked in PBP, two are known also from the Acropole tablets. The god Šati is attested only in PBP and in a dozen of Acropole tablets; Šati is attested also as theophoric element in the onomastics of the Acropole tablets (as it is in that of PBP) (Table 1). The goddess Laliya is mentioned only in one Acropole tablet, whereas she is attested as theophoric element in a frequently recurring anthroponym, Lalintaš (Table 1).<sup>63</sup> Another goddess mentioned on PBP, Dilbat,<sup>64</sup> is attested in some Neo-Elamite texts: an inscription of Šilhak-Inšušinak II who dedicated to her a temple in Susa,<sup>65</sup> an inscription of Hanni at Izeh<sup>66</sup> and on the vessels of Samati.<sup>67</sup> Finally, the title *GAL.E.GAL*<sup>MEŠ</sup> is attested at least 7 times in the Acropole tablets;<sup>68</sup> in PBP, *GAL.E.GAL*<sup>MEŠ</sup> seems to be written on the last isolated line of text of the reverse.<sup>69</sup>

Table 1. Occurrences of the gods Lali and Šati as divine names and theophoric elements in personal names on the Acropole tablets.

god(dess)	name	type	transliteration and context	occurrences in MDP IX	total occ.
Lali	Laliya	DN f	d <sup>l</sup> la-li-ya	80	1
	Lalintaš	PN	BE <sup>l</sup> la-li-in-taš	9, 18, 50 (2 occs.), 91, 135, 151, 156, 217 (?)	9
	Lali-sunki	PN	BE <sup>l</sup> la-li-EŠŠANA	101, 143, 289	3
Šati	Šati	DN	d <sup>š</sup> ša-ti BE <sup>d</sup> šša-ti-du-du-pè-ra	98, 126, 281:13–14	3
			d <sup>š</sup> ša-ti	119, 139:rev.3, 149, 150, 174, 187, 204 (?), 255 (?), 259, 281:15	10
	Šati ...	DN (?)	d <sup>š</sup> ša-[ti ...]	162	1
	Šati	PN	BE <sup>d</sup> šša-ti	98, 259	2
	Šati	PN (?)	[d <sup>š</sup> ]šša-ti <sup>SAL</sup> d[...]	196	1
	Šati (?)	PN	BE <sup>d</sup> šša-ti al-[...]	158	1
	Šati ...	PN	BE <sup>d</sup> šša-ti-[...]	165, 222, 275	3
	Šati-dudu	PN	BE <sup>d</sup> šša-ti-du-du	98, 126, 281:13–14	3
	Šati-duš	PN	(BE) <sup>d</sup> šša-ti-du-iš	23 (?), 139:5	2
	Šati-hupiti	PN	BE <sup>d</sup> šša-ti-hu-pi-ti	3	1
	Šati-kitin	PN	BE <sup>d</sup> šša-ti-ki-tin	122	1
	Šati-šilhak	PN	BE <sup>d</sup> šša-ti-šil-ha-ak	169	1
	Šati-te ...	PN	BE <sup>d</sup> šša-ti-te(?)-[...]	153	1
	Šati / Humban	PN	BE <sup>š</sup> šša-tin- <sup>d</sup> h[u]-ban	29	1
	Šati / Humban	PN	BE <sup>d</sup> šša-ti-hu-ban	108, 281:17, 287, 298	4
	Šati / Napiriša	PN	BE <sup>d</sup> šša-ti-DINGIR.GAL	259 (2 occs.)	2

An additional connection is provided by the dating formula on PBP:rev.11, *ITI ra-hal UD-ma*, which follows the usual pattern of the Acropole tablets; this pattern is well differentiated from the formula in the Persepolis tablets where *nan* ‘day’ is used in place of the logogram *UD*; moreover, *nan* is always followed by the day number while in the Acropole texts the day number

<sup>63</sup> See also the occurrence of Lalintaš on the rhyton published in Vallat 2000b.

<sup>64</sup> On Dilbat, see Vallat 2000a: 1069–1070, Vallat 2002: 141–142, and Henkelman 2003b: 222, fn. 151.

<sup>65</sup> EKI 78. See also Waters 2000: 40.

<sup>66</sup> EKI 75; text and translation also in Hinz 1962.

