

This pdf is a digital offprint of your contribution in G. Chambon, M. Guichard & A.-I. Langlois (eds), *De l'argile au numérique. Mélanges assyriologiques en l'honneur de Dominique Charpin*, ISBN 978-90-429-3872-4.

The copyright on this publication belongs to Peeters Publishers.

As author you are licensed to make printed copies of the pdf or to send the unaltered pdf file to up to 50 relations. You may not publish this pdf on the World Wide Web – including websites such as academia.edu and open-access repositories – until three years after publication. Please ensure that anyone receiving an offprint from you observes these rules as well.

If you wish to publish your article immediately on open-access sites, please contact the publisher with regard to the payment of the article processing fee.

For queries about offprints, copyright and republication of your article, please contact the publisher via [peeters@peeters-leuven.be](mailto:peeters@peeters-leuven.be)

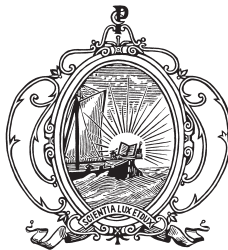
PIPOAC 3

# DE L'ARGILE AU NUMÉRIQUE

MÉLANGES ASSYRIOLOGIQUES  
EN L'HONNEUR  
DE DOMINIQUE CHARPIN

édités par  
Grégory Chambon, Michaël Guichard  
et Anne-Isabelle Langlois

avec la participation de  
Thomas Römer et Nele Ziegler



PEETERS  
LEUVEN – PARIS – BRISTOL, CT  
2019

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Avant-propos. . . . .	v
Bibliographie de Dominique Charpin. . . . .	vii
ABDALLAH, F., Dynasties du Yamhad (Halab = Alep) . . . . .	1
ALEXANDROV, B., Posing a Question in Akkadian: <i>Wh-</i> and Other Interrogatives in Old Babylonian Letters. . . . .	13
ARKHIPOV, I., <i>Ittum</i> « signe » et <i>ittum</i> « moment » en paléobabylonien . . . . .	47
ATTINGER, P., Našše A. . . . .	79
BÉRANGER, M., Du signe à l'enveloppe. L'enseignement du genre épistolaire à l'époque amorrite d'après un nouveau modèle de lettre scolaire avec enveloppe . . . . .	125
BEYER, D., Une empreinte de sceau-cylindre du palais de Mari .	169
CANKIK-KIRSCHBAUM, E., <sup>D</sup> GU <sub>4</sub> -DUMU- <sup>D</sup> UTU in Assur in mittelassyrischer Zeit . . . . .	175
CAUBET, A. & YON, M., Importation asiatique en Grèce mycénienne. La « <i>Combat Agate</i> » de Pylos . . . . .	189
CHALENDAR, V., Un serment dur à avaler, les manifestations pathologiques du serment. . . . .	203
CHAMBON, G. & GUICHARD, M., Le monde en tableaux (I) : une étude des tablettes-registres de la grande fête d'Eštar à Mari. . . . .	225
COHEN, Y., Forging an Empire: The Land of Aštata According to the Šattiwaza Treaty (CTH 51) and Additional Sources. . .	279
COUSIN, L., Entre Ur et Eridu : réflexions autour d'une brique d'Amar-Sin . . . . .	299
DE BOER, R., Pīhatni-īpiq, an official in the service of king Sumu-El of Larsa . . . . .	307
DELNERO, P., Sound and Meaning in Sumerian Cultic Laments .	315
DÉMARE-LAFONT, S., Équité et légalité à Emar . . . . .	357
DURAND, J.-M., Un joint dans les textes de Mari. . . . .	373

FIETTE, B., Des bateaux pour Babylone . . . . .	383
FLEMING, D., Only the <i>maš'artu</i> -Priestess Speaks: The Emar Installation Rites in Scribal Context . . . . .	401
FOSTER, B., Language Study and the Beginnings of the Collège de France . . . . .	425
HEESSEL, N., Traum was Schönes! . . . . .	441
HUOT, J.-L., Le mystère des remparts de Larsa . . . . .	455
JACQUET, A. & RECULEAU, H., Tablettes paléo-babyloniennes de la collection R. F. Harper conservées à l'Oriental Institute de l'Université de Chicago . . . . .	469
JOANNÈS, F., « Mettez-vous en quête de ce sceau ! » . . . . .	491
JURSA, M., A 'Prisoner Text' from Birmingham . . . . .	507
LACAMBRE, D., Samsī-Addu et la constitution de son empire : nouvelles données . . . . .	513
LANGLOIS, A.-I., Quelques ânes en plus... . . . . .	545
LAUINGER, J., Contribution to a Diplomatics of the Amarna Letters from the Levant: « la mise en page ». . . . .	563
LION, B., Mariages et archives dans le Royaume d'Arraphe . . .	583
LYONNET, B., La « céramique du Khabur » et ses relations orientales : les routes de l'étain . . . . .	613
MARTI, L., Les archives de Tell Munbâqa : le cas de la maison B . . . . .	639
MAUL, S., Eidesleistung und Selbstverfluchung. Überlegungen zu KAR 373 (VAT 8719) . . . . .	655
MICHALOWSKI, P., Memories of Rim-Sin II . . . . .	669
MOLINA, M., Sumerian Judicial Procedures against Tomb Robbers	693
NEBIOLO, F., <i>Iprum</i> , <i>iptirum</i> ed altre richieste: una lettera inedita dalla collezione dell'Iraq Museum di Baghdad . . . . .	713
NEUMANN, H., Bemerkungen zur Identität und Rolle des <i>qajjāp(ān)um</i> in § 5/6 des Edikts Ammi-šaduqa . . . . .	731
NICOLLE, C., La formation d'une culture régionale en Djézireh, le témoignage d'une tombe de guerrier de la période amorrite	739
OTTO, A., Official Seal Motifs at Larsa and Ur in the 19 <sup>th</sup> Century BC . . . . .	763
OWEN, D., 'Death for Default' Redux. Akkadian Field Cultivation and Other Akkadian Contracts from Iri-Saġrig . . . . .	777

