

The Intercession Scenes in ancient Mesopotamian Cylinder Seals till the End of the Old Babylonian Period

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1 Introduction

“In the monumental arts the Akkadian theme of military victory was replaced by scenes of presentation and libation before the gods and deified kings; depictions of construction scenes reflected the building or restoration of many temples and sacred complexes, homes to the powerful divinities, as well as the erection of the first great stepped towers, the Ziqqurats. On cylinder seals impressions the numerous lively scenes of the Akkadian period that had captured mythical and historical moments were replaced by a single theme: the presentation of a worshiper to an enthroned divinity or deified king. In most compositions the worshiper was led by an interceding goddess, but occasionally he stood alone in front of the enthroned figure.” (H. Pittman, 1987, 24.)

The main aim of this research is to interpret the intercession scenes.

2 Early Dynastic Period

“In divine presentation scenes, an enthroned deity is approached by a second deity, which can be led by a third deity, as is common during the Akkadian period. The little evidence for its appearance during the Early Dynastic period is presented. Also common during the Akkadian period, but rare during the Early Dynastic period, are banquet scenes (Fig. 1) in which the participants are gods, and bull-men and heroes scenes.” (B. Holzinger, 2013, 132.) (Fig. 2).

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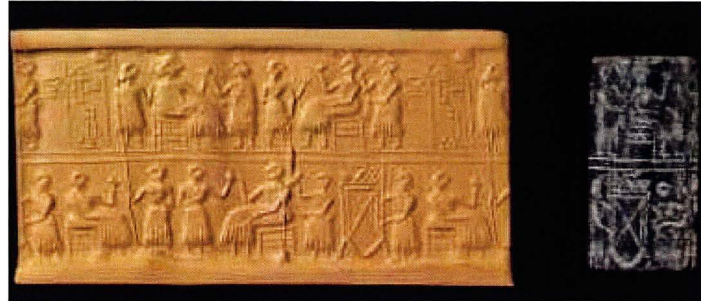


Fig. 1 “The cylinder seal of “Queen” Pu-abi. Early Dynastic III period (c.2600 bc), lapis lazuli seal depicting a banquet scene and inscribed: “Pu-abi nin”. From the Queen’s Grave in the Royal Cemetery of Ur, ht. 4.9 cm, dia. 2.6 cm, BM 121544 © The Trustees of the British Museum” (Tsouparopoulou, Ch., 2014, 40)



Fig. 2 “Early Dynastic II (c.2700 bc) white calcite (marble) cylinder seal, depicting a contest scene with bull-men and heroes, possibly from Sippar, ht. 4.12 cm, dia. 3.65 cm, BM 89538 © The Trustees of the British Museum.” (Tsouparopoulou, Ch., 2014, 41).

“The Earliest group belongs to the Early Dynastic period (Fig. 3 a-c). Examples of these seals are found from such sites as Ur, Telloh and Nippur, and manufactured of clay, are poor imitations of the traditional repertoire.” (L. W. Al-Gailani, 1988, 31-32, Fig. 5, Nos. 31-33.)

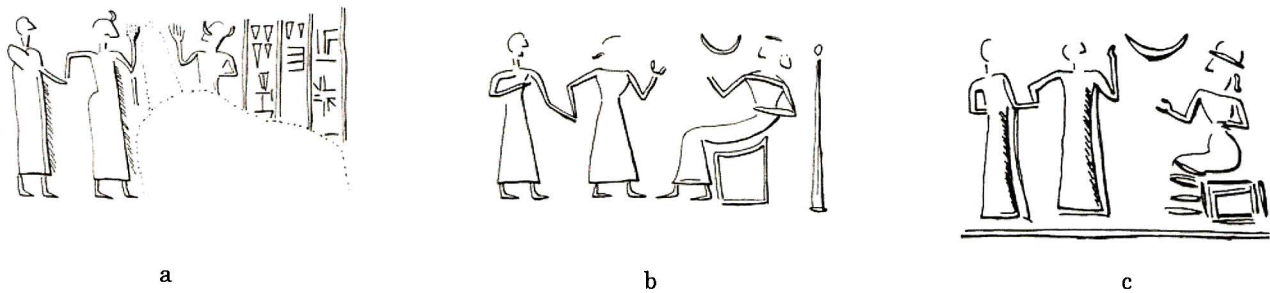


Fig. 3 a, b and c. Early Dynastic period.

