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# EGYPTIAN HIEROGLYPHS ON ACHAEMENID PERIOD CYLINDER SEALS<sup>1</sup>

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This article examines four Achaemenid period cylinder seals which incorporate Egyptian hieroglyphic writing. On one of the seals the hieroglyphs have not been recognised as such; on two others, the hieroglyphs have not previously been translated or discussed. Three of the seals are Achaemenid in style; the fourth is Babylonian in style, but, I shall argue, probably Achaemenid in date. Despite the fact that two of the seals bear the names of pharaohs, all of the seals were probably owned by non-royal individuals during the First Persian Period (Dynasty XXVII).<sup>2</sup>

## 1. THE SEAL OF *iḥ-ms*.

Figure 1a is Félix Lajard's mid-19th century drawing of the recently published modern cylinder seal impression seen in Figure 1b. The image was carved onto a banded brown and white quartz sardonyx cylinder now in the British Museum (ANE 89585) (Merrillees, 2005: 65–66 (cat. no. 56), pl. XXII).<sup>3</sup> There, a bearded figure wears a dentate crown and a Persian court robe with his sleeves pushed up to reveal his arms. In either hand he holds a rampant winged bull by the horn, which turns to look at him. These three figures stand on top of two reclining winged and bearded sphinxes also wearing dentate crowns. The particular type of contest subject matter and the type of Persian crown and dress worn by the hero figure on this seal, compare well with a number of sealings from the Persepolis Treasury and Fortification archive which feature a crowned hero (Schmidt 1957: 18–23, and pls. 1–5, PTS 2\*–11; Garrison and Root 2001: pls. 188–89).<sup>4</sup> Similarly, the reclining creatures supporting the contest group compare with sealings from the Treasury and Fortification archive (Schmidt 1957: pls. 1–2, esp. PTS 1\* and 6\*; Garrison and Root 2001: pls. 216–17, esp. PFS164\* and PFS 524).<sup>5</sup> Lajard's drawing of a rolled-out impression of the seal presents the winged bulls as framing several motifs: a crescent moon with its points turned down and a full moon within it, a symbol for three foxes' skins tied

together (cp. Fig. 1c) and a seated archer. The archer wears an ankle-length tunic, and helmet and quiver, and draws a bow and arrow; and sits on a chair with a low back that terminates in animals' feet.

In the history of published descriptions of this seal, the symbols next to the contest scene have gone unmentioned, they have been treated as part of the pictorial design, or their forms have been misunderstood and therefore drawn incorrectly. Cullimore, Micali and Lajard did not mention the two hieroglyphs or the seated figure in their descriptions. Ohnefalsch-Richter did not mention the hieroglyphs; however, he did note the appearance and meaning of the seated archer (see n. 10 below). Micali's drawing merged the crescent moon with the foxes' skins, resulting in one sign or symbol (i.e., he drew the foxes' skins as two branches coming out of the crescent moon). And though Ward rendered these symbols accurately, he still described the moon and skins as merged: "...the god stands on two sphinxes and the space is filled by a small seated archer and a curious design of crescents and hanging branches" (Ward 1910: 337).

Lajard's accurate drawing shows that the top two symbols match hieroglyphs whose phonetic equivalents are *iḥ*, for the crescent moon, and *ms*, for the three foxes' skins, i.e., *iḥ-ms*, Ahmose, Gr. Amasis.<sup>6</sup> By way of comparison, consider a scarab sealing from the "Palace of Apries" at Memphis (Fig. 1d) (Petrie *et al.* 1910: pl. XXXVI, fig. 21).<sup>7</sup> On this sealing we see a hieroglyph of the crescent moon with its points turned down,<sup>8</sup> and beneath it a hieroglyph comprising either three fox-skins, or two foxes seen in profile and one *en face*.<sup>9</sup> *iḥ-ms* (Petrie's *āāh-mes*) was a common personal name from the Middle Kingdom through to the Ptolemaic period (c. 2052–30 B.C.) (Ranke 1935: 12, no. 19). It also happened to be the name of the pharaoh Ahmose II of Dynasty XXVI (c. 570–526 B.C.). The signs on ANE 89585, although they can be read as hieroglyphs, do not appear in a cartouche. This could mean that we are not meant to read the signs as the name of the pharaoh (cp. Petrie 1889: pl. 64, "Aahmes",



Fig. 1a. Drawing of cylinder seal impression that reads *i'h-ms* (ANE 89585). Acquired by the British Museum. From Lajard 1847: pl. XIII, 8.



