

# Sasanian Bullae

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Bullae (sig. bulla), are clay or bitumen impression of seals that are usually attached to documents or parcels (or the strings used to bound them) and show the identity of the author or witness of the document or the owner of the merchandise. The Middle Persian word for bulla, *gil muhrag* is known to us from an Iranian loanword in Aramaic Talmud (N. Frye). A number of clay bullae from the Sasanian era have been discovered at various Sasanian sites such as *Takht-e Suleiman* (D. Huff) and *Qasr-e Abu Nasr* (P. Harper). These have been of much importance in identifying these sites as Sasanian remains (D. Huff). Sasanian bullae have also been discovered from Transoxiana, bearing inscriptions in Sogdian (N. Frye). Bullae are important in Sasanian onomastics, assisting us in identifying personal names, government offices, and religious positions (R. Frye).

Important collections of bullae, discovered in unknown sites and presented by dealers, now exist in the Pahlavi Archive of the University of California, Berkeley, and Freie Universität Berlin (G. Azarpay; D. Weber). The UC Berkeley collection, residing in the Bancroft Library, is a collection of 390 bullae and 260 manuscripts that have been dated to the period AD 600-888 using C14 dating method. This collection mainly consists of economic documents and receipt for goods, which await preparation and publication by Prof. Ph. Gignoux and Dr. R. Gyselen. Most of the bullae in this collection are separated from the manuscripts, but 82 documents still have their bullae attached, with two of the manuscripts each having two clay bullae attached. (G. Azarpay). The Berlin collection is also awaiting publication by D. Weber in a forthcoming issue of *Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum*. Smaller collections, including 71 bullae and a number of manuscripts in California Museum of Ancient Art have also been partially studied and published by Prof. Ph. Gignoux.

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