<sup>67</sup> Henkelman 2003b: 214–227. See also Steve & al. 2002–2003, cols. 482–483, with further references (especially Vallat 1996b and 2005).

<sup>68</sup> MDP IX 9, 22, 39, 93, 145, 163, 232; it has to be restored in MDP IX 181 according to Hinz & Koch 1987: 1023, s.v. hw.ráb.E.GAL.lg; see also Hinz & Koch 1987: 1021, s.v. ráb.lg. Another occurrence is in Nin 3. See also Steve 1986: 13–14, and Henkelman 2008: 22, fn. 42.

<sup>69</sup> Steve 1986: 14, and Waters 2000: 89.

is nearly always lacking, as is lacking in PBP. The usual translation is 'a day in the month MN'; Grazia Giovinazzo suggested that this could be not 'a day' but 'the day', i.e. the day established for offerings or the market day. The month-name is also interesting, since *rahal* is attested both in the Acropole and in the Persepolis Fortification tablets; in both corpora this month-name seems not to be part of the usual sets of month-names.<sup>70</sup>

A general connection between PBP and the Acropole tablets is provided by the palaeography. Already Cameron wrote that there is little difference between the PBP and the tablets, though hinting at a closer link of PBP to the inscriptions of Šutruru from Susa and Hanni from Izeh.<sup>71</sup>

## 5. THE USE OF THE SIGN *GAM* AS PERSONAL DETERMINATIVE

Another peculiarity of PBP is the use of the sign *GAM* as personal determinative. Leaving aside the occurrences in the Elamite administrative tablets from Tall-e Malyân, where Matthew Stolper pointed out the usage of *GAM* at the juncture of an anthroponym divided in two lines,<sup>72</sup> the rare occurrences of this sign as a true personal determinative in Elamite are chronologically closer to the Achaemenid period.<sup>73</sup> In a royal inscription of Hallutaš-Inšušinak (ca. 600 BC), *GAM* precedes the name of the king.<sup>74</sup> In one of the so-called Nineveh letters, before the two occurrences of the logogram *EŠŠANA* 'king', a *GAM* and then a debated *BE* is to be found.<sup>75</sup> *GAM* occurs several times in another isolated Elamite text, the omen tablet found in Susa.<sup>76</sup> In PBP, *GAM* occurs several times, not only before anthroponyms,<sup>77</sup> but also before a social group designation (*šá-al-hu-ip* 'nobles', as the Achaemenids are styled in DB/AE),<sup>78</sup> before a denomination of temple personnel (*pu-hu* <sup>4</sup>*zī-ya-nu-ip*, the young apprentices of the temple)<sup>79</sup> and before *KÛ.BABBAR* 'silver'.<sup>80</sup>

An apparently anomalous occurrence of *GAM* can be dated without doubt to the Achaemenid period, in the Elamite text of the short inscription CMc in Palace P at Pasargadae. The inscription is engraved along a fold of the garment of the king in two bas-reliefs facing one another in a doorway.<sup>81</sup> *GAM* is attested before the logogram for 'king' and before the word [*h*]a-ak-ka<sub>4</sub>-man-nu-ši-ya-ra 'Achaemenid'.

So the use of *GAM* is not limited to Neo-Elamite documents and one should emphasize that it cannot be used as a distinctive feature for dating purposes. Its presence both in Susa and in Pasargadae is puzzling and could be related to the origin of the Old Persian word-divider, since the personal determinative probably had functions very similar to those of the word-divider;<sup>82</sup> not by chance determinatives are not attested in scripts using word-dividers systematically.

<sup>70</sup> Basello 2002, especially pp. 21 and 24.

<sup>71</sup> Cameron apud Schmidt 1957: 64. The inscriptions of Šutruru and Hanni are published as EKI 74 and EKI 75–76.

<sup>72</sup> As a hyphen, but at the beginning of the new line. Stolper 1984a: 19. See also Steve 1988 and Steve 1992: 156, nos. 362–363. In Elamite script, also in monumental inscriptions like the royal Achaemenid ones, it is usual to break words at the end of a line.

<sup>73</sup> See especially Steve 1988 and Vallat 2005: 1239–1241.

