



Wouter F.M. Henkelman - Collège de France
Charles E. Jones - Blegen Library
Matthew W. Stolper - Oriental Institute

**Achaemenid Elamite Administrative
Tablets, 2: THE QAŞR-I ABU NAŞR TABLET***

The site of Qaşr-i Abu Naşr is on a mountain spur at the edge of the plain of Shiraz, about six km east of the modern city. The Persian Expedition of the Metropolitan Museum of Art excavated in the citadel, town and tombs there for three seasons, between 1932 and 1935. The standing remains of

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Achaemenid doorways that had been reported by Iranian and European travelers of the eighteenth, nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries drew the excavators' first attention. Visitors who had looked closely, from Eugène Flandin and Pascal Coste in 1841 onward, concluded that Achaemenid doorways were not original to Qaṣr-i Abu Naṣr, that they were made of pieces that had been brought from another site in Sasanian or Islamic times. On his first visit to the site, Ernst Herzfeld concurred, but in 1926 he put forward the opinion that the Achaemenid architectural fragments were remains of an original Achaemenid building on the site. When excavations at Qaṣr-i Abu Naṣr began, Herzfeld's spectacular discoveries at Persepolis were attracting international attention, and the hope of uncovering another Achaemenid stronghold in the Persian homeland was strong.¹

By the end of the first season in Spring, 1933, that hope was disappointed but not extinct. The excavators had confirmed that the Achaemenid doorways were not original, but they still thought the architectural elements of the doorways might have come from "some as yet undiscovered building in the neighborhood" (Hauser 1933: 42). They opened the second season in the last days of October, 1933, by ignoring this "Achaemenian bait" and beginning work at the fortress on the opposite end of the site, but even so, they soon found pre-Sasanian objects and sherds, some of Achaemenid date, on the

¹ Hauser 1933: 39-40; Whitcomb 1985: 16; Flandin & Coste 1851-52: 65-66; Herzfeld 1926: 250.



west slope of the fortress. Among these finds was a cuneiform tablet with impressions of two Achaemenid seals and a text in Achaemenid Elamite. The tablet was found on the west slope on November 12, 1933. In form and content it is very similar to Achaemenid Elamite administrative texts from the Persepolis Fortification that had been excavated by Herzfeld only a few months earlier.²

The pre-Sasanian finds of the early second season again raised “expectations of a series of levels making a cross-section through all the Persian cultures,” expectations that were again disappointed (Winlock, Hauser & Upton 1934: 4, 13). These finds were “more false bait” (Whitcomb 1985: 18). They proved to be the only pre-Sasanian items found, and they had no stratigraphic or architectural connections. The portable Achaemenid objects – stone bowls and plates, an inlaid chert bird’s head ornament, seals, and even the cuneiform tablet – were interpreted, like the Achaemenid architectural fragments, as intrusive, brought to the site as antiquities, decorations or curios in Sasanian times or later. Qaşr-i Abu Naşr could be characterized not as the site of an Achaemenid fortress, but as a “memento of the early pillaging of Achaemenian sites” (Wilkinson 1965: 345).

² MMA 36.30.62: Wilkinson 1965: 344f., pl. LXXVII fig. 24; cf. Whitcomb 1985: 191. Herzfeld did not excavate the Persepolis Fortification tablets in 1934, as is often said, but in the spring of 1933; he had already given a comprehensive description of the tablets in a lecture at the Royal Asiatic Society in September, 1933 (Anonymous 1934).