PARPOLA, S., The Sumerian 2 <sup>nd</sup> Person Pronoun, and Latin and French Morphophonemics . . . . .	799
POZZER, K., Les divinités au féminin – une étude des sceaux-cylindres mésopotamiens . . . . .	813
RADNER, K., Mistakes were Made ... on the Throne base of Shalmaneser III of Assyria . . . . .	833
RAMEZ, M., « Tu représenteras parfaitement la force de mon héroïsme ! » La diorite comme vecteur de l'idéologie royale au pays de Sumer et d'Akkad (III <sup>e</sup> -II <sup>e</sup> millénaires av. J.-C.)	841
ROTH, M., Seductress or Victim? Another Look at Laws of Ur-Namma §§6-8 . . . . .	879
SALLABERGER, W., Who Is Elite? Two Exemplary Cases from Early Bronze Age Syro-Mesopotamia . . . . .	893
SASSON, J., Vile Threat: The Rhetoric of a Marital Spat . . . . .	923
SHIBATA, D., The Gods of Ṭabetu during the Middle Assyrian Period and their Genealogy . . . . .	943
STEINKELLER, P., Texts, Art and Archaeology: An Archaic Plaque from Mari and the Sumerian Birth-Goddess Ninhursag . . . . .	977
STOL, M., Old Babylonian <i>kišdātum</i> , “what one may get” . . . . .	1013
TANRET, M., Gimil-Marduk. Une carrière de juge ou un juge de carrière ? . . . . .	1031
THOMAS, A., L'adorant de Larsa au Louvre . . . . .	1059
VAN KOPPEN, F., Itur-Asdu of River Silakku. A Contribution to the Kingship of Hammurabi of Babylon . . . . .	1081
VAN LERBERGHE, K., Abiešuh's Year Four . . . . .	1103
VELDHUIS, N., Word Studies: Ur III and ePSD2 . . . . .	1113
WASSERMAN, N., Mesopotamian Underwear and Undergarments	1125
WESZELI, M., Two Dossiers of Boat Owners and Hirers of Small Watercraft from the Area of Yahrurum šaplûm . . . . .	1145
WILHELM, G., Mari hurr. Nr. 8 . . . . .	1181
YAMADA, S., Sim'alites at Ṭabatam and the Origin of the Kingdom of the “Land of Hana” . . . . .	1189
ZGOLL, A., Mythos als rituell aufgeführtes Drama. Inthronisation, Tempelschöpfung und Stadtgründung im altbabylonischen Lied auf Bazi . . . . .	1209
ZIEGLER, N., La <i>qadištum</i> dépouillée . . . . .	1243

## OFFICIAL SEAL MOTIFS AT LARSA AND UR IN THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY BC

Adelheid OTTO\*

Seals and sealings are certainly one of the most effective media to get access to behaviours and beliefs of the ancient Near Eastern people. It is therefore a strange fact that many archaeologists are not keen to study these minute but meaningful icons, and that even fewer Assyriologists are fond of deciphering the seal inscriptions on sealings. One reason might be that the work with sealings means studying for hours and hours small clay fragments, which bear only tiny parts of shallow images and cuneiform signs and are often obliterated by deep cuneiform writing or impurities of the clay. Dominique Charpin is exceptional also in this respect, since he has been passionate about deciphering even the faintest traces of seal legends from Mari, Ur and other sites. We share the passion for sealings, and this article is in fact the outcome of his own reading of two very specific seal legends on sealings from Ur which we excavated recently. I dedicate this study to him in deep admiration for his achievements in the field of Near Eastern studies and with infinite thank for his friendship.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The mentioning of kings' names allows for the most accurate dating of any material in the Ancient Near East. Seals, which identify their owner as a member of the royal family or apparatus, are our most precious tools for dating purposes. They are even more reliable than seal impressions on dated tablets, since those allow only for a *terminus ante quem*. Therefore, it is of great importance, that the impressions of two seals of servants of Larsa kings have been found recently at Ur. They date to the Isin Larsa- or early Old Babylonian period, more precisely to two specific Larsa kings, one of whom reigned two years only and the other one only nine months. Thus they represent a stroke of luck concerning precisely

\* Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, München.

dated seals. On the one hand, the seals close a gap in our knowledge about official Larsa seals, since one of them is the first known seal of a servant of king Šilli-Adad. On the other hand, they give new answers to the question, when the Old Babylonian standard seal motif for the members of the royal apparatus became accepted and replaced the old seal motif which had been perpetuated since the Ur III period. We will pursue this question in the following, by integrating the two seals in the line of the hitherto known seals of servants of the Larsa kings.

