



HALLOCK, RICHARD TREADWELL

HALLOCK, RICHARD TREADWELL (b. Passaic, New Jersey, 5 April 1906, d. Chicago, 20 November 1980), Elamitologist and Assyriologist, whose magnum opus, *Persepolis Fortification Tablets*, transformed the study of the languages and history of Achaemenid Persia.

Hallock earned a bachelor's degree at the University of Toronto in 1929, turned to the study of Assyriology in the Department of Oriental Languages at the University of Chicago, wrote a master's thesis under the supervision of Edward Chiera on the economy of Nuzi (unpublished), receiving the master's degree in 1931, and received the Ph.D. in 1934, after writing a dissertation that was later published as *The Chicago Syllabary and the Louvre Syllabary AO 7661*, *Assyriological Studies* 7, 1940.

In 1932, Chiera hired Hallock as an assistant on the Assyrian Dictionary project of the Oriental Institute of Chicago. Hallock was still a research assistant of the Assyrian Dictionary when he went on unpaid leave in the autumn of 1941, first as a civilian employee working on cryptography at the War Department in Washington, D.C., and later, after the United States entered World War II, as a second lieutenant in military intelligence, who "sometimes kept a colonel's chair warm overnight" (Hallock, 1977, p. 130). After the war ended, Hallock stayed on in a civilian intelligence job in Washington until 1947, when he returned to a reduced salary and uncertain future at the



Oriental Institute.

The Assyrian Dictionary remained his academic home until 1957. By then he was the project's editorial secretary, having seen the first two volumes through publication (1956-). He continued as a research associate of the Oriental Institute, then was named to the faculty of the University of Chicago as an associate professor in 1963. After *Persepolis Fortification Tablets* appeared, he was promoted to professor in 1970, and retired as professor emeritus in 1971. In 1972, he was elected a Corresponding Fellow of the British Academy, an honor that recognized both the achievement that his work on the Achaemenid Elamite texts represented and the impact that its results were beginning to have.

During the first half of his academic career, Hallock's publications were among the prolegomena of the *Assyrian Dictionary*, editions of syllabaries and grammatical texts that stem from the indigenous Mesopotamian tradition of scholarship. They included "Syllabary A" (1955), "Sa Vocabulary" (1955), "Old Babylonian Grammatical Texts" (1956), and "Neo-Babylonian Grammatical Texts" (1956), the last three with Benno Landsberger.

The publications of Hallock's later career, on the Achaemenid Elamite administrative texts from Persepolis, were the culmination of decades of work on paleography and epigraphy, philology and grammar, formal and functional analysis, glossing and cross-indexing, and curation of the tablets. The main group of tablets was found in 1934 in the northeast corner of the fortification wall at Persepolis during excavations supervised by Ernst Herzfeld. Herzfeld's reports of the find raised high hopes. There were said to be as many as 30,000 tablets and fragments, most of them in Elamite but some in Aramaic and a few in other languages. They were rich in Iranian names and administrative vocabulary transcribed into Elamite cuneiform and they carried hundreds of seal impressions that could supply a new frame of reference for understanding Achaemenid art. Those hopes were enhanced when George G. Cameron published parts of a smaller group of Elamite administrative tablets, found between 1936 and 1938 in the treasury at Persepolis during excavations directed by Erich Schmidt (Cameron, *Persepolis Treasury Tablets*, Oriental Institute Publications 65, Chicago, 1948). From 1937 on, a team that included Hallock, Cameron, and Pierre M. Purves worked on the Persepolis Fortification tablets under the direction of the Sumerologist Arno Poebel. They came to grips with the problems raised by a large corpus and poor preservation, a script that was troublesome even to seasoned cuneiformists, a language of



which there was little certain knowledge and about which there was even less working agreement, and a historical context so uncertain that even the king by whose regnal years the tablets were dated was a matter of argument. First Purves and then Cameron left the Oriental Institute, and the Fortification texts were left to Hallock's sole responsibility.