Fig. 1b. Photograph of impression of ANE 89585. Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum. Banded brown and white quartz sardonyx. Length: 3.15 cm.; diameter: 0.9585–1.00 cm. (ends irregular).



Fig. 1c. Drawing of *ms* hieroglyph. From Gardiner 1928: 23, F.31.



Fig. 1e. Drawing of "soldier with bow and quiver" hieroglyph. From Gardiner 1928: 17, A.12.

written without a cartouche and referring to a non-royal person). However, there are examples of the name of this pharaoh carved onto a seal and a scarab, without the cartouche (e.g., Gauthier 1916: 126, nos. LXI–LXII; 130, no. LXXIV, 3).

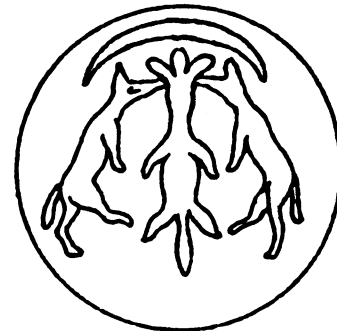


Fig. 1d. Drawing of a sealing from a scarab that reads *i'h-ms*. Found at "Palace of Apries", Memphis. From Petrie 1910: pl. XXXVI, 21 (text, p. 42). Formerly in the Ashmolean Museum (former museum no. 1910.601). Current location unknown.

There are problems with identifying the Ahmose of this seal with the pharaoh Ahmose II. Ahmose II had died before Cambyses' conquest of Egypt. It is hard to think of a plausible motive for making a seal in a non-Egyptian style bearing the name of a dead pharaoh. It seems more likely that the seal was made for someone else, also called Ahmose.

The seated archer figure may help us to identify the seal's owner. It is possible that the archer is meant to be

part of the hieroglyphic inscription, as a determinative for the name *iḥ-ms*. Egyptian masculine names usually end with a sign for a man in one pose or another and, in formal contexts, the sign can also look as if it is part of the pictorial design. There is an archer/soldier hieroglyph that is used as a determinative in words such as “army” and “soldier”. Figure 1e compares with our seated archer, in that he is equipped with a bow and quiver, as well as a plumed helmet.

And yet, the seated archer figure need not be a determinative: the other seals examined here do not have determinatives (which are often omitted on very small objects). He could be part of the scene, intended as a “filling” or “filler” motif. These motif types may, in some cases, denote divine symbols, in others identify people or places, and in yet others mark property (Collon 1995: 69–76). If our archer is a filling motif, his meaning could still be linked to that of the archer/soldier determinative: he could be denoting a person via his occupation or station. Interpreting the seated archer in this way may be a good compromise, particularly since our archer does not exactly match the archer/soldier determinative: our archer sits on a rather elaborate chair or throne whereas in Figure 1e the archer/soldier kneels.

In fact, our archer matches no other type known to me from the Achaemenid period. There is a motif of the pharaoh as a seated archer which appears in Egyptian and Levantine iconography on scarabs and cylinder seals dated to the New Kingdom period. Some examples show an enthroned pharaoh drawing a bow, and this has been interpreted as conveying the legitimate power and mastery of the pharaoh over all creatures, as well as the pharaoh’s right to the throne (Keel 1977: 166 and abb. 20–27).<sup>10</sup> And yet seated pharaoh figures draw their bows in order to shoot animals or humans, whereas our figure appears to have been taken out of context. Also, the apparent life of this New Kingdom archer iconography does not extend to the Achaemenid period.

In the face of this negative iconographic evidence, there is a thread of textual evidence that can be considered. In Herodotus we read of a military commander named Amasis, who was a member of the Persian tribe of the Maraphii. This Amasis was put in charge of an Egyptian army by the Persian governor of Egypt, Aryandes (Herodotus IV. 167 and IV. 201 for Amasis; I.125 for reference to the Maraphians). It may seem rather unlikely that the owner of our seal should conveniently be named in Herodotus, but everything about the seal makes it suitable to this Maraphian

Amasis; the Persian iconography, the Egyptian hieroglyphs, the name spelled out by those hieroglyphs, and the military filling motif (if not a determinative).