<sup>74</sup> EKI 77:1; see Steve 1988. The indexing no. 78:1 in König 1965, pl. 44, and the reference to EKI 76:1 in Steve 1992: 156, no. 362, are misprints.

<sup>75</sup> Nin 13:3–4.

<sup>76</sup> Published in Scheil 1917.

<sup>77</sup> E.g. PBP:3S and 20S (mentioned in Steve 1992: 156, no. 362), 11S and 28S (Steve 1988).

<sup>78</sup> PBP:42S (= PBP:50H). <sup>DIS</sup>šá-lu-ú-ut in DB/AE col. I:6.

<sup>79</sup> PBP:57S (= PBP:rev.15H). Giovinazzo 1995 distinguished three categories of *puhu* 'young': the apprentices, the servants and the assistants (especially of travellers).

<sup>80</sup> PBP:55S (= PBP:rev.13H).

<sup>81</sup> Photograph in Stronach 1978, pl. 81b. Steve 1988 and 1992: 156, no. 362; also Vallat 2005: 1240–1241.

<sup>82</sup> Basello, in print.

## 6. THE PSEUDO-SEALING ON THE PBP

I mentioned above the image of a sealing on the reverse of PBP. It is a reproduction of a sealing, engraved on the bronze plaque.<sup>83</sup> The pseudo-sealing is upside down, i.e. oriented in the same manner of the text on the obverse. It was drawn using the full width of the plaque so to have four instances of the figuration alternating with three instances of a five-line panelled inscription. According to the transliteration by Steve, the inscription is to be read as follows:

|<sup>1</sup> EŠŠANA <sup>DIŠ.d</sup>|<sup>2</sup>hu-<sup>r</sup>ban<sup>ˀ</sup>-šū-<sup>3</sup>tur-<sup>r</sup>uk<sup>ˀ</sup>?<sup>7</sup> DUMU |<sup>4</sup>dšá-ti-hu-<sup>5</sup>pi-ti-na<sup>84</sup>

i.e. 'king Huban-šuturuk son of Šati-hupiti'. I added in the transliteration the half square brackets and the interrogation mark, since the second sign in line 3, commonly read *uk*, is of difficult interpretation: only a *nu* or *man* (i.e. two converging horizontal wedges) in one of the forms attested on the Acropole tablets (but not in PBP itself) is visible.

The figurative part represents two symmetrical rampant animals, one facing the other. One foreleg of each animal is raised, touching the raised foreleg of the facing animal; the other foreleg is flexed in front of the chest. The animals are labelled as 'perhaps lions' by Schmidt.<sup>85</sup> However, the slimness of their bodies, necks and heads points rather to horses, as the styling of the mane and the descending tail (the lions are usually styled with an upright curved tail<sup>86</sup>) do. The pseudo-sealing, being on the reverse (i.e. not on the face where the lobes protruded if the plaque was hung on a wall), could not be an ornamentation and should therefore have had the function of a real sealing.<sup>87</sup>

Starting from the assumption that we are facing a reproduction of a real sealing, I looked for comparisons among seals and sealings. I found one in a sealing attested on a tablet from the Acropole of Susa and published by Amiet in 1973.<sup>88</sup> The seal has been applied three times: in the two impressions below the last line of text, as long as the width of the tablet and one above the other; the seal has been rolled for at least two complete turns; one impression of the animals is on the left edge. Only the latter impression is shown in the photograph published by Amiet; the drawing of Amiet is based mainly on the impressions on the face of the tablet, probably the upper one, left part, for the animals and the lower one, right part, for the inscribed panel.

<sup>83</sup> Cameron apud Schmidt 1957: 64: 'representations of the impression of a cylinder seal'; Miroshedji 1985: 285, fn. 85: '... pas à proprement parler un sceau-cylindre mais—cas unique dans l'histoire de la glyptique élamite—sa reproduction gravée sur une plaque de bronze découverte à Persépolis'; Steve 1986: 14: '... gravé au burin sur une imitation de sceau-cylindre'; Waters 2000: 87: 'imprint of a cylinder seal with inscription'. Also Henkelman 2008: 54, fn. 131.