## 2. NEW SEALINGS FROM UR

New excavations at Ur have been conducted under the direction of Elizabeth Stone (Stony Brook University NY) since 2015.<sup>1</sup> Within this project, a team of LMU Munich conducted a geophysical survey and a small-scale excavation in March-April 2017.<sup>2</sup> We excavated partly one early Old Babylonian house, which was situated at the southern end of the South Mound (Fig. 1). This area close to the city wall and maximal distant from Woolley's areas AH and EM was chosen in order to investigate if a house and its inhabitants near the periphery differed functionally, socially or economically from those in the city center. Only the southern part of the house, comprising eight rooms, was excavated, the northern part was only traced by scraping and is awaiting further excavation.

Around 45 sealed labels and tablet cases were found in the house, most of them lying in a heap of waste in Room 5 (Fig. 2 a: the room in the middle). They lay mixed with c. 40 cuneiform tablets, numerous sherds and animal bones (Fig. 2 a-b). Clearly, most of the worthless remains of the house had been thrown away here when the house was abandoned and cleared at the end of phase 3. This indicates a severe break in the history of the house, since the house was massively changed and the floors rised in the following phase 4.

The associated cuneiform documents — letters and especially the seal legends, which have been deciphered by Dominique Charpin<sup>3</sup> — suggest

<sup>1</sup> We thank Elizabeth Stone for the permission to participate in her excavation project at Ur. Our thanks go also to the Vice Minister Dr. Qais Rasheed for permitting our participation. For the new project see Stone & Zimansky 2016.

<sup>2</sup> We thank all the members of the team for their enormous efforts, and the Gerda Henkel Stiftung for the financial support.

<sup>3</sup> I am very grateful to him for conveying his results to me. We are presently preparing the final publication of all the sealings.

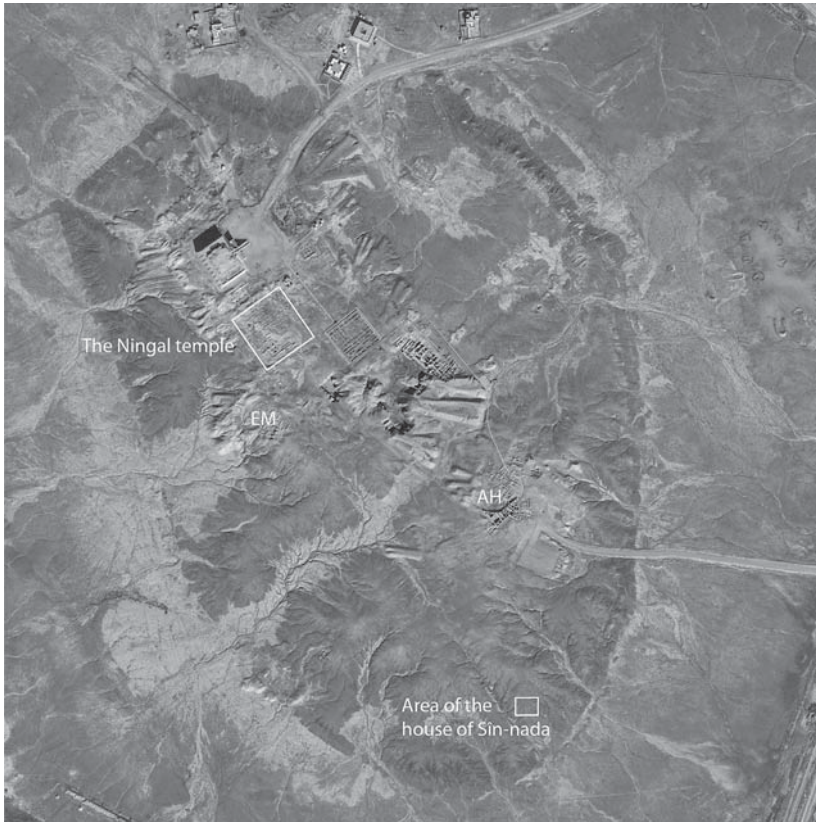


Fig. 1. Situation of *Sîn-nada*'s house on the South Mound of Ur and the location of the Ningal temple in the Giparku (Map by B. Einwag).

that the house was inhabited during Phase 3 by a man called *Sîn-nada*, clearly a member of the local elite. Even his profession is known from his unusually long seal inscription of five lines<sup>4</sup>: he is named a scribe and the intendant (UGULA É) of the important Ningal temple, which constituted a part of the Giparku in the heart of the sacred area.<sup>5</sup> It is

<sup>4</sup> The pure length of seal inscription is already a certain indicator for the social position of a seal owner. The basic informations of a seal legend are the name and filiation; if the individual is on duty for the king, he indicates his servanthship in a third line. Titles and professions are often indicated if the individual is on duty in the temple.