It may of course be that Herodotus’ information was once again wrong and that no such Amasis ever existed. Perhaps the owner of the seal was another Persian working in Egypt, with a name that would fittingly be transcribed as *iḥ-ms*; or it may be that the Ahmose of the seal’s inscription was not a Persian at all, but an Egyptian working for the Achaemenid administration in Egypt.<sup>11</sup> The mix of Persian iconography and Egyptian writing suggests someone with a position of responsibility in connection with Egypt during the First Persian period.

## 2. THE SEAL OF *iḥ-iir-dj-s*

Figure 2a shows William Ward’s early 20th century drawing of the unpublished modern cylinder seal impression seen in Figure 2b. The image was carved onto a banded yellow and grey sardonyx cylinder now in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (BMFA 98.700). On this cylinder, a bearded figure holds two rampant lions who face him. The man wears trousers and a short striated tunic terminating above the knee and belted at the waist. His hair is tied with a band (or he wears a headdress), the loose ends apparent over his rounded coiffure. Next to this scene are a vertical column of motifs.

To my knowledge, only Ward has published this seal which is important for the history of interpretation of BMFA 98.700 since he misunderstood and therefore incorrectly drew the motifs (Ward 1910: 336, fig. 1108). Although Ward does not refer to them in his terse description, “[On this seal] the hero attacks two lions



Fig. 2a. Drawing of cylinder seal impression that reads *iḥ-iir-dj-s* (BMFA 98.700). From Ward 1910: 336, fig. 1108.



Fig. 2b. Photograph of impression of BMFA 98.700. Taken from an out-of-copyright photograph in the Henri Frankfort Bequest at the Warburg Institute, University of London.

Banded yellow and grey sardonyx.

Length: 2.5 cm.; diameter: 1.1 cm.

rampant.....” (Ward 1910: 336), his drawing shows three motifs next to the contest scene: a crescent moon with its points turned up and below this moon two indeterminate objects that look like a hill and a tree on a groundline. Ward tells us that he drew this seal from a cast, and so it is possible that his drawing faithfully reproduced inaccuracies embedded in that modern impression. Whatever the reason, it seems unlikely that Ward regarded these motifs as hieroglyphs.

From a photograph of a modern impression of the cylinder (Fig. 2b) we can see that Ward’s crescent moon motif is indeed a crescent moon sign, whose phonetic equivalent is *i’h*; that his hill motif is actually an eye sign, whose phonetic equivalent is *ir*; and that his tree motif is actually two separate signs: a “conical loaf” sign, whose phonetic equivalent is *dj*, and a door bolt sign, whose phonetic equivalent is *s*.<sup>12</sup> When the four signs are read together they spell the name “*i’h-iir-dj-*

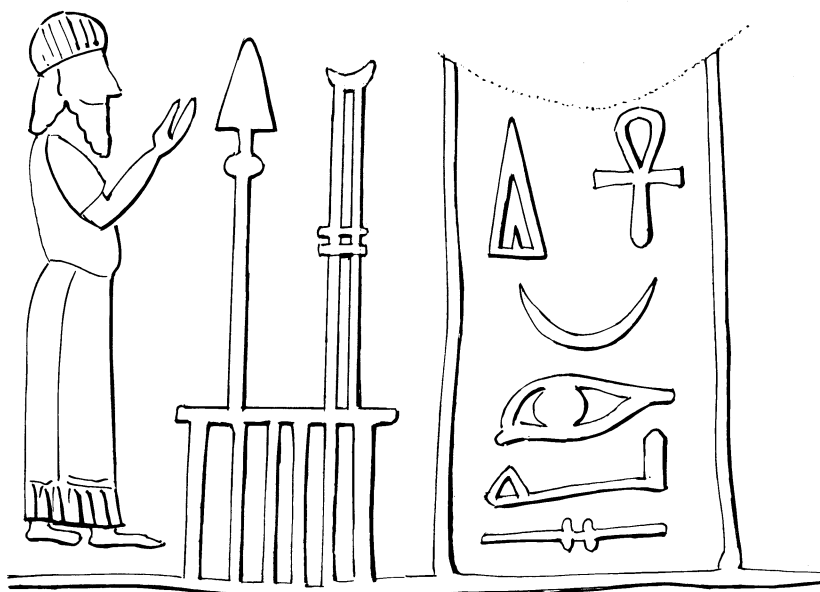


Fig. 3a. Drawing of cylinder seal impression that reads *dj ‘nh i’h-iir-dj-s*.