<sup>84</sup> Also in Waters 2000: 89. Cameron (apud Schmidt 1957: 64), who offered only a translation, omitted the logogram 'king'. The sign *GAM* before the name of the king, restored by Hinz & Kock 1987: 680, s.v. [*GAM*].hu-ban.šū-tur-uk, is probably to be substituted with *DIŠ*, since it would be unusual to use *GAM* in a sealing; see Giovinnazzo 1989 for a peculiar use of *DIŠ* in administrative texts. Vallat's translation is given in Miroshedji 1985: 285, fn. 85.

<sup>85</sup> Schmidt 1957: 64.

<sup>86</sup> E.g. in Amiet 1973, nos. 11 and 68.

<sup>87</sup> Miroshedji 1985: 285, fn. 85: 'Le texte de cette plaque est apparemment une charte dont les clauses sont garanties par le roi, qui devait donc y apposer son sceau'.

<sup>88</sup> Amiet 1973: 10–11 and 28, pl. III, no. 12. The similarity was already noted (without a particular emphasis) in Miroshedji 1985: 285, fn. 85: 'Le décor de ce dernier est typique de la glyptique élamite du VI<sup>e</sup> siècle (cf. Amiet ... no. 11–12 et plusieurs ex. parmi les empreintes inédites des tablettes de Persépolis)'. In the discussion following my lecture at the conference in Ghent, Javier Álvarez-Mon supported this comparison, which has been already emphasized in his forthcoming work on the Arjân tomb; see now Álvarez-Mon 2010: 105–106 and pl. 50e–f. See Garrison 2002 for a reassessment of the stylistic evidence of the sealings from Susa.

The figurative section is nearly the same of the PBP. The forelegs, both the touching and the flexed ones, are clearly visible, even if the ends were not drawn by Amiet; the tail is thick and falls vertically at the bottom of the back. Note also the hoof of the rear leg nearly touching the end of the tail. The head is stylized in the same way, and the snout has the same orientation.<sup>89</sup>

The proof that this very seal was imitated in the PBP pseudo-sealing should come from the comparison of the inscribed panels. Unfortunately, the seal was lightly pressed and the inscribed panel can be barely seen. Amiet could see only a few wedges, parts of three or four signs. In the first line, I can see the lower half of a possible logogram *ESSANA* 'king'; in the second line, it seems possible to see two *nu* signs; traces of a logogram *DUMU* are cut by a slit, probably the impression of a nail; however, it is likely that I am influenced by the mention of a king Ummanunu in the text of the tablet.

The tablet bearing this seal, MDP IX 165,<sup>90</sup> is a special tablet. First of all, is one of the few tablets from the Acropole mentioning a king.<sup>91</sup> So it is possible that the impressed seal was a royal one. The name of the king mentioned in the text is Ummanunu (<sup>BE</sup>*um-ma-nu-nu*),<sup>92</sup> attested only here as a king, just as Huban-šuturuk, the king named in the pseudo-sealing of PBP, is otherwise unknown. A theophoric compound name implying the god Šati (<sup>BE.d</sup>*šá-ti-[x-x-x(-x)]*) is also attested in the tablet.<sup>93</sup> Moreover, this tablet is exceptional in the Acropole corpus, as it is the only tablet mentioning a measure of capacity while the other tablets deal with clothing, weapons and other tools.<sup>94</sup> Even the administrative formulae are different from the other Acropole tablets.

If it were possible to prove the identity of the sealings on PBP and MDP IX 165, it would be likely that PBP also originated in Susa as a royal chart or grant regarding some estates in the East, and perhaps kept there. Probably the emphasis on Gisat may be reduced, on account of the other toponyms attested on PBP.<sup>95</sup> Maybe PBP should not be a proof of a fragmentation of power in the last Neo-Elamite phase anymore.<sup>96</sup> On the contrary, PBP could be a witness of the existence of a regional system where Susa was still the focal point, as attested also from the mention of people from other places (e.g. Samati and Ayapir) in the Acropole tablets, and notwithstanding the localization of Gisat, probably closer to Persepolis than to Susa.