3 Akkadian Period (c. 2334-2200 BC.)

“The Dynasty founded by Sargon of Akkad produced some of the most beautiful seals of all time. In order to unify his empire, Sargon reorganized the religious pantheon, which consisted of local, mostly agrarian Sumerian city gods, and amalgamated it with the Semitic astral deities of the Akkadians. His Craftsmen created a new artistic style and iconography, and cylinder seals which became the most successful vehicle for the transmission of the new ideas.

Deities had rarely been identifiably depicted before Sargon`s reign. However, they were now characterized by their horned headdresses and attributes, and they were incorporated into presentation scenes and into mythological scenes. These latter depict myths which are often lost or may have survived in fragmentary form in later texts, and their meaning is unclear. They include the so-called "Battle of gods", "Bull and Winged gate", " Snake god before an Altar", " Etana and the Eagle", where the legendary shepherd-king of Kish is carried up to heaven by the eagle.

The most popular deities include the sun god, shown with rays rising from his shoulders, sometimes seated with his saw-toothed knife, but frequently cutting his way through the mountains of the east at dawn, while attendants hold open the gates.

The water god Ea/Enki is depicted with streams of water flowing from his shoulders or from a vessel he holds.

The banquet scenes of Akkadian Period II developed into presentation scenes, often depicting the owner of the seal presented to a deity, or processions of minor gods approaching a more important god, although sometimes figures are shown drinking together as in Period II.” (J. Kist, 2003, 5-6)



Fig. 4 “Akkadian lapis lazuli cylinder seal from the Royal Cemetery of Ur (U.9813) depicting a contest – a bull-man in full-face fighting with a lion, 3.50 x 2.05 cm, BM 121566d © The Trustees of the British Museum”
(Tsouparopoulou, Ch., 2014, 41)



Fig. 5 “The so-called Adda seal. Akkadian greenstone, slightly concave cylinder seal depicting a mythological scene, with a full-faced hunting god, a full faced Ishtar armed with weapons, the sun god Shamash with rays emerging from two mountains, the water god Ea stretching out his right hand (probably towards the Zu bird) and behind him his two-faced attendant god Usimu. A two-line inscription is in a frame below with a roaring lion, ht. 3.90 cm, dia. 2.55 cm, BM 89115 © The Trustees of the British Museum.” (Tsouparopoulou, Ch., 2014, 41)

Cylinder seal of the god Enki¹ (Fig. 6) which was titled by Van Buren "Judgment of Bird-Man." On seal Fig. 7, “a male divine figure leads a captured "bird-man" to the seated god with streams. Enki / Ea is one of the most often represented gods in the glyptic art of the Akkadian period. He is pictured with two streams flowing out from his shoulders, sitting inside his cosmic territory Abzu surrounded by waves of water and accompanied by fish swimming in water.” (P. Espak, 2006, 79.; V. Buren, 1933, 41-50.)



Fig. 6 “Greenstone cylinder seal showing Enki seated on a throne, wearing a horned headdress with a flowing stream full of fish; 2250 BCE. (BM. 103317).” (<http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/amgg/listofdeities/enki>) Akkadian period.

“The seated water god on seal 6 is EA, the Akkadian equivalent of the Sumerian Enki. Only one possible representation of EA so far exists from the Early Dynastic period, although he was then a popular deity whose holy city was Eridu. As god of water he was considered the third deity in the major triad of which the other two were Anu (sky god) and Enlil (god of air, earth, and wind). EA was endowed with wisdom and cunning and gave advice to both men and gods. He was also the patron deity of crafts and magic.