Achaemenid Elamite administrative records from Persepolis, however, kept the possibility of an Achaemenid occupation at Qašr-i Abu Našr alive. Texts on Persepolis Treasury tablets, published in 1948 and after, and texts Persepolis Fortification tablets, published in 1969 and after, mention a place called *Tirašziš* (sometimes spelled *Širašziš*) as a regional administrative center, the site of a “fortress” (Elamite *halmarris*), a “storehouse” (Elamite *kanti*) and a “treasury” or craft-production center (Elamite *kaḫnuški*, with gangs of *kaḫnuškip*, “treasury workers”) at Tirazziš. This toponym was recognized as an ancestral form of the name Shiraz; the place that it named was thought to be located at or near modern Shiraz; and this fixed point was one of the keys to investigations of the historical geography of Achaemenid Persia on the basis of the Persepolis texts.³

Islamic geographical and historical writers, however, indicate that the city of Shiraz was an Islamic foundation, and no archaeological evidence contradicts them. Hence, pre-Islamic Qašr-i Abu Našr has been the best candidate for a nearby Achaemenid site that might have been called by the ancestral form of the name Shiraz, although no archaeological evidence unequivocally supports this candidacy (e.g., Herzfeld 1926: 250; Frye 1973: 2). William Sumner put the case explicitly: although Achaemenid architectural fragments and objects

³ Hallock 1969: 762 s.v. *Tirašziš*; Hinz & Koch 1987: 335 s.vv. *h.ti-ra-iz-zī-iš*, etc., 1092 s.v. *h.sir-zī-iš*, 1169 s.v. *šī-ra-iš-zī-iš*, etc. Cf. Sumner 1986: 19-20; Koch 1990: 41-68; Vallat 1993: 282f. s.v. *Tiraš(z)iš*.



could be considered curious antiquities brought to the site from elsewhere

the presence of unmistakable Achaemenid sherds from a trench on the slope of the citadel is not so easily dismissed. These sherds are, in my opinion, good evidence for an Achaemenid occupation on the citadel, the remains of which could easily have been destroyed in the course of Parthian and Sasanian construction ... it is premature to dismiss Qasr-e Abu Nasr as the most probable location of Tirazziš (Sumner 1986: 19f.).

What is true of the Achaemenid sherds might also be said of the Achaemenid tablet. Unlike stone bowls, metal work, and carved architectural ornament, the tablet is not an intrinsically attractive object. Its value as an antiquity or curio would not be obvious to an observer in Sasanian or Islamic times, or to anyone who found it before the nineteenth-century decipherment of the cuneiform scripts. Even afterwards, it was only the discovery of similar tablets at Persepolis in 1933 that would have made this piece interesting to a collector. Just because it has so little to attract anyone but a twentieth-century cuneiform epigrapher, some commentators have viewed it as an oddity among the Achaemenid pieces from Qasr-i Abu Naşr (e.g., Wilkinson 1965: 345; Whitcomb 1985: 191).

The form of the text on the Qasr-i Abu Naşr tablet has exact parallels among Persepolis Fortification tablets, but the specific collocation of names, seal impressions, and details in the text does not occur in known Fortification texts. The seal impression on the reverse of the Qasr-i Abu Naşr tablet is similar to seals on the Fortification tablets, but no impressions



of the same seal have been identified among known Fortification tablets. Hence, nothing forces the conclusion that the Qaṣr-i Abu Naṣr tablet came from Persepolis. If Qaṣr-i Abu Naṣr was indeed the site of Achaemenid Tirazziš, this tablet might be the sole surviving document from an administrative center that was controlled from Persepolis, just as MDP 11 308 may be the sole surviving document from an Achaemenid administrative archive at Susa (Garrison 1996).

Nevertheless, there is reason to hesitate over this inference. This tablet was discovered at the same time and in the same area as the other Achaemenid small finds. It came to light only a few months after Herzfeld's work had made tablets of this kind known as real and valuable Achaemenid objects, when the discovery of the Fortification archive had drawn even more international attention to the work at Persepolis, and when the employment of hundreds of men at Qaṣr-i Abu Naṣr might depend on rekindling the Metropolitan Museum Expedition's waning hope of similar discoveries. The Achaemenid sherds and the Elamite tablet might be unsuitable curios for Sasanian or early Islamic occupants of Qaṣr-i Abu Naṣr, but they were very suitable "bait" to put before the excavators (as Whitcomb 1985: 18 intimates). Under these circumstances, it seems to us very probable, but not actually provable, that the Qaṣr-i Abu Naṣr tablet came from the Persepolis Fortification find, that it was not brought to Qaṣr-i Abu Naṣr in Sasanian or early Islamic times, but only in 1933 or 1934.