<sup>5</sup> For the identification of the Ningal temple at the Gipar-ku see Woolley & Mallowan 1967, p. 40-63, Heinrich 1982, p. 185-188 and Charpin 1986, p. 192-220.



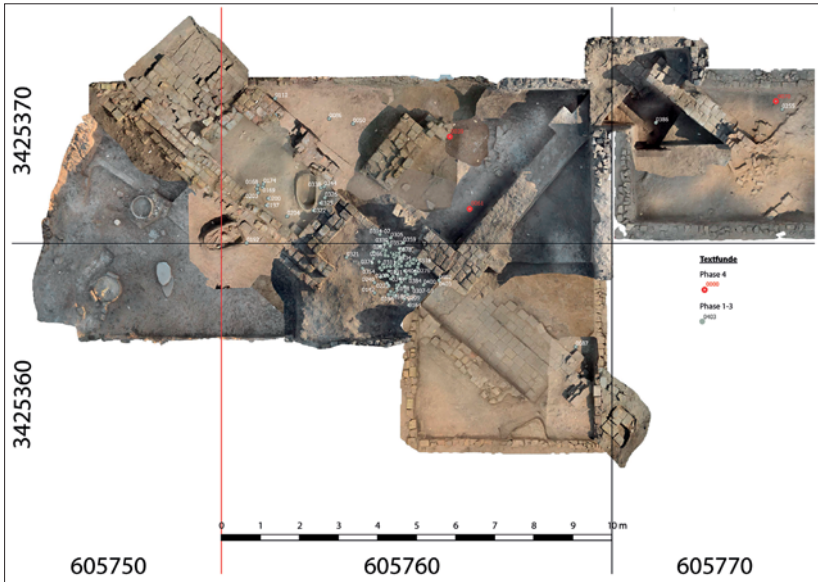


Fig. 2a. The partially excavated house of Sin-nada (March 2017) with findspots of tablets, tablet cases and labels (Map by M. Gruber).



Fig. 2b. A fragment of a tablet case, sealed with Sin-nada's second seal, in situ near an animal's jaw.

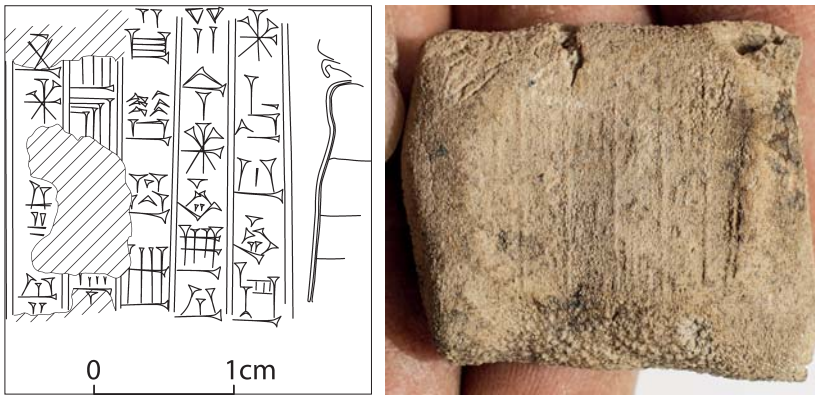


Fig. 3. Photo and drawing of Seal 1 of Sîn-nada (Servant of Sîn-eribam) (Photo by P. Zimansky and drawing of inscription by D. Charpin).

interesting to note that the intendant's home was far away from EM where many members of the clergy were living, and that his home was situated far away from his „office“, nearly at the opposite end of the city (see Fig. 1).

### 2.1. *The two seals of Sîn-nada, intendant of the Ningal temple*

Interestingly, the impressions of two different seals of Sîn-nada are attested. Apparently, he owned his first seal (Seal 1), when he was on duty for king Sîn-eribam, and he possessed the second seal (Seal 2), when Šilli-Adad reigned for 9 months only.

Seal 1 (Fig. 3) is attested only from impressions on a rectangular tablet label.<sup>6</sup> The obverse and reverse of the label bore the impression of the seal. However, when the seal was rolled over the label, care was given only to the seal inscription of five lines, not to the seal image. Therefore, only the faint traces of the backside of a suppliant goddess are visible to the right of the inscription case. The seal cylinder must have been at least 2.5 cm high, since the preserved fragment measures 2.2 cm in height. Although the seal image is admittedly not well preserved, the seal motif can be reconstructed with great probability. A suppliant goddess, turning right and depicted to the right of an inscription case, is attested – at least in this period – nearly exclusively in audience scenes, rarely offering

<sup>6</sup> Tablet label no. 334, clay with two cord holes, 3.4 × 3.0 × 1.45 cm.

scenes, in front of the enthroned king or god (see for comparisons Figs. 5 a-d, i, k). The inscription reads: *Sîn-nada*, son of *Igianakezu*, scribe, intendant (*UGULA É*) of the *Ningal* temple, servant of *Sîn-eribam* (reading and drawing of the inscription: courtesy of D. Charpin). Since *Sîn-eribam* reigned only for two years in 1842-41 (MC), this gives a precise date for this seal.