The first published results of his efforts were prolegomena on script and grammar, including "New Light from Persepolis" (1950), "Notes on Achaemenid Elamite" (1958), "The Finite Verb in Achaemenid Elamite" (1959), "A New Look at the Persepolis Treasury Tablets" (1960), "The Pronominal Suffixes in Achaemenid Elamite" (1962), "The Verbal Nouns in Achaemenid Elamite" (1965), and "The Verb *šara-* in Achaemenid Elamite" (1965). They were rounded out by the front and back matter of his *Persepolis Fortification Tablets* (1969), with terse statements on Achaemenid Elamite chronology, metrology, script and grammar, Iranian lexicon in Achaemenid Elamite transcription, and a comprehensive glossary of Achaemenid Elamite that covered not only the texts included in the volume itself, but also the Elamite versions of the Achaemenid royal inscriptions, the tablets from the Persepolis treasury that Cameron had published, assorted unpublished Fortification tablets, and the single known Achaemenid Elamite administrative text from Susa. The central part of the book, fastidious editions of more than 2,000 texts, multiplied the corpus of Achaemenid Elamite manifold. Hallock published a few corrections and thirty-three supplementary texts in "Selected Fortification Texts" in 1978. His last publications dealt with the historical, geographical, and administrative contents of the Fortification tablets, including "The Evidence of the Persepolis Tablets" (1971), "The Persepolis Fortification Archive" (1973), and "The Use of Seals . . ." (1977).

Hallock's academic seniors and contemporaries describe him as personally reticent, a trait carried over in published terseness, but also a trait that masks some of the effort required to achieve outwardly plain statements, reliable transliterations of thousands of texts selected from tens of thousands of intractable fragments, and reliable information of hundreds of seals from fragmentary and often similar impressions. The results were more important than Hallock's own characterization of the texts as adding "a little flesh to the picked-over bones of early Achaemenid history" suggests (*Camb. Hist. Iran* II, p. 588). The immediate consequences for Assyriology and cuneiform studies were slight, but the consequences for Old Iranian studies and for Achaemenid historical research by scholars rooted first in Greek and Roman texts were



profound.

Hallock had circulated lists of Iranian names and forms in the Fortification texts before publication, and so the first scholarly impact of the results was on the Old Iranian languages, etymology, onomastics, and administrative and kinship terminology. By contrast, the effect of such a large volume of new texts, accompanied by such a comprehensive glossary, on Elamite grammar and studies of the history of the Elamite language was surprisingly modest. Soon after *Persepolis Fortification Tablets* was published, Achaemenid historical scholarship turned to analysis and reconstruction of the local and regional administrative system controlled from Persepolis, reconstructions that were occasionally flawed but that nevertheless gradually settled on a sound understanding of general outlines. Historians and philologists then found in the Fortification texts a standard of reference for interpreting the scantier evidence for Achaemenid imperial intervention in the legal and administrative institutions of other complex societies of the empire, found in Egyptian, Aramaic, Babylonian, and Greek texts, and a source of new evidence for the highest levels of provincial political administration. These investigations gradually crowded out historical assumptions that treated the Achaemenid Empire as a mere political or fiscal veneer over the stagnation or demise of the ancient Orient. Subsequently, historical attention returned to the archive itself, broaching still unsettled questions of how information was transmitted, of how this archive was maintained, of how knowledge of cuneiform administrative archives from earlier Near Eastern states can be brought to bear on interpreting the Persepolis documents, and what can be confidently inferred from the available sample (a large volume of texts with narrow concerns from a short interval) about other administrative apparatuses at Persepolis, about parallel organizations elsewhere in the empire using other forms of recording to serve comparable functions, and about general imperial communications, control, extraction, and outlays.

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The *Annual Report of the Oriental Institute* for 1979-80, dedicated to Hallock, appeared shortly after his death; the dedication was accompanied by a brief necrology. An obituary by John Anthony Brinkman appeared in *Archiv für Orientforschung* 28, 1981-82, p. 276.