(For a photograph of the impression see von der Osten 1957: no. 332.)

Formerly in the von Aulock collection and then the Borowski collection. Milky brown chalcedony cylinder. Length: 3.3 cm.; diameter: 0.8 cm. Current location unknown.



s".<sup>13</sup> *iḥ-iir-dj-s* was a male or female name in use before the Saite period and continuing into the Ptolemaic period (c. 700–30 B.C.) (Ranke 1935: 12, no. 15; Lüddeckens 1980: 81). This reading, and these signs, compare with another cylinder engraved with practically the same set of hieroglyphs.

### 3. THE SEAL OF *iḥ-iir-dj-s*

In Figure 3a we have a drawing of a modern impression of an unprovenanced chalcedony cylinder formerly in the von Aulock and Borowski collections and published by Hans Henning von der Osten (von der Osten 1957: 121, no. 332).<sup>14</sup> The impression shows a Babylonian-type worship scene: a worshipper with upraised hands stands before spade and stylus symbols set upon a pedestal or altar. Beyond these cult symbols is a band of hieroglyphs: a “conical loaf” sign (*dj*) and an ankh (*nh*), followed by signs having the same phonetic value as those seen in Figure 2b (*iḥ-iir-dj-s*).<sup>15</sup> Von der Osten published this phrase as “*dj nh iḥ-iir-dj-s*” which translates something like “causes *iḥ-iir-dj-s* to live” (von der Osten 1957: 121).

The phrase “*dj nh*” is part of the common formula “God X causes person Y to live”. It is therefore likely that the chipped area just above the signs spelling *dj nh* included a god’s name, all of which was then followed by the personal name *iḥ-iir-dj-s*. A reconstruction of this phrase would read “God X causes *iḥ-iir-dj-s* to live”.

During his lifetime, von der Osten had been preparing a publication of the seals housed in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and so it is possible that while publishing von Aulock’s collection, which included our Figure 3a, von der Osten realised that the same name had been engraved onto it and Figure 2b (BMFA 98.700) (cf. von der Osten 1957: 9, 161, and *passim*). Evidence to support this possibility has been left to us on the museum accession card for BMFA 98.700, which records the seal as having “a hieroglyphic inscription”, although no transliteration or translation is provided. Perhaps von der Osten would have linked these two seals as well, if he had had the opportunity to complete the Boston catalogue.

On the face of it, it seems unlikely that the same person is referred to on both seals. However, the combined iconographies of these seals should be



Fig. 3b. Photograph of impression of ANE 89324. Courtesy of the Trustees of The British Museum.  
Banded brown and white quartz sardonyx.  
Length: 3.7 cm.; diameter: 1.55 cm.

considered before we throw out that possibility. The style and iconography of Figure 2b is Achaemenid: the figure wears a garment and coiffure that find parallels with the Fortification sealings from Persepolis, dated 509 to 494 B.C. (cp. Garrison and Root 2001: pls. 185–87, 192–93, and see Garrison and Root 2001: 18–19). The style and iconography of Figure 3a could be called Neo-Babylonian, though perhaps “Late Babylonian” is more accurate since we know this iconography was well-represented in Babylonian contexts into the second half of the 5th century B.C. (Ehrenberg 2000: 311–14). We know that the lives of these two iconographies overlapped, and that Babylonian worship scenes and Achaemenid contest scenes appear together in Babylonian and Persepolitan archival contexts that date as late as 494 B.C. (Root 1998: 260–65; 2003: 258–75; Garrison 2000: 142–43; Ehrenberg 1999; 2000: 311–20).<sup>16</sup> So, it is possible that these two different iconographies could have appeared on seals used by the same person (or persons in the same family).