Seal 2 (Fig. 4) is known from 15 envelope fragments. The seal must have been 2.6 cm high with a diameter of 1.3 cm. The image shows the victorious king (or king with the mace) facing the suppliant goddess and an inscription of five lines. The traces of a 2.5 mm wide metal cap, nicely decorated with a fine herringbone pattern, has left traces on several impressions. The inscription reads: *Sîn-nada*, son of *Igianakezu*, scribe, *UGULA É* of the *Ningal* temple, servant of *Šilli-Adad* (reading and drawing of the inscription: courtesy of D. Charpin).<sup>7</sup>

King *Šilli-Adad* had reigned for a few months only, when the Amorite *Kudur-mabuk* conquered *Ur* and *Larsa* in 1835 (MC), removed *Šilli-Adad* and installed his son *Warad-Sîn* as the new king of *Larsa* and *Ur*.<sup>8</sup> This gives us on the one hand a very precise date of this seal. On the other hand, it is striking that this seal is the latest dated object within the house, before it was abandoned. Therefore, our hypothesis is, that the political turmoils following the change of regimes had direct impact on *Sîn-nada*, who belonged to the former king's apparatus. We suppose that he had to leave his house and perhaps even *Ur*, before his house was taken over by other people.

As we have already seen, *Sîn-nada* owned first an official seal indicating his service to king *Sîn-eribam*, and he got a new seal when *Šilli-Adad* ascended the throne. But although the two seals are only 6-7 years distant in time, different scenes are depicted: his first seal must have shown an audience scene to the enthroned king, his second seal showed the victorious king facing the suppliant goddess. Why had he chosen a different motif for his second seal? Was everybody free to choose his favourite seal motif? Were these motifs usual for officials of the kings?

<sup>7</sup> During his service for *Šilli-Adad* he was probably involved in the restoration work at the *Ningal* temple, which is reported in RIME 4, E4.2.12.2 (Frayne 1990, p. 2000-2001).

<sup>8</sup> Charpin 2004, p. 107, 116-118, 385-387.

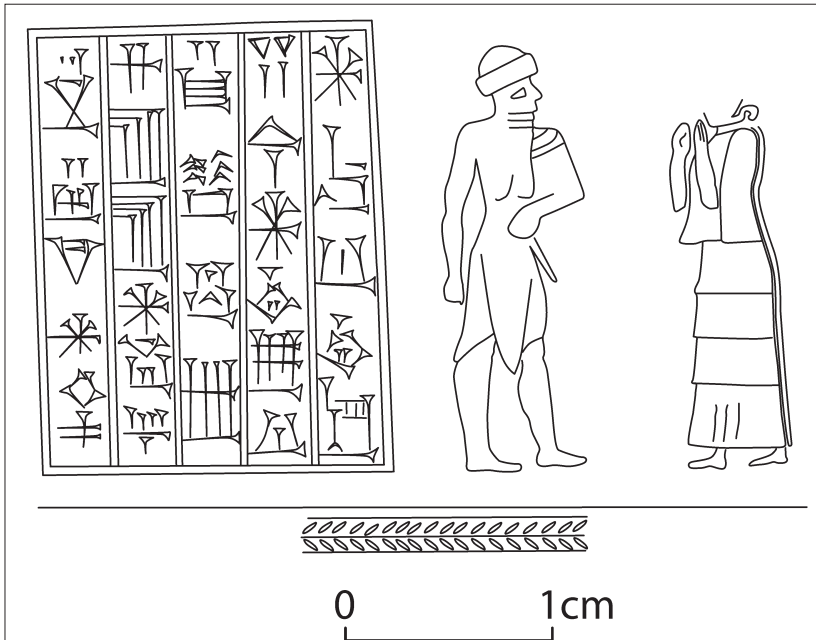


Fig. 4. Photos and drawing of Seal 2 of Šin-nada (Servant of Šilli-Adad) (Photos by P. Zimansky and drawing of inscription by D. Charpin).

### 3. SEALS OF SERVANTS OF LARSA KINGS FROM GUNGUNUM TO RÎM-SÎN

Several seals of servants of the Larsa kings or of members of the royal family are known, most of them from their impressions on tablets and labels. They have been dealt with — among others — by Edith Porada (1950), Lamia al-Gailani Werr (1988), and Felix Blocher (1992). For the purpose of this study, most of the hitherto known examples were assembled on Figure 5.<sup>9</sup> At least one seal impression has now been known from every king from Gungunum (1932-1906) until Rîm-Sîn I (1822-1763). Thanks to Sîn-nada's second seal, which fills the gap at the time of Šilli-Adad, only from the time of Sîn-iqīšam (1840-36) there is no seal known so far.

Several seals show the audience scene: a worshipper in a long garment, beardless and shaven-headed or wearing a cap, is facing the seated king, seldom a god. Usually the worshipper stands with hands clasped, exceptionally he raises one hand in adoration or offers a kid or a liquid. These seals belong to servants of Gungunum (1932-1906) (Fig. 5 a-c)<sup>10</sup>, Abi-sarê (1905-1895) (Fig. 5 d-e)<sup>11</sup>, Sumu-el (1894-1866) (Fig. 5 f-h)<sup>12</sup>, Nûr-Adad (1965-50) (Fig. 5 i)<sup>13</sup>, Sîn-iddinam (1849-1843) (Fig. 5 k)<sup>14</sup> and our friend Sîn-nada, servant of Sîn-eribam (1842-41) (Fig. 5 l).