In the Akkadian period EA was worshiped as a nature deity in several cities. On seals he is

¹ For details about the god Enki.... See, Espak, P., The God Enki in Sumerian Royal Ideology and Mythology, PhD. Tartu University, 2010.

normally represented seated with streams of water issuing from his shoulders, as here, and is frequently associated with Usmu, a double-faced figure who acts as Ea's intermediary, and the nude because here intentioned above." (B. Teissier, 1984, 16.).

"On this seal (Fig. 7), a half-man, half-bird creature is being led to EA. A bird-man appears in different context on several Akkadian seals that appears to illustrate a mythological cycle. Scenes such as on 83 have been related to the myth of Zu. In this myth, which may be of Akkadian origin, the bird Zu stole the insignia of power and "tablets of destiny" from Enlil in order to gain supremacy over the gods; this scene would illustrate the Judgment of Zu." (B. Teissier, 1984, 16, 133.)

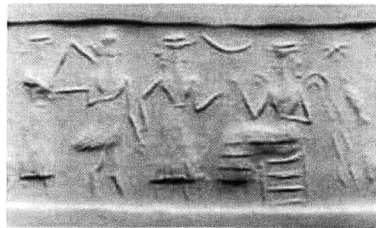


Fig. 7 "A seated deity with streams of water issuing from the shoulders receives a bird-man held and presented by secondary deities" (ibid., 132).
Serpentine. 24 x 19.5. Akkadian period (2334-2145 BC).

"On seal 8 a worshiper is led by the wrist and introduced to a seated deity. This subject was derived from the Early Dynastic worship scenes, achieved this form in the early Akkadian period, and became quite popular in the Ur III period." (B. Teissier, 1984, 18, No. 85.)

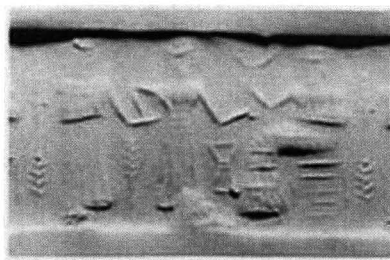


Fig. 8 "Intermediary figure presents a worshiper to a seated deity. In the field: stand, stalk of grain. In the sky: crescent. Terminal: two stalks of grain. Lb. Marble. 17 x 33 mm. Akkadian period (c. 2334-2260 BC.)."
(B. Teissier, 1984, 132.)

"The most popular deities include the sun god, shown with rays rising from his shoulders (Fig. 4-5), sometimes seated with his saw-toothed knife (Fig. 5), but frequently cutting his way through the mountains of the east at dawn, while attendants hold open the gates." (J. Kist, 2003, 6.)



Fig. 9 Cylinder seal of Akkadian period (c.2280-2260 BC.). Limestone. Leningrad, Staatliche Hermitage.

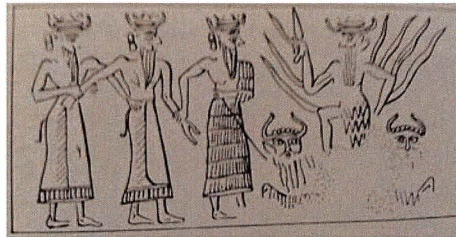


Fig. 10 Cylinder seal impression of the sun god shamash. Akkadian period (2260-2160 BC.). H. 3.2 x 1.9 cm. from Isin. Bagdad Museum.



Fig. 11 Cylinder seal impression- serpentine - Akkadian period ca. 2250 BC.
H. 3.4 x 2 cm. Berlin Museum VA. 243.