**MMA 36.30.62****Description**

Metropolitan Museum
of Art, Rogers Fund
= PF-NN 2303.
3.51 x 2.49 cm
Category C6

Transliteration

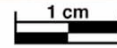
1. 60 *ráp-tam*₅
2. 75 *hi-du*
3. 20 *ba¹-gi-maš*
4. 25 *ka¹-ri*
GURUŠ^{MEŠ}
5. 25 *ki¹+MIN*
SAL^{MEŠ}
6. PAP 2 ME 5
UDU.NITÁ^{MEŠ}
7. *ka₄-da-ka₄ kur-mín*
Lower Edge
8. ^{HAL}*hi-in-du-iš-*
9. *na am-ma be-ul*
Reverse
10. 21-*me-man-na*

Translation

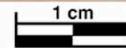
¹⁻⁴ 60 rams, 75 ewes, 20 intermediate (yearling) ewes, 25 male lambs, 25 female lambs: ⁶⁻⁷ altogether 205 head of small live-



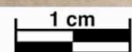
MMA 36.30.62
upper edge



MMA 36.30.62 obv.



MMA 36.30.62 obv.





stock, alive ⁷⁻⁹ (as/for?)
allocation by Hinduš, ⁹⁻¹⁰
balance of the 21st year.

Comparanda

Cf. PF 0283-0287 (esp. PF 0285 [year 20] and PF 0287 [year 24]), PF-NN 0007, PF-NN 0125, PF-NN 0395, PF-NN 0444, PF-NN 0719, PF-NN 1226, PF-NN 2140, PF-NN 2302, PF-NN 2563 (all Category C6).

Seals

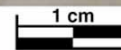
Seal reverse: see Garrison & Root 2001: 7: “similar but not identical to PFS 32* ... and PFS 677*.” Another seal left edge.

Comments

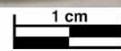
2. *hidu* “ewe” rather than “female goat” (so Hallock), on the basis of a Middle Elamite text from Tall-i Malyan with separate entries for numbers of hides of $\dot{U}Z^{ME\dot{S}}$, “female goats” and *hi-du*; in that case *kariri* (*karrī*) indicates “lamb(s),” rather than “kid(s),” as the Aramaic gloss *’mrn* on PF 0695 implies, and *bagimaš* refers to a yearling ewe, not a female goat of inter-



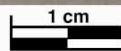
MMA 36.30.62
lower edge



MMA 36.30.62
lower edge



MMA 36.30.62 rev.





mediate age (Hinz & Koch 1987: 656; Hallock 1969: 16).

3. *ba*¹ written ŠU.
4. Or: *ka₄-ri-ri*; cf. *kar-ri* PF 0287:2, 5, PF-NN 1226:2, 5.
6. Properly, “head of small livestock,” that is, sheep and/or goats, of all age and sex categories. UDU.NITÁ also renders *ṣēnu* (otherwise U₈.UDU) or a synonym of *ṣēnu* in Neo-Babylonian texts (e.g., Da Riva 2002: 211).
8. Hinduš: “India(n).” Cf. ^{HAL}*Hi-du-iš*, a cultic expert (*šatin*), PF 0596:2. Not otherwise attested as personal name in Fortification texts.



MMA 36.30.62 rev.



MMA 36.30.62 left edge



Interpretation

What does this text, lacking a finite verb, actually record, and for what purpose? Hallock assigned it and similar texts to Category C6, labeled “Other ‘Deposits.’” It is one of his categories that is loosely defined in formal and functional terms (cf. 1969: 17: “of uncertain character”). Hallock also assigned to this category not only texts in similar formats that deal with livestock – cattle and poultry as well as sheep and goats – but also texts that deal with other commodities.