This motif, however, is not attested on seals of servants or court members after Sîn-eribam. From the time of Šilli-Adad (1835) onwards, only the scene of the victorious king facing the suppliant goddess is attested so far on their seals (Fig. 5 n). The seal of king Warad-Sîn (1834-1823) himself — although only fragmentarily preserved — clearly must have shown this image (Fig. 5 o), as does the seal of his servant (Fig. 5 p).<sup>15</sup> The seals of Rîm-Sîn's wife Beltani (Fig. 5 q) and a servant of Rîm-Sîn (Fig. 5 r) also show this motif.<sup>16</sup>

There has been an intensive discussion for the past 100 years how to interpret this figure, which was so common in the Old Babylonian period,

<sup>9</sup> This collection is not complete. Unfortunately, a thorough collection and study of all Mesopotamian servants' seals is still missing today, although the depicted themes are essential not only for our understanding of the ideological concepts of the regimes.

<sup>10</sup> Blocher 1992, Nos. 13-17.

<sup>11</sup> Blocher 1992, Nos. 23, 37.

<sup>12</sup> Blocher 1992, Nos. 48, 36; Buchanan 1981, No. 753.

<sup>13</sup> Porada 1950, Fig. 3.

<sup>14</sup> Porada 1950, Fig. 2.

<sup>15</sup> Blocher 1992, Nos. 76, 97.

<sup>16</sup> Moortgat 1940, No. 322; Buchanan 1981, No. 787.

mainly but not exclusively on cylinder seals. Since we cannot go into details here, it suffices to say that the total of arguments points to the interpretation of the motif as one of the several manifestations of the king or the royal concept, namely the king, who as the continuously successful conquerer and leader of his troops symbolized the military powerful “victorious king”. The earliest depictions are attested on a seal dating to Bur-Sîn of Isin (1897-76), but the figure seems to have appeared nearly at the same time also in Northern Mesopotamia, as the seal of Zinuba, son of Shakkanakku Iddin-ilum of Mari (c. 1870-50), shows.<sup>17</sup> The standardized form – a kilted figure with a brimmed hat, wind-blown hair, holding a weapon in the left hand, seems to have been canonized after 1890 BC. The type goes ultimately back to Naram-Sîn’s victorious image, which is reported e.g. on his famous stele.

At Larsa, the standardized form of the victorious king appears for the first time on the seal of a servant of Nûr-Adad (Fig. 5 j).<sup>18</sup> Although the figure of the victorious king has been preserved only, it is quite certain that he had been standing opposite the suppliant goddess, since the back of the seated king is not visible close to the inscription case as would be usual in an audience scene. Interestingly, another seal of a servant of the same king Nûr-Adad showed the traditional standard scene of the audience in front of the seated king (Fig. 5 i).<sup>19</sup> Also from the time of Sîn-eribam one seal of a servant is known which depicts the victorious king opposite suppliant goddess theme (Fig. 5 m).<sup>20</sup> Clearly, servants’ seals showing the audience scene and the victorious king scene appeared side by side under these kings.

There is no attestation of the victorious king scene at Larsa earlier than Nûr-Adad. Only one seal of a servant of Sumu-El shows the unique depiction of a king with a brimmed hat and a short kilt (Fig. 5 h). Although the figure resembles the victorious king in many respects, it has a few unusual features such as his right arm which is bent and not hanging down, the tip of his kilt between the legs which is missing, and his beard which is not wind-blown. It seems as if the conventions about how precisely to depict the victorious king had not been fully established by then. Only later it became standardized and quasi frozen in its features

<sup>17</sup> For the earliest depiction on a seal of a servant of Bur-Sîn, which has been found at Ur, see Legrain 1951, No. 540. For Zinuba see Durand & Otto 2008.

<sup>18</sup> Porada 1950, Fig. 6.

<sup>19</sup> Porada 1950, Fig. 3.

<sup>20</sup> Al-Gailani 1980, No. 19.