On a cylinder seal now in the British Museum these two iconographies have been combined: see the modern impression in Figure 3b (ANE 89324) (see Collon 2001: 195, no. 393, pl. XXXII; Merrillees 2005: 58–59, no. 31, pl. XIII). There, a Babylonian-type worshipper garbed and poised like the one on Figure 3a stands before an incense burner and spade symbol; the spade is set on the back of a snake-dragon (*mušhuššu*) and both sit upon a pedestal or altar. Next to this scene is an Achaemenid contest with a bearded figure wearing a dentate crown and a Persian court robe with his sleeves pushed up to reveal his arms. In either hand the hero holds a rampant lion that faces him. The contest group stands on a dais or perhaps its own pedestal. It has been argued that the space, scale and cutting of the seal indicate that it was recut in the Achaemenid period when the contest scene was added on (Collon 2001: 195; Merrillees 2005: 59). No precise iconographic comparisons exist for such a combined scene; however, it is clear that by placing the contest group on a platform, an effort has been made to link it to the *mušhuššu* and spade symbols which have been raised up on their own pedestal (Merrillees 2005: 59). Deliberately linking the two iconographies is suggestive of the kind of archival evidence referred to above, that use of these iconographies was more fluid and interrelated than our standard stylistic and chronological categories allow. Based on these discussions, as well as the fact that *iḫ-iir-dj-s* was a name in use from 700 B.C., it seems likely that the

seals in Figures 2a/b and 3a–b date to Dynasty XXVII, perhaps even to Darius I’s reign.<sup>17</sup>

#### 4. THE SEAL OF *w3ḫ-ib-rʿ*

Figure 4 shows our only source for this blue chalcedony cylinder, a drawing of an impression of the seal once owned by the Comte de Caylus, who had it until his death, at which point it may have passed into the Cabinet du Roi (Comte de Caylus 1761: 65–66, pl. XXII, I–II).<sup>18</sup> The scene shows an unbearded figure dressed in a Persian court robe with a headdress. In his left hand he holds a weapon and in his right he grasps a rearing lion. Next to this scene is a figure kneeling before a cartouche. Egyptian cartouches, such as the one shown here, regularly appear surmounted by a disk and feathers and with the ends of the rope tied together (here resembling a stand). Next to the cartouche are more hieroglyphs.

The drawing published by Caylus makes it difficult to ascertain the ancient engraver’s style of carving. This, together with the fact that we no longer know the whereabouts of the seal<sup>19</sup> and that no available photograph exists, prevents one from confidently assigning a specific artistic style to the seal; although the composition of the contest scene points to an Achaemenid period date. For all these reasons the seal is odd, and perhaps this helps explain why a drawing of it last appeared in the literature in 1886. However, it invites discussion in the context of the contest iconographies and hieroglyphic inscriptions discussed above.

Caylus recognised the signs on the seal as hieroglyphs, yet their meaning has not been discussed (Lajard 1847: 8; Ward 1910: 11). Within the cartouche are three hieroglyphs whose phonetic equivalents are *rʿ*, for the sun sign, *w3ḫ*, for the swab of fiber sign, and *ib*, for the heart sign, which together read *w3ḫ-ib-rʿ* (Petrie’s *uah-ab-ra*), Gr. Apries.<sup>20</sup> Next to the cartouche are four signs whose phonetic equivalents are *s3*, for the looped cord sign, *p*, for the stool of reed matting sign, *t*, for the bread sign, and *ḫ*, for the wick of twisted flax sign, which altogether reads *s3 pṯḫ* meaning “Ptah protects” or “the protection of Ptah”.<sup>21</sup> The entire inscription reads “Ptah protects *w3ḫ-ib-rʿ*”.