Handling livestock, however, is fundamentally different from handling grain, wine, and other such commodities, since livestock cannot be held in storage except on the hoof. Understanding the C6 texts that deal with livestock in particular calls for comparison with texts of other categories that deal with animals, especially the elaborate accounts of Category W. Hallock’s fastidious analysis of these accounts was the basis for studies of the handling of sheep and goats in the Persepolis administration by Toyoko Kawase,⁴ who argued convincingly that the Persepolis records of sheep and goats represent a lopsided view of a “consignment system” (otherwise characterized as a system of share-breeding), in which the owners (the crown and its administrators) managed large stocks of

⁴ Hallock 1969: 57ff., especially 65-68. Kawase 1980, complemented by Kawase 1984 and 1986. See also Hinz 1971: 288-90; Briant 1979: 143-150 (= 1982: 338-345), 2002: 425f. and 440f.; Henkelman 2005: 157-59.



animals⁵ by allocating flocks to individual herdsmen who were remunerated with a share of the offspring. The view is lopsided in the sense that it conveys only information of interest to the owners; it is lopsided also in the sense that it conveys only administrative data without making explicit the legal or customary relationships that bound the administrators and the consignees. In this interpretation, the “core institution” that links the external sphere of the herdsmen and the internal sphere of the owners and consumers was the *nutannuš*, both an organization and a locale.⁶

The characterization of “external” and “internal” spheres borrows from Van Driel’s study of the handling of sheep and goats represented in Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid

⁵ PF 2007 accounts for more than 16,000 sheep and goats; cf. Hallock 1969: 66.

⁶ Hallock 1969: 739: “stockyard;” Hinz & Koch 1987: 1012: “Viehhof;” Tavernier 2002: 659; all accepting an Iranian etymology, **nidāni-/nitanī-*), “depot, store.” We cannot accept G. Giovinazzo’s divergent proposal that *nutannu(ya)š* is borrowed from Akkadian *nadānu*, “give,” with a meaning “gift,” hence “tax” (1989: 203-206). It is implausible on formal grounds (e.g., El. *lnul* for Ir. *lnil* is well attested, but El. *lnul* for Bab. *lnal* is not; final *-š* is common on transcribed Ir. words but unwarranted on transcribed Bab. words); it is without a convincing Akkadian donor form in comparable meaning (despite *mimma nadānātu* [not *nadānu*], “any gifts (to the crown) at all” [not: a particular tax], frequent in fifth-century legal texts from the Murašû archive of Nippur but not elsewhere); it postulates an unlikely kind of borrowing (why borrow from Akkadian, not Aramaic? and why borrow a word of general meaning when Iranian and Elamite synonyms were in common use?).



Babylonian temple archives from Uruk and Sippar (Van Driel 1993). Like the Fortification archive, the Babylonian temple archives supply the perspective of administrative records on the management of very large stocks of animals. They reflect a share-breeding system, carried out on general terms that seem to have parallels in the Persepolis texts: an expectation of about $66 \frac{2}{3}$ lambs and kids per 100 viable ewes and she-goats to be paid annually to the owners (additional offspring to belong to the herdsman), and perhaps also an allowance of 10% deaths among the offspring (additional losses to be charged to the herdsman).⁷ Given the similarities of perspective and operating relationships, the understandings gained by recent work on Babylonian temple records of sheep and goats may offer systematic comparanda to elucidate Persepolis records.⁸ In the absence of such systematic comparison, we confine ourselves to remarks on some terms of

⁷ Two-thirds yield: cf. Hallock 1969: 66; Kawase 1980: 46-8. A ten percent loss allowance is perhaps to be seen in the entries discussed by Hallock 1969: 66 on PF 2008 (“584 sheep [i.e., goats] on hand ... 58 (as usual 1/10 of the carry-over ...) were brought in, slaughtered, and issued to the herdsman [*batmana*], having no effect on the herd;” Kawase 1980: 41 (item B), 43 (“delivered to ... the *batmana* for slaughter”). Might sheep and goats described as *baṣiṣ*, “tax,” be compared also to Neo-Babylonian animals levied as *šibtu*?