4 Post Akkadian and the Third Dynasty of Ur Periods (2200-2000 BC.)

“The collapse of the Akkadian empire adversely affected the quality of seal-cutting. Context scenes survive but with two heroes on either side of a lion or lion griffin, instead of the well-matched pairs found on the best Akkadian seals. Presentation scenes also survived in a simplified form and the Period II eagle and prey motif reappears.” (J. Kist, 2003, P.6)

“A revival of centralized power under the Third Dynasty of Ur led to presentation scenes becoming extremely stereotyped, with a worshipper led before the seated deified king or before a seated deity, generally a goddess, with strict rules dictating what each person was to wear, and what type of seat they were to sit on. These scenes were accompanied by an inscription giving the name of the owner and his title. Sometimes people who did not have seals had to have their names inscribed on a blank seal, generally made of gypsum, specially made for a transaction.” (J. Kist, 2003, P.6)

“The classification of seals that belong to the time between the end of the Akkadian period and the beginning of the Ur III periods is not clear yet, although an attempt has been made at dividing the

seals into three styles. Different terms, such as "Post-Akkad", "Guti", and "Neo-Sumerian" have also been used. The term Post-Akkad/Early Neo-Sumerian an best describes the seals below, because they contain iconographic lines with both the Akkadian period (worship of the sun god and with the Ur III period (bald worshiper figure).” (B. Teissier, 1984, P.17, figs., 91-96.)

“Cylinder seal (Fig. 12) shows an intermediary female figure presents a worshiper to a seated deity. A figure with a raised arm stands behind the worshiper. In the sky: crescent.” (B. Teissier, 1984., 134.)

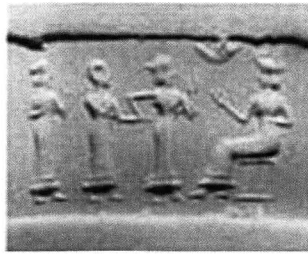


Fig. 12 Cylinder seal, slightly chipped edges. Quartz. 22x11 mm.
Post-Akkadian (c.2154-2112 BC.).

“Another cylinder seal (Fig. 13) shows an intermediary female figure presents a worshiper to a seated figure. In the field: stand. . In the sky: crescent.” (B. Teissier, 1984, 134, Nos.92-93)

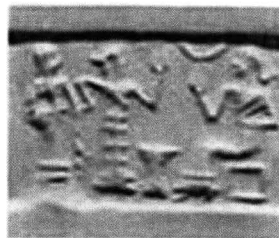


Fig. 13 Cylinder seal. Serpentine. 19x9 mm. Post-Akkadian (c.2154-2112 BC.).

“Another cylinder seal (Fig. 14) shows an intermediary female figure presents a worshiper to a seated figure. In the field: laden table before seated figure, table between the standing figures. Lb .” (B. Teissier, 1984, 134, No. 94.)



Fig. 14 Cylinder seal. Serpentine. 20x8 mm. Post-Akkadian (c.2154-2112 BC.).

“Another cylinder seal (Fig. 15) shows an intermediary female figure presents a worshiper to a seated figure. In the field: a stand before the seated figure.” (B. Teissier,., 1984, 134, No. 95)



Fig. 15 Cylinder seal. Marble. 11x19 mm. Post-Akkadian (c.2154-2112 BC.).

“Another cylinder seal (Fig. 16) shows an intermediary female figure presents a worshiper to a seated figure. In the field: indeterminate shape.” (B. Teissier,., 1984, 134, No. 96.).

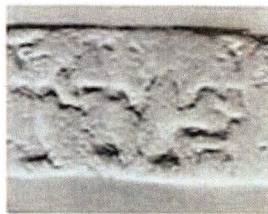


Fig. 16 Cylinder seal. Serpentine. 23 x 11 mm .Post-Akkadian (c.2154-2112 BC.).

“Certain presentation scenes are less sketchy. Impressions of them have been found at Tello where Gudea, the local governor, who seems to have set himself up as a virtually independent ruler, initiated a period of prosperity and stable government, and led a Neo-Sumerian revival (Fig. 17).”

(D. Collon, 1987, 36, No. 14.)

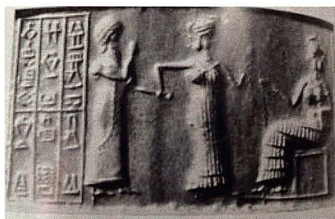


Fig. 17 Inscribed Gudea, governor of Lagash; Abba, the scribe, is your servant, PML: green "serpentine"; 3.5 x 2.0 cm.