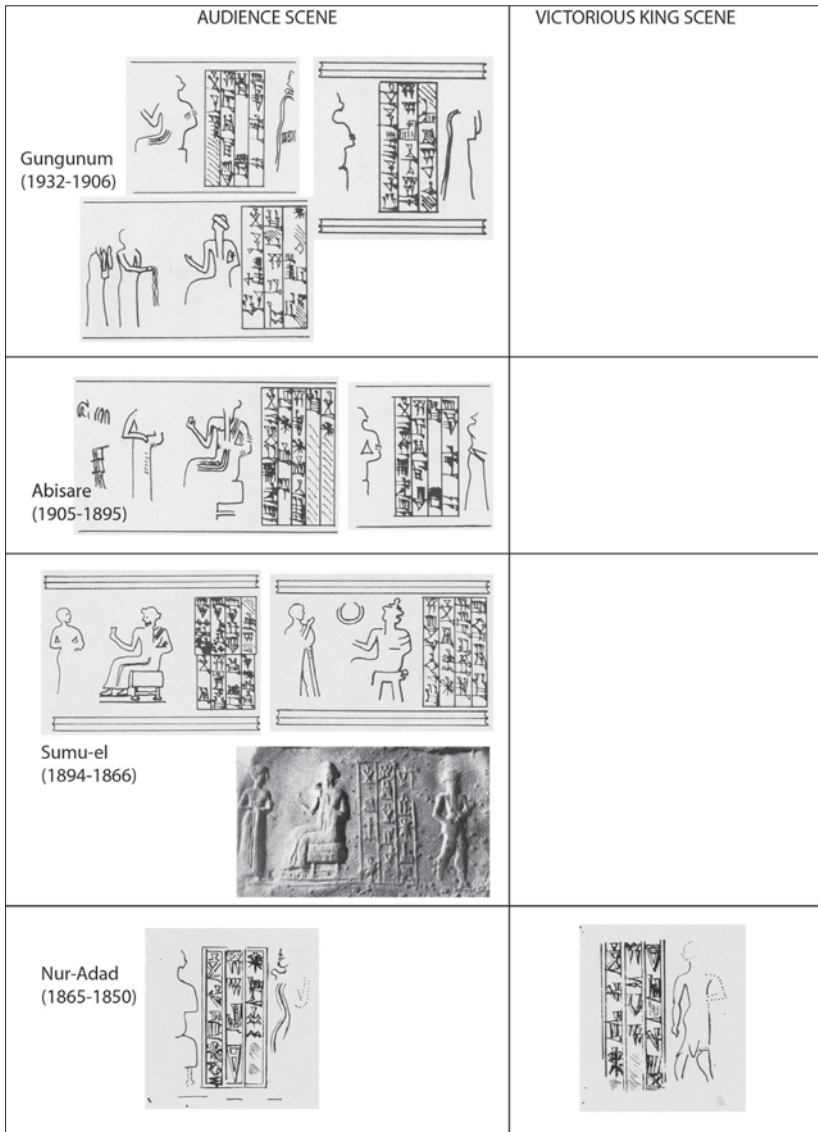




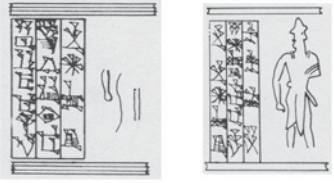
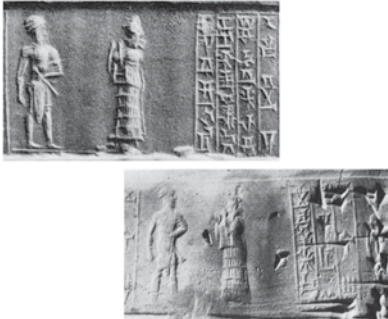


Fig. 5 a-j. Seals of servants of Larsa kings or the royal family (after al-Gailani Werr 1988, Blocher 1992, Buchanan 1981, Moortgat 1940, Porada 1950).

AUDIENCE SCENE	VICTORIOUS KING SCENE
<p>Sin-iddinam (1849-1843)</p> 	
<p>Sin-eribam (1842-1841)</p> 	
<p>Šilli-Adad (1835)</p>	
<p>Warad-Sin (1834-1823)</p>	
<p>Rîm-Sîn (1822-1763)</p>	

k

l m

n

o p

q

r

Fig. 5 k-r. Seals of servants of Larsa kings or the royal family (after al-Gailani Werr 1988, Blocher 1992, Buchanan 1981, Moortgat 1940, Porada 1950).



and appearance, and became the most typical standard motif for royals and their apparatus throughout the Old Babylonian period.

It seems that nearly all the seals of servants of Larsa kings from at least 1930 onwards until at least 1841 bore the motif of the audience scene, while servants' seals from 1835 onwards show uniquely the victorious king facing the suppliant goddess. There seems to have been a 25 years period of overlapping of the two motifs between 1865 and 1841.

If we consider the large range of seal motifs which was available in the early Old Babylonian period even in South Babylonia (e.g. the contest scene, the presentation scene with a leading goddess, offering to or adoration of standing deities, several scenes on a seal etc.<sup>21</sup>), the limitation of the servants' seals to two motifs only is striking and cannot be explained by pure chance. More likely there existed the idea of an official seal motif for the king's servants or for royal bureau seals, as has already been proven for other periods and regions.<sup>22</sup> We may therefore conclude that these two scenes were chosen on purpose for the officials who were on duty for the king.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

There existed specific coats of arms already in the early Old Babylonian period: motifs which were used mainly by officials who were in service of the king or held other high ranking positions. At Larsa this was the traditional audience scene, which was maintained until 1841. From 1865 onwards we see a second motif appear side by side which was later to become the unique coat of arms not only at Larsa, but in whole Lower and Upper Mesopotamia: the victorious king facing the suppliant goddess and thus referring to the king's piety.<sup>23</sup>

The usefulness of a coat of arms-like standard seal motif for the royal apparatus is immediately understandable for everyone who has dealt with sealing and seal impressions on tablets and labels today, and this was

<sup>21</sup> See Blocher 1992 for an overview.

<sup>22</sup> Official seal motifs for servants of the royal court certainly existed in Northern Mesopotamia and Syria from the time of Samsi-Addu onwards (Otto 2000, p. 173-178) and in Assyria from the 9<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> century, where the royal office seal (the "royal seal type"), of which dozens of examples were in use in numerous offices, depicted the king stabbing a lion (Herbordt 1992, p. 123-136).