⁸ Van Driel’s programmatic study is the starting-point for more extensive studies of animal husbandry and consumption in the temple archives. Sippar: da Riva, 2002: 173-309; Uruk: Kozuh 2006. See also Gehlken 1990: 19-55; Bongenaar 1997: 416-422; Van Driel & Nemet-Nejat 1994; Zawadski 2003.



this text in connection with other Persepolis texts.

- 1-3. As A.M. Arfaee observes (personal communication), animals in the species-sex categories that Hallock interpreted as male outnumber those in the categories that Hallock interpreted as female, while flocks in normal herding practices – modern, traditional, and ancient, amply reflected in Old and Neo-Babylonian texts – are preponderantly female, for obvious reasons. Nevertheless, Hallock (who was cautious about any claim to certainty in Elamite) insisted that “there is ... no doubt about the age and sex categories” (1969: 16); there are no grounds for changing his assignments, and ample evidence for maintaining them.⁹

In this text, female animals outnumber males. Nevertheless, the sex ratios, with about two-thirds as many rams as ewes and yearling females, make it unattractive to see this as an inventory of a flock in the hands of an individual herdsman, comparable to the Neo-Babylonian lists of animals called “on the spot herd inventories,” “Standardurkunde,” or “Einzelinspektionen.”¹⁰ Sex ratios vary widely in texts of similar form: PF 0285 and 0287 enumerate both sheep and goats, with much higher ratios of females to males; other texts have still

⁹ Like Babylonian texts, the Persepolis texts are highly regular (but not perfectly consistent) in listing male animals before female animals, noted explicitly as GURUŠ(-*na*), “male” and SAL-*na*, “female” in the case of lambs and kids, for which there are no sex-specific terms. The sex-category assignments are also strongly implicit in the projected yield of 66 2/3 young per viable 100 females.

¹⁰ Van Driel 1993: 220ff.; Gehlken 1990: 21ff.; da Riva 2002: 204-207, 235.



lower ratios of females to males than this text (e.g. PF-NN 0007 26:61 adult sheep, 23:41 adult goats; PF-NN 0125 1:7 adult goats). If texts of similar form record similar situations, they are situations that involve groups of animals of variable size and composition; the groups are not often, if ever, active herds consigned to a herdsman.

- 4-5. 50 lambs = 75 ewes x 2/3, corresponding to the expected yield as entered in accounts of Category W, but this ratio does not recur in similar C6 texts.
7. *kadaka* (*katukka*), “alive”: Neo-Babylonian *napsātu* (ZI^{MEŠ}), literally “lives,” designates head of livestock in herd totals (CAD N/I 301 s.v. *napištu* mng. 5b), but a counterpart usage here is excluded by similar texts that describe the livestock as *halpika*, “slaughtered” or perhaps simply “dead,” e.g., PF 0283, PF 0284. “Alive” and “dead” are also accounting categories. In W texts, *kadaka* (*katukka*) labels numbers of animals on account at the first step of the annual calculation (balance carried forward from the previous year [*amma bel #-na*] less 10% dead or slaughtered [*halpika*] and animals lost² [*piika*]). At the end of the calculation it labels grand totals of animals held on account and carried forward to the following year (year-initial “live” animals plus unexpended newborns), contrasted with the total of animals “removed” (*mazzika* newborns plus 10% dead; cf. Kawase 1980: 40, 43, 45).
- 7-9. *kurmin* PN-*na*: in most C6 texts, Hallock translated “entrusted to PN,” rather than the usual “entrusted by PN;” his choice



seems to imply that he understood these texts to record income rather than disbursements (1969: 10f.). PF 0290:5ff. describes live donkeys as *kurmin* PN-*na* GN “allocated to/by² PN (at²) GN.” Other C6 text combine *kurmin* PN-*na* with finite forms of the cognate verb *kurma-* and/or forms of *kuti-*, “carry away” or *marri-* “hold,” but in ways that seem inconsistent with records of income:

kurmin PN₁-*na* PN₂ *ak* *akayaše* *marriš* PN₁ *hi kurmaš* “(cattle) allocated for PN₁, PN₂ and his associate(s) took², they allocated (them) to him, to PN₁” (PF 0291:7-11), where the final phrase would seem to confirm that the preceding *kurmin* PN₁-*na* indicates “allocated to PN₁,” yet Hallock preferred to translate it as “entrusted by PN₁,” making a sequence: supplied by PN₁, held by PN₂, allocated to PN₁;