“Cylinder seal impression shows a presentation scene of Gudea, king of Lagash, about 2130 BC., from Girsu. (Fig. 18) Gudea, with shaven head, is accompanied by a minor female diety. He is led by his personal god, Ningishzida, into the presence of Enlil, the chief Sumerian god. Wind pours forth from of the jars held by Enlil, signifying that he is the god of the winds. The winged leopard (griffin) is a mythological creature associated with Ningishzida, The horned helmets, worn even by the griffins, indicates divine status (the more horns the higher the rank).

Although Gudea used the title ensi (ruler, governor) rather than the more exalted title of lugal

(king), he was a king in all but name. Unlike other Sumerian kings, however, did he not use the sign *diĝir* in his name (meaning a "god" or "deity") which designated divinity.

Gudea did not represent himself to be a god, but only as a man who was divinely favored, so it's significant that Gudea is shown bareheaded, without his crown, and with his hands raised in the "reverence position", as was required of a mortal man when in the presence of a god.

A king like Ur-Namma was shown standing before the god Enlil with his hat on, signifying that he too is a god (see Ur-Namma Translation). He writing in the background translates as: "Gudea, Ensi [ruler], of Lagash".” (<http://sumer/ianshakespeare.com/25401>)



Fig. 18 Cylinder seal of Gudea Governor of Lagash. H. 2.7 cm. Tello. Louvre Museum.

“Another cylinder seal of Gudea (c. 2144-2124 BC.) (Fig. 19), shows the sun god in an ascending position with his foot resting on a small stool, receives a worshiper led by another deity. The inscription refers to the scribe of Gudea of Lagash.” (B. Teissier, 1984, 23; M. R. Boehmer, 1985, 240, 138 d.)



Fig. 19 Cylinder seal of Gudea. H. 3.7 x 2.3 cm. Louvre Museum.

“Cylinder seal impression (Fig. 20) shows an intermediary goddess lead a worshiper to a seated deity of Post-Akkadian period.” (M. R. Boehmer, 1985, 240, 138 i.)



Fig. 20 Cylinder seal (2160-2110 BC.). Serpentine. H. 3.2. Museum of Wien.

“Cylinder Seal. B16299 (Fig. 21). Ur from Gipar-ku, Larsa leve Period: Pre Ur Iii Date: c. 2500 BC Early Date: -2550 Late Date: -2450 Section: Near Eastern Materials: Diorite. Description: CBS Register: cylinder seal. diorite. votary before Namar. Ninigalzd, dumu, Ur pa... ka-ai-de-a, dub? c. 2500 BC UE VII: cylinder seal. published as B16229 UE X: bare-headed worshipper introduced by the assistant goddess to the seated god. Elongated crescent. Cubi stool with a short back. Double inscription: Mes-sig-gi (?), son of Ur nannar (?), and KA-zi-de-a, son of Nam-sag-ga. Grey steatite cylinder. Length: 2.8cm Width: 1.5cm. British Museum/University Museum.”
(<http://www.penn.museum/collections/object/135043>)



Fig. 21 Cylinder Seal. B16299 (Fig. 21). Ur from Gipar-ku, Larsa.

5 Ur III Period (c.2112–2004 BC.)

“Towards the end of the third millennium BC, southern Mesopotamia was united under the control of the city of Ur. The empire, which stretched onto the Iranian plateau, was founded by King Ur-Nammu (2112-2095 BC). He was a prodigious builder, constructing ziggurats at various cities.”
(<http://collection.britishmuseum.org/resource?uri=http://collection.britishmuseum.org/id/object/WCO22775>)

“A revival of centralized power under the Third Dynasty of Ur led to presentation scenes becoming extremely stereotyped, with a worshipper led before the seated deity, deified king or before a seated deity, generally a goddess, with strict rules dictating what each person was to wear, and what type of seat they were to sit on.

These scenes were accompanied by an inscription giving the name of the owner and his title. Sometimes people who did not have seals had to have their names inscribed on a blank seal, generally made of gypsum, specially made for a transaction.” (J. Kist, 2003, 6.)