## 7. WHY WAS PBP IN THE PERSEPOLIS TREASURY?

As mentioned above, PBP was found in a subsidiary room of the Treasury together with various other objects. Assuming that no-one would bring objects into the building while looting it, one should assume that these findings were already in the room or, at most, in the two interconnected rooms. According to Erich F. Schmidt, the uninscribed tablets found in the

<sup>89</sup> Miroschedji 1982: 57, provided the following general description of the sealings on the Acropole tablets: 'Les animaux y sont représentés suivant des conventions particulières ...: ils ont une silhouette efflanquée, avec des membre grêles et un ventre excessivement allongé, mais avec une cuisse puissante et en fort relief; la ligne de la tête, du cou et du poitrail cambré forme un "S"':

<sup>90</sup> Louvre Museum number Sb 12935.

<sup>91</sup> See Waters 2000: 95–96, and Tavernier 2004: 30–31, for a discussion on the references to kings in the Acropole tablets.

<sup>92</sup> MDP IX 165:6; see also the transliteration in Jusifov 1963: 222, no. 200. The sign *ma* in Ummanunu was read *ba* by Scheil; actually it is not *ba* but it appears to be slightly different from the *ma* on line 6.

<sup>93</sup> MDP IX 165:8.

<sup>94</sup> Basello 2011: 74–75.

<sup>95</sup> See Vallat 1993, s.v. Asampi, Babili (TIN?.TAR), Bahar, Hamun, Irkume?, Kummama, Šumurtan-Duri, Tartin, Tartin-Ammak?, Udazammin, Udman, Zanu and Zippa.

<sup>96</sup> On late Neo-Elamite political fragmentation, cf. Henkelman 2003a, cols. 254–259, with further references.

same room might be attached to valuable objects deposited in the Treasury.<sup>97</sup> Starting from this interpretive context, that of the scene of a secure storehouse violated by looting, Schmidt tried to explain the presence of PBP as ‘apparently a trophy of war’;<sup>98</sup> George G. Cameron reinforced this view:

it is unlikely that this plaque was inscribed at Persepolis, a new city founded by Darius. Presumably it was written some generations earlier in some other (Elamite) center and brought to the capital as a war trophy or the like.<sup>99</sup>

This judgment was issued in the context of the other findings from the Treasury such as the inscribed Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian eyestones, seals and beads from Mesopotamia<sup>100</sup> which, as Potts remarked, ‘certainly ... must have arrived long after they have originally been manufactured’.<sup>101</sup> Recently Razmjou gave a slightly different perspective, defining the Treasury as ‘an early kind of museum’.<sup>102</sup>

Henkelman suggested another possibility:

the late Neo-Elamite Persepolis Bronze Plaque, found in the Treasury at Persepolis, was in fact kept there as retroact and had a relevance for the current rights and obligations of the Gisat sanctuary and its administrators.<sup>103</sup>

In the light of the connection between PBP and the tablet MDP IX 165, it seems possible to hypothesize that PBP was written in Susa, as a grant related to a far provincial centre in the East, maybe Hamun or Gisat. The polarization created by the establishing of Persepolis as the chief administrative centre in the area once called Anshan, may account for the “migration” of the text from Susa to Persepolis. The administrative link between Gisat and Persepolis seems to be proven by PF 352. As remarked by Henkelman, PBP was kept not for its material value but because it was a still valid document. The discovery of PBP in Persepolis may attest the shift of administrative control from Susa to Persepolis. It is also possible that PBP had been transferred to the previously pre-eminent centre of the area, maybe Matezziš.<sup>104</sup>

While this interpretation remains a tentative attempt, it is hoped that a thorough study of the “exceptional” PBP and the publication of its text could shift our comprehension of the 6th century BC in the South-Western Iran a little bit further.

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<sup>97</sup> Schmidt 1957: 5: ‘When the building was despoiled by Alexander, these labels were torn from the objects to which they were attached, or the labeled objects were left with things found useless, to be burned during subsequent conflagration’. See also the recent observations on the uninscribed tablets in Garrison 2008: 182–183.

<sup>98</sup> Schmidt 1953: 180.

<sup>99</sup> Cameron apud Schmidt 1957: 65.

<sup>100</sup> See the section ‘Votive objects from Mesopotamia’ in Schmidt 1957: 56–64.

<sup>101</sup> Potts 1999: 291.

<sup>102</sup> Razmjou 2010: 242–243, referring to PBP as ‘a Neo-Elamite inscribed plaque’ (p. 243).

<sup>103</sup> Henkelman 2008: 172, fn. 376.