*w3ḫ-ib-rʿ* was a common personal name in use before the Saite period and continuing into the Ptolemaic period (c. 700–30 B.C.) (Ranke 1935: 72, no. 28; Lüdeckens 1980: 113). *w3ḫ-ib-rʿ* also happened to be the name of the pharaoh Apries (c. 589–570 B.C.),

the pharaoh who preceded Ahmose—also of Dynasty XXVI—whom we briefly discussed in relation to the inscription on Figure 1a/1b.<sup>22</sup> The signs on Figure 4 appear in a cartouche, which could mean we are meant to read them as the name of the pharaoh (cp. Gauthier 1916: 104–12). However, there are examples of this name written in a cartouche that refer to non-royal people (e.g., Petrie 1889: pl. 64, “Haa-ab-ra”). According to this reading *w3h-ib-r* would be a basiliphorous personal name, which reflects the practice of naming a child after a reigning or deceased monarch. Basiliphorous names were written in cartouches to refer to the royal namesake; and this practice was common during Dynasty XXVI.

The frequency of *w3h-ib-r* as a common personal name from the 8th century B.C. onwards, together with the basiliphorous naming practice known in Dynasty XXVI, points to the likelihood that the name on Figure 4 is that of a non-royal person from early in the Saite period. However, the seal’s iconography extends a dating of the seal to the First Persian period.

The garment of the hero on Figure 4 is drawn as two separate items: an ankle-length skirt and hip-length waistcoat. It seems more likely that the figure was actually carved wearing the Persian court robe with the sleeves pushed up to reveal his arms. The sleeves would then hang from either side of his body in long swags (as in Fig. 1a/b), which has been here conveyed as a long waistcoat. Although the style of carving on Figure 4 does not compare with any of the carving styles on the Treasury or Fortification sealings, those corpora are useful for comparing iconographies of dress and gesture. Examples of the Persian robe with sleeves pushed up and

hanging in swags, and a double central pleat and diagonal folds indicated on the lower part of the garment, are worn by heroes appearing in contest scenes on the Persepolis Fortification sealings (see Garrison and Root 2001: pl. 178, and in particular PFS 52, cat. no. 114; PFS 95, cat. no. 25; PFS 102, cat. no. 1; and PFS 632, cat. no. 143). The figure’s headdress is difficult to describe—a striated beret is close. Perhaps it was more of a turban-like headdress or a domed, flat or conical headdress, and, if so, could be compared to those worn by heroes on the Fortification sealings (see Garrison and Root 2001: pls. 186–87, and in particular PFS 971, cat. no. 171 for a “turban-like headdress”, PFS 1367s, cat. no. 211 for a “domed headdress”, PFS 4\*, cat. no. 292 for a “flat headdress”, and PFS 225, cat. no. 46 for a “conical headdress”). Overall, the gesture and dress of Figure 4 compares well with Treasury and Fortification sealings that depict a hero grasping an animal or monster with an outstretched arm while holding a weapon in the other hand, with that arm held down and away from his body (see Schmidt 1957: 32, and pl. 11=PTS 37; Garrison and Root 2001: PFS 1367, cat. no. 211; PFS 39s, cat. no. 221; PFS 139s, cat. no. 222, PFS 196, cat. no. 224; PFS 1428s, cat. no. 230; and PFS 959s, cat. no. 246).

The figure kneeling before the cartouche has been depicted on a small base with arms and hands raised in front of the face, palms facing away. While examples from all periods of Egyptian art attest to the frequency of this particular motif of a male figure kneeling and worshipping a king’s cartouche(s), similar-looking male figures that kneel and raise their arms with palms facing forward in worship, supplication or praise, are known from Persian-period monuments in Egypt. Good parallels for the kneeling figure on Figure 4 appear on two of Darius I’s four “canal stelae”, i.e., one from Tell el Maskhoutah, and another from Chalouf (Kabret) (Root 1979: 61–68 and pl. IX). The front faces of both these stelae are inscribed with hieroglyphs that commemorate the completion of the Suez Canal project by Darius. Above the inscription appear crenellated cartouches inscribed with the names of the different lands of the Persian empire; male figures, who kneel on top of the place names they represent, hold up their arms and raise their hands in front of their face, palms facing forward (cp. Posener 1936: pls. IV–V with actual fragments of the Chalouf (Kabret) stele on pls. VI–VII). The stelae display clear-cut Egyptian iconography, and the kneeling figure of Figure 4 is likely located within such a tradition.



Fig. 4. Drawing of impression of a blue chalcedony cylinder seal that reads *s3 pth W3h-ib-r*. Location and dimensions unknown. Drawing of impression from Comte de Caylus 1761: pl. XXII, I–II.