“Cylinder Seal (and its modern impression): (Fig.22) found in Babylon in southern Iraq and dated by its cuneiform inscription to the reign of Ur-Nammu, first king of the third Dynasty of Ur (2112-2005 BC.): " Ur-Nammu, strong man (the mighty hero), king of Ur; Hash-hamer, governor of Ishkun-Sin, is your servant (his servant)" (D. Collon, 1990, 46.).

“An interceding and a leading goddess introduce the owner of the seal before the king, who wears the round, high-brimmed head-dress of royalty and sits on a bull-legged throne on a dais beneath a crescent moon.” (D. Collon., 1990, 46, fig. 33.)

“ It shows two goddesses, one of whom is leading the owner of the seal by the hand in a way that is distinctive of this period; while the other stands with both hands raised in the posture which was to become almost universal for interceding goddesses in the second millennium.” (D. Collon., 1995, 81, fig. 60, a.)



Fig. 22 Cylinder seal Mesopotamia: Ur 111, 2112-2095 BC., Measurements: Length: 2.6 cm, Width: 1.5 cm Material: Stone, Hematite. Provenance: Unknown- British Museum WA 89126.

“Another cylinder seal impression of the third dynasty of Ur (Fig. 23), The presentation scene before a deified king, inscribed Ibbi-Sin, god of his country, King of the Four Quarters: Aham-Arshi, the scribe, son of Babati, is your servant.” (D. Collon., 1987, 36, no. 118.)



Fig. 23 Cylinder seal impression of king Ibbi-Sin. Ur 111. Black limestone; 3.32 x 2, 0 cm. BM 102510.



Fig. 24 Last Mesopotamian Ur III Haematite Cylinder seal with inscription reign of IBBI-SIN, 2028-2004 B.C.

“A star disc and crescent in the field, with a finely cut cuneiform inscription to Ibbi-Sin, King of Ur (Fig. 24).” (<http://www.christies.com/lotfinder/lot/a-mesopotamian-ur-iii-haematite-reign-of-4470046-details.aspx?intObjectID=4470046>.)

“On later official seals the king holds a cup which symbolizes the office he is conferring on his servant; he is seated on a distinctive fleece-covered stool, and the crescent moon is generally replaced by a combined symbol with a star, within the arc of the crescent. Along inscription, divided into two panels one above the other, is also typical of the period.” (D. Collon, 1995, 81, fig. 60, b.)

“The owner of this chlorite seal (Fig. 25) is led by a goddess before a bearded god whose seal resembles a temple. H. 1.8 cm.” (D. Collon, 1995, 81.)

Sometimes a deity replaced the king, but deities do not hold cups and they sit on thrones resembling inched temple facades.

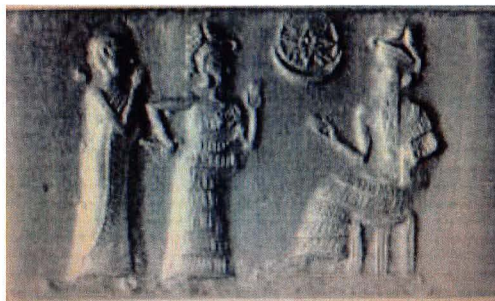


Fig. 25 The owner of this chlorite seal is led by a goddess before a bearded god. Ht. 1.8 cm.

“These seals (Figs. 23-25) are repetitive but their iconography corresponds to extremely precise rules regarding the dress of the figures in different combinations, their types of headdress and their seals; the rules apply as much to these Court seals as to the smaller, cruder seals of private individuals, with brief, two-line inscriptions, where the worshipper is generally led by a goddess in a vertically striped robe before another goddess who is seated.” (D. Collon, 1995, 82).