<sup>104</sup> On Matezziš, see Stolper 1984b: 306–308; Vallat 1993: 178–179, s.v. Matezziš, and Tavernier 2007: 31 (§ 1.3.41), 71 (§ 2.3.22) and 76–77 (§§ 2.3.48–49), with further references.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

DB/AE	Grillot-Susini & al. 1993.
DPh	see Schweiger 1998, vol. 2, pp. 29–31, and Schmitt 2009, pp. 13 and 119–120, with further bibliography and the Old Persian text.
DSaa	Vallat 1986; see also Vallat 1971.
DSz	Vallat 1972; see also Vallat 1971.
EKI	König 1965.
MDP I	Morgan & al. 1900.
MDP V	Scheil 1904.
MDP VII	Morgan & al. 1905.
MDP VIII	Jéquier & al. 1905.
MDP IX	Scheil 1907.
MDP XI	Scheil 1911.
Nin	Weissbach 1902 (autograph) and Hinz 1986 (transliteration). See also Vallat 1998b and Waters 2000, pp. 89–92, with further references.
PBP	Persepolis bronze plaque. The text is unpublished. See Schmidt 1957, pp. 64–65, Vallat 1993 for the toponyms (under the siglum 'Hub Pe' for Huban-šuturuk, Persepolis), Waters 2000, pp. 87–89. Line numbers, differing among scholars, are marked with the following sigla: C: Cameron apud Schmidt 1957, pp. 64–65; H: references in Hinz & Koch 1987 (under the siglum 'Oruru'); S: unpublished transliteration by Steve (followed also in Vallat 1993).
PF	Hallock 1969.
PF-NN	unpublished Persepolis Fortification tablets edited by R.T. Hallock. Online access: < <a href="http://ochre.lib.uchicago.edu/PFA_Online">http://ochre.lib.uchicago.edu/PFA_Online</a> >.
PFS	seals on the Persepolis Fortification tablets, partially published in Garrison & Root 2001. See the list in Hallock 1969, pp. 78–81.
PT	Cameron 1948.

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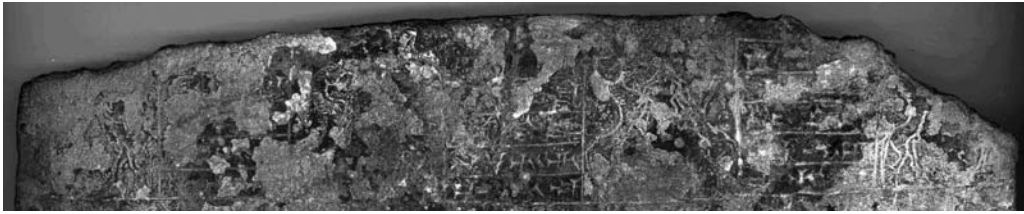
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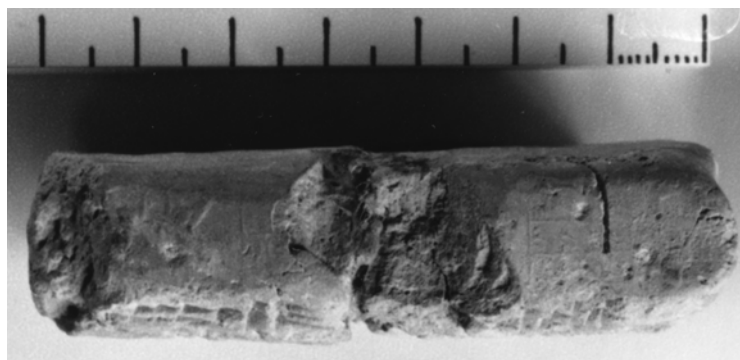
## FIGURES



*Fig. 1.* The pseudo-sealing at the bottom of the reverse of PBP (National Museum of Iran, Tehran).



*Fig. 2.* PBP, detail of the third figuration of the pseudo-sealing (National Museum of Iran, Tehran).



*Fig. 3.* MDP IX 165, second sealing below the text (courtesy by G. Giovino).



*Fig. 4.* MDP IX 165, left part of the first sealing below the text (courtesy by G. Giovino).



*Fig. 5.* MDP IX 165, left side with sealing (courtesy by G. Giovino).