Caylus' own description of Figure 4 reveals that he was struck by the intermingling of Egyptian and Persian cultures, to the extent that he thought his seal could have been cut in Persepolis, or in Egypt by an artist of Persepolis.<sup>23</sup> It is possible that Figure 4 was cut during the reign of Apries and then recut at some point during the Achaemenid period; but that now seems unlikely, given the similarities ranging over the small group of seals presented here.

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> The four cylinder seals discussed here were each acquired by various museums or individuals, and all lack provenance. However, it is clear that these seals date to the Achaemenid period due to distinctive features of iconography. The exact dating of provenanced seals within this period is often difficult, and is obviously more so with unprovenanced material; therefore this article attempts to do no more than propose a general timeframe for the seals. The small group of seals under discussion are not meant to represent an exhaustive survey of Achaemenid period seals bearing hieroglyphic inscriptions.
- <sup>2</sup> An abbreviated version of this paper was presented at an Achaemenid Memphis workshop organised by Amélie Kuhrt and Stephen Quirke, held at the Department of History, University College London in 2002. Dominique Collon, Sue Davies, Mark Garrison, Cameron Petrie, Margaret Root, Harry Smith, Paul Taylor and two anonymous reviewers for *Iran* kindly provided helpful suggestions on subsequent drafts of the paper originally produced for that workshop. Tessa Rickards made the drawing for Figure 3 and drew the hieroglyphs that appear on the seal in Figure 2b.
- <sup>3</sup> Margaret Sax has suggested that the stone could have been artificially dyed in honey and then heated to produce banded brown and white stripes on the ends (see Merrillees 2005: 65, 147). The seal was bought by the British Museum in 1835 and drawings of it have been previously published by Cullimore 1842: pl. 20, no. 103; Micali 1844: tav. I, 5; Lajard 1847: pl. XIII, fig. 8; Ohnefalsch-Richter 1893: 428, fig. no. CIV, 13, and 425, fig. no. XCIX, 4; and Ward 1910: 337–38, fig. 1118.
- <sup>4</sup> For a description of the contest motif as one of “heroic encounter” as it occurs specifically in Achaemenid Persian art, see Garrison and Root 2001: 42–43; 53–60. See Collon's review of Garrison and Root 2001, in Collon 2003/2004: 443–45, for a critical analysis of the description “heroic encounter”.
- <sup>5</sup> Reclining creatures who support the contest figures are referred to in the secondary literature as “pedestal” creatures. Dusinger 1997: 106–9, has argued that in Achaemenid period seals, pedestal creatures appear either in contest or religious scenes; and that the pedestal creature motif was a favoured one on “Achaemenid-period seals inscribed with the name of the king (the so-called royal name seals, generally used not by the king himself but by very important imperial administrative offices)”; and that cases where the motif is found together with the crowned figure “seem to be special, particularly in the early history of the empire, appearing only in limited numbers outside the corpus of royal name seals....used by people at a very high social level.”
- <sup>6</sup> For the signs, see Gardiner 1957: 486, 545, *iḥ* (crescent moon)=N.12; 465, 544, *ms* (three foxes' skins tied together)=F.31.
- <sup>7</sup> Although now missing, this sealing was among others that had been received and registered at the Ashmolean Museum in 1910: its museum no. is recorded in the 1910 Register as 1910.601.
- <sup>8</sup> For this hieroglyph (crescent moon) with the same phonetic equivalent as N.12, (*iḥ*), see Gardiner 1957: 486, 545=N.11.
- <sup>9</sup> See Petrie's description of this seal (1910: 42), “[This fig.] is the most interesting of all Egyptian seals; the name is Aahmes, and the *mes* sign is figured as a foxes' skin with two foxes as supporters....”
- <sup>10</sup> Further, see Keel 1977: abb. 19, for an Egyptian parallel for the low-back animal-footed throne on ANE 89585. I am grateful to Dominique Collon for suggesting this reference. See Ohnefalsch-Richter 1893: 425, 428, for his interpretation of the archer figure on ANE 89585 as a deity.
- <sup>11</sup> Or, perhaps the owner of ANE 89585 was born of Persian and Egyptian parents: consider the Persian period stele from Saqqara. The face of this stele is divided into three parts: a lunette featuring a winged sun disk; the upper register showing a funerary scene featuring a mummiform male attended to by Anubis, Isis and Nephthys; and the lower register showing a presentation scene featuring a seated, bearded Persian dignitary approached by two Egyptian-garbed attendants. An inscription in hieroglyphs and Demotic runs along the bands dividing and framing the registers and names “Djedherbes, son of Artam, born of Tanofret”. See Mathieson *et al.* 1995: 26–41. The authors argue that the stele has been dedicated by the Egyptian-