“The direction of the scenes also becomes established with the deity or king who is the focus of the scene sitting or standing on the right, facing left, when viewed on the impression.” (D. Collon, 1995, 82, fig. 60, a-b-c)

“Cylinder seal (and its modern impression): (Fig. 26) A clean-shaven man is presented before a seated, bearded god. In the spaces between the figures are a cluster of three drill-holes, a crescent moon, and a tall, narrow-necked jar on a small table. An inscription, written in cuneiform, reads: *a-ḫa?-ni-šū // arad₂ nu-ur₂-dšul-gi*.” (<http://archaeologicalmuseum.jhu.edu/the-collection/object-stories/cylinder-seals-from-the-ancient-near-east/presentation-before-a-god>)



Fig. 26 Measurements: Length: 2.6 cm, Width: 1.5 cm Material: Stone, Hematite Date/Culture: Sumerian, 2112-2004 B.C.E. Provenance: Unknown.

“Cylinder seal (Fig. 27) shows a deity sit on temple thrones on the manner hitherto receives a worshiper led by a goddess.” (M. R. Boehmer, 1985, 240-41, 139 d; G.A. Eisen, 1940, No. 50)



Fig. 27 Cylinder seal of Neo-Sumerian (2110-2000 BC.). H. 2.8 x 1.8 cm. Metropolitan Museum.

“Cylinder seal impression (Fig. 28) shows figure in presentation scene wearing a flounced robe and a brimmed cap and holding a cup in his extended right hand sits on a padded stool beneath a sun disk in moon crescent. Approaching is a goddess leading a baldheaded worshiper. An eight-line framed inscription.” (H. Pittman, 1987, 56, no. 23).



Fig. 28 Ur 111, ca. 2112-2004 BC. Steatite or chlorite; H. 19 mm, Dim. 10 mm. MMA 1986.47.34.

“Another cylinder seal impression (Fig. 29) shows a deified king in presentation scene wearing a flounced robe and a brimmed cap and holding a cup in his extended right hand sits on a padded stool beneath a sun disk in moon crescent. Approaching is a goddess leading a worshiper.” (A. Otto, 1940,

No. 254)



Fig. 29 Cylinder seal of Erra-bani, son of Ur-Ningishida from Eshnunna. Ur 111 period. Lapis-Lazuli. H. 2. 28 x 1.5 cm. Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin.

“Cylinder seal of Ninkhillia, the wife of Ayakala, god of Umma shows a usual presentation scene (Fig. 30).” (A. Otto, 1940, No. 33.)



Fig. 30 Cylinder seal of Ninkhillia. Ur 111 period.

“Cylinder seal BM 104496 (Fig. 31), shows a typical Ur III “presentation scene”. From the standpoint of the adopted formalization strategy, the legend is in the “origin” of the scene, and the “receiver” (that can be detectable in each scene, and is thus called “Person 1”) is a sitting goddess: before her a goddess (or Person 2, since this character is the closest one to the receiver) standing hand in hand with a shaven man (or Person 3). Of this scene, for instance, the data set records the dress, headgear, hairstyle, position of arms and legs and other attributes of each character (1, 2 and 3). There are also two integrative motifs, both between Person 1 and Person 2 that is the moon sickle and the goose, respectively located in the upper part and the middle of the field. The specific kind of niched throne and dais of the receiver have also been recorded, as well as the shape (two lines in a frame) and content (the typical formula: “x, son of y”) of the legend. Below, the verso of NBC 3401 (Yale Bab. Coll.), an administrative document which shows the juxtaposition of different kinds of impressions of the same seal: impressions of the legend on the right and in the middle, impressions of the scene on the

left.” (A Di LuDovico, 2008, 136, fig. 1)



Fig. 31 Cylinder seal BM 104496 shows a typical Ur III “presentation scene”.