PN₁ *ak* PN₂ *kutiš* PN₃ *i kurmaš kurmin* PN₄-*na* “(sheep and goats) PN₁ and PN₂ carried away, they allocated (them) to him, to PN₃, allocated by² PN₄” (PF-NN 0444:5-11) might represent a similar sequence: animals taken away and turned over to PN₃ after being issued by PN₄;

PN₁ *hiše* PN₂² *idaka* PN₃-*ikkimar tingišda* PN₄ GN *dušda* PN₅ PN₆-*na i kurmašda* “(cattle) PN₁ together with PN₂¹¹ sent from (a herd under the control of?) PN₃, PN₄ received at GN (and) allocated (them) to him, to PN₅ (a subordinate of) PN₆¹²” (PF-NN 1727:2-11) has the same sequence, but in reversed order and with additional intermediaries: animals issued by PN₃,

11 HAL *ak-ka₄-nap*, not likely a variant of *akayaše*, hence perhaps a personal name.

12 PN₆ = the royal woman Artystone.



sent by PN₁ and PN₂, received on the spot by PN₄, and subsequently handed over to PN₃, the agent of PN₆;

PN₁ *kuṣṣa* PN₂ *bi kurmaš* “(goats) PN₁ took, he turned (them) over to him, to PN₂” (PF 0627:4-7) suggests much the same operation, but in a less complicated form, and without notation of an original supplier;

(sheep and goats) *kurmin* PN₁-*na kadaka* PN₂ *akkaṣaše* GN *marriš* “allocated by² PN₁, alive, PN₂ his associate (at) GN took” (PF-NN 2302:6-11).

kurmin PN-*na* in these texts perhaps records responsibility not for income, but for outlays: living animals for storage on the hoof with herdsmen, still considered as assets on annual accounts; dead animals for consumption, considered “removed” from current balances.

- 9f. *amma*: Hallock translates “on hand,” analyzing the word as adverbial *am*, “now,” + locative postposition *-ma*, hence with inherently temporal sense (1969: 666). Hinz & Koch 1987: 51, prefer to see it as an irreducible noun, “Bestand,” governing the following phrase with *-na* in passages like this one, hence “stock” or “balance” of year so-and-so. Interpretation as noun is favored by such constructions as *ammae*, “its *amma*” (with possessive *-e*) and *amma nimak*, “exists/is there as *amma*.” Phrases similar to the one in MMA 36.30.62 occur in C6 texts (PF 0288:5, PF 0289:7, PF 0290:7f., PF-NN 0395:9f.; PF-NN



2061:12).¹³ They do not occur in texts that record dead (*halpika*) animals. In accounts of livestock, the counterpart phrase PAP # *amma bel #-na* marks the opening balance carried forward from the previous year, prior to deductions for deaths and expenditures, and prior to operations in the current year (PF 2008:8, PF 2009:14, PF 2010:15).

Wouter F.M. HENKELMAN

wouter.henkelman@college-de-france.fr

Charles E. JONES

ce-jones@ascsa.edu.gr

Matthew W. STOLPER

m-stolper@uchicago.edu

13 In PF 0285 a place-name takes the position taken here by *amma* ([sheep/goats] *katukka kurme* PN-*na* GN *bel #-na*); compare (sheep/goats) *kurmin* PN-*na kadaka nutannuyašna bel #-na* PF-NN 0719:4-7 (C6) corresponding to account entries of the form PAP NN *amma nutannuyaš*, PF 2009:14 (W). In other texts, *amma* appears between a place name and the indication of the year: (donkeys) *katukka kurmin* PN-*na* GN *amma bel #-ummemanna* PF-NN 0863:4-8; PF-NN 2140:4-8 (Category D/C6?).



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