<sup>23</sup> In view of the North Mesopotamian model, it appears that also in South Mesopotamian kingdoms high ranking officials' seals were adorned with a sort of "coat of arms".

certainly not much different in the second millennium BC: Even if a tiny part of the motif only was visible or if it was impossible to decipher the inscription, the official character of the sealed document became immediately apparent. It functioned like a coat of arms which allowed to distinguish between documents which had been verified by a high official and others which had been issued by other people on duty and therefore facilitated administrative and legal procedures.<sup>24</sup>

But beyond these utilitarian considerations, there must have been more profound, ideological reasons why the choice of motifs was so restricted, and why the traditional motif was replaced by another motif, which became equally obligatory for officials. The audience motif goes back to the Ur III dynasty, when it was one of the most favored scenes on officials' seals (Winter 1987). This motif was apparently not changed in the early Larsa period, except for a few stylistic and antiquarian details. Possibly it was maintained on purpose, in order to underline visibly the claim of the Larsa kings to be the rightful heirs of the Ur III empire. Already Edith Porada (1950) had claimed due to seal impressions of the time of Sîn-iddinam of Larsa that the shift from Ur III iconography to Old Babylonian iconography occurred in the middle of the Larsa period only, around 1850 BC.

It is impossible to know if this was connected to the rising of the Amorites or if the Amorite kings just resumed already present motifs. But it seems that the Amorite Larsa kings were wise enough not to invent completely new images for their seals, but to maintain the rather modern motif of the victorious king, which had been used by a few servants already before. It is not difficult to imagine why the Amorite newcomers at Larsa and Ur broke with the centuries old Sumerian traditions — which had been perpetuated not only in the coats of arms — and favored the motif of the victorious king, which refers to the powerful Akkadian king Naram-Sîn who had established the largest empire so far in the Near East.

<sup>24</sup> This seems to be clear from the study of seals in the North Mesopotamian kingdom of Samsi-Addu (Otto 2004). From the study of the seals which were used in the palace at Tuttul/Tall Bi'a it seems that other people on duty used private seals, even if they served in the royal palace.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Al-Gailani Werr L., 1988: *Studies in the Chronology and Regional Style of Old Babylonian Cylinder Seals*, BiMes 23, Malibu.
- Blocher F., 1992: *Siegelabrollungen auf frühaltbabylonischen Tontafeln in der Yale Babylonian Collection*, MVS 9, München/Wien.
- Buchanan B., 1981: *Early Near Eastern Seals in the Yale Babylonian Collection*, New Haven/London.
- Charpin D., 1986: *Le Clergé d'Ur au siècle d'Hammurabi (19<sup>e</sup>-18<sup>e</sup> siècles av. J.-C.)*, Genève/Paris.
- 2004: "Histoire politique du Proche-Orient amorrite (2002-1595)", in D. Charpin, D. O. Edzard & M. Stol (eds.), *Mesopotamien. Die altbabylonische Zeit*, OBO 160/4, Fribourg/Göttingen, p. 25-480.
- Collon D., 1986: *Catalogue of the Western Asiatic Seals in the British Museum. Cylinder Seals III*, London.
- Durand J.-M. & A. Otto, 2008: "Šakkanakku", *RIA* 11, p. 560-565.
- Frayne D., 1990: *The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Early Periods 4. Old Babylonian Period*, Toronto.
- Heinrich E., 1982: *Die Tempel und Heiligtümer im alten Mesopotamien*, Berlin.
- Herbordt S., 1992: *Neuassyrische Glyptik des 8.-7. Jh. v. Chr.*, SAAS 1, Helsinki.
- Legrain L., 1951: *Seal Cylinders*, Ur Excavations 10, Oxford.
- Moortgat A., 1940: *Vorderasiatische Rollsiegel*, Berlin.
- Otto A., 2000: *Die Entstehung und Entwicklung der Klassisch-Syrischen Glyptik*, UAVA 8, Berlin/New York.
- 2004: *Tall Bi'a/Tuttul-IV: Siegel und Siegelabrollungen*, WVD OG 104, Saarbrücken.
- 2013: "Königssiegel als Programm – Überlegungen zum Selbstverständnis altorientalischer Herrscher und zur Deutung der Tierkampfszene", *ZA* 103, p. 54-68.
- Porada E., 1950: "Critical Review of Corpus of Ancient Near Eastern Seals in North American Collections, Vol. I 1949", *JCS* 4, p. 155-162.
- Stone E. C. & P. Zimansky, 2016: "Archaeology Returns to Ur. A New Dialog with Old Houses", *Near Eastern Archaeology* 79.4, p. 246-259.
- Winter I. J., 1987: "Legitimation of Authority through Image and Legend: Seals belonging to Officials in the Administrative Bureaucracy of the Ur III State", in McG. Gibson & R. D. Biggs (ed.), *The Organization of Power. Aspects of Bureaucracy in the Ancient Near East*, SAOC 46, Chicago, p. 59-106.
- Woolley L. & M. Mallowan, 1976: *The Old Babylonian Period*. Ur Excavations VII, London.