



Wednesday 31 May 2023, 20.00hrs

A Queen, her Son, and her Chamberlain. Seal Imagery and Socio-Administrative Hierarchies at Persepolis

Dr Mark Garrison | hybrid event: RMO (Leiden) or livestream

The Persepolis Fortification Archive, excavated at the site of Persepolis in 1933/34, is one of the largest state administrative archives surviving intact from ancient Western Asia. Dating to the early and middle years of the reign of Darius the Great (ruled 522-486 BC), the archive documents the state's collection, storage, and, principally, distribution of food commodities to individuals and livestock. The individuals include dependent workers, travelers on official state business, local administrators, high-rank members of the nobility and royal family, and religious officials (for offerings).

Since the landmark publication of the first representative sample of Elamite texts by Richard Hallock in 1969, the Fortification Archive has become one of the most important primary sources for the study of the Achaemenid imperial phenomenon. The archive is noteworthy also for the enormous corpus of seal imagery that survives via impressions on the clay administrative tablets. The seals constitute one of the largest corpora of visual imagery from ancient Western Asia.

The seals applied to the administrative tablets belong to officials and offices involved in the daily operation of the state agency and to non-local administrators moving through the region on state business. Because we can often link specific seals with specific administrators and offices, the glyptic from the Fortification Archive opens myriad avenues of research on the manner in which images functioned within a distinctive socio-administrative landscape. The

place, Persepolis, and time, the reign of Darius I, situate the archive at an imperial capital city during the reign of the Achaemenid empire's formative ruler.

This lecture will explore the imagery of the seals used by three particularly important individuals: the Queen Irtašduna, her son Prince Iršama, and her chancellor Šalamana. Mother, son, and chancellor comprise a closely bounded social unit. Their seals, each a glyptic masterpiece, provide an especially focused, and in many ways unique, lens through which to explore the interfaces of images with social, political, and administrative hierarchies at Persepolis in the last decade of the 6th century BC.

Dr Mark Garrison is Alice P. Brown Distinguished Professor of Art and Art History at Trinity University, Texas

Practical information

The Sancisi-Weerdenburg Lecture 2023 will be held as a hybrid event. Join us at the National Museum of Antiquities (Taffeh Hall) for the lecture and drinks afterwards, or online via livestream.

Register to attend in-person:

<https://www.rmo.nl/uw-bezoek/activiteiten/sancisi-lezing-2023/>

Register for the livestream:

<https://rijksmuseum-van-oudheden.webinargeek.com/sancisi-lezing-2023>



Bi-annual Sancisi-Weerdenburg Lecture

The Sancisi Lecture, a recurring event in memory of Prof. Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1944-2000), is organised by the Netherlands Institute for the Near East in cooperation with the National Museum of Antiquities.

Prof. H.W.A.M. Sancisi-Weerdenburg was Professor of Ancient History at Utrecht University. The first memorial lecture was held in June 2010 and initiated by her two children. All are welcome to attend the lecture.