- named son (Djedherbes) of a Persian father (Artam) and Egyptian mother (Tanofret); and that the offering scene shows the son approaching his seated father. Based on iconographic and stylistic features, they date the stele to the 6th–4th centuries B.C., and within that range possibly to Dynasty XXVII.
- <sup>12</sup> For the signs, see Gardiner 1957: 486, 545, *iḥ* (crescent moon)=N.11; 450, 544, *ir* (eye)=D.4; 533, 547, *dj* (conical loaf?)=X.8; 496, 545, *s* (bolt)=O.34.
- <sup>13</sup> This reading rests upon the idea that the first sign of the name is the moon sign (N.11) written upside down, which, though infrequent, does occur.
- <sup>14</sup> According to von der Osten 1957: 9, this seal belonged to the private collection of Hans Silvius von Aulock, who put his collection together from 1945–51. E. Borowski purchased von Aulock's seal collection, which was then sold by Christie's New York: see *Christie's* 2000: 162–63, lot no. 546, where the photograph of the cylinder does not show the hieroglyphic inscription, and where a brief description of the seal does not refer to the inscription.
- <sup>15</sup> The sign of the forearm holding a conical loaf (Gardiner 1957: 454, 544=D.37) has the same phonetic value (*dj*) as the conical loaf sign (X.8). Gardiner regarded these two signs as interchangeable.
- <sup>16</sup> Whereas both iconographies appear in Babylonian archival contexts as late as the second half of the 5th century B.C. (see Ehrenberg 2000: 312).
- <sup>17</sup> Merrillees 2005: 59, has dated the Achaemenid contest scene of ANE 89324 to c. 520 B.C.
- <sup>18</sup> Caylus described the stone as “agate d'un blanc qui tire sur le bleu”. The seal was also drawn and published by Micali 1844: tav. I, 5; Lajard 1847: pl. XXX, fig. 2; and Ménant 1886: 202, fig. 20.
- <sup>19</sup> Since at least 1847, the location of this seal has been unknown: see Lajard 1847: 8, “Autrefois dans le cabinet de feu le comte de Caylus. Possession actuel inconnu.”
- <sup>20</sup> For the signs, see Gardiner 1957: 485, 545, *r* (sun)=N.5; 525, 546, *w3ḥ* (swab of fiber)=V.29; 465, 544, *ib* (heart)=F.34.
- <sup>21</sup> For the signs, see Gardiner 1957: 523, 546, *s3* (looped cord serving as hobble for cattle)=V.16; 500, 546, *p* (stool of reed matting)=Q.3; 531, 547, *t* (bread)=X.1; 525, 546, *ḥ* (wick of twisted flax)=V.28.
- <sup>22</sup> *w3ḥ-ib-r* could also be the prenomen of Psammetichus I, who reigned at the beginning of Dynasty XXVI (c. 664–610 B.C.).
- <sup>23</sup> Comte de Caylus Caylus 1761: 65, “La figure qui combat le lion est absolument dans le goût que l'on voit sur les monuments de cette ville [Persepolis]: d'ailleurs cette action qui n'est point du tout Égyptienne, s'y trouve plusieurs fois représentée. Mais la figure de femme à genoux...est absolument Égyptienne, et les caractères représentés devant cette femme, sont des hiéroglyphes. Cet assemblage de goût ainsi que la gravure en creux, autorisent mon sentiment, et rendent ce petit monument très singulier et très précieux. Suivant ce que j'ai plusieurs fois avancé, cette amulette auroit été gravée à Persépolis, ou en Égypte, par un artiste de cette ville....”

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