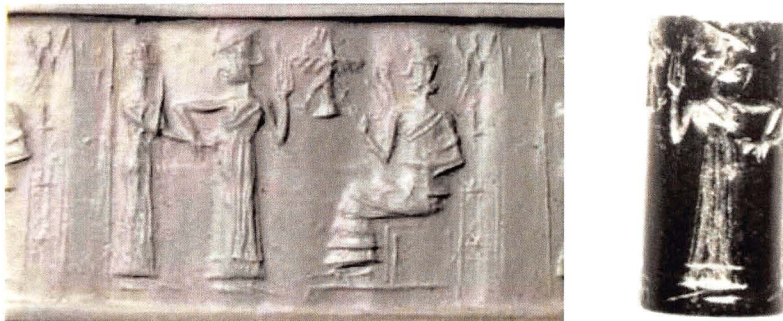


Fig. 32 “An Ur III period black chlorite cylinder seal, depicting a standard introduction scene to a goddess with rays rising from her shoulders, erased two-line inscription with some traces still visible, 2.55 x 1.36 cm, BM 132193 © The Trustees of the British Museum.” (Tsouparopoulou, Ch., 2014, P.41, fig. 5).

“By the Ur III period (c.2112–2004 BC.), the standard theme was a presentation scene, either to a deity or the king. Several variations of this occur: an audience with the king, the introduction of a worshipper to a deity, or the king by the goddess Lama (Fig. 32), salutation scenes, and others. There are still found, however, some contest scenes, as well as a few ritual scenes, especially depicting libations. Chlorite was the predominant material used, while seals made of serpentine and steatites were also ubiquitous; there also exist seals made of marble, hematite, and lapis lazuli.” (Ch. Tsouparopoulou, 2014, 40–41, fig. 5, <http://ojs.tsv.fi/index.php/StOrE>.)

“Presentation to a deity is derived from the Akkadian repertoire. Except for more elaborate seals, deities are shown without attributes, as here, and this cannot be identified except for their gender. They are invariably shown wearing a horned headdress and are seated on a throne in the shape of a temple façade.

A bald worshiper figure (Figs. 33, 34) and an intermediary goddess with one hand raised in suppliant gesture are commonly found on seals from the time of Gudea. Antecedents for both these figures occur in the Akkadian period; the bald figure is found on seals and the goddess on reliefs from Susa.” (B. Teissier, 1984, 19,134, Nos. 97-98)



Fig. 33 “Intermediary goddess leads a worshiper to a seated female deity. In the sky: crescent. Terminal: empty space, possibly left by an abraded inscription. Marble. 28 x 15 mm. Ur 111 (c. 2141-2004 BC.)”

(B. Teissier,, Ancient Near Eastern Cylinder Seals from the Marcopolic Collection, P. 134).



Fig. 34 Intermediary goddess leads a worshiper to a seated female deity. In the sky: crescent. Marble. 17x 31 mm. Ur 111 (c. 2141-2004 BC.). Inscription: i-di /ki/ hi-nu-ni-g DuMU e-x-x-ad = Idinunish, son of E,,,ad.

“Scenes of Presentations to kings (Fig. 35) became especially popular during the Ur 111 periods because the status of kingship reached a new peak at this time. Although Gudea called himself "god of Lagash", kings of Ur 111 dynasty from Shulgi onward not only assumed divine titles but instituted their own cults during their lifetimes. Shulgi, for example had temples erected to himself at Lagash, Umma, and Drehm. The King is distinguished from deities by his round cap and the covered stool on which he sits. He also holds a cup, a tradition that goes back to the Early Dynastic period. The inscriptions on seals with this subject suggest that the majority of dedicates were scribes.” (Teissier, B., Ancient Near Eastern Cylinder Seals from the Marcopolic Collection, p. 19)



Fig. 35 "Intermediary goddess leads a worshiper to a seated king holding a cup. In the sky: crescent. Terminal: inscription: too faint to be read. Serpentine. 22x 14 mm. Ur 111 (c. 2141-2004 BC.)”
(B. Teissier, 1984, 136.)

“Near eastern Ur III figural lapis lazuli cylinder seal circa 2100-2000 BC. (Fig. 36). A carved mottled lapis lazuli cylinder seal divided into two fields: above, a minor goddess leads a worshipper before a seated goddess, with cuneiform script; below, a procession of three long-necked birds. Fine condition.” (<http://www.timelineauctions.com/lot/ur-iii-figural-lapis-lazuli-cylinder-seal/13251>)



Fig. 36 Near eastern Ur III figural lapis lazuli cylinder seal circa 2100-2000 BC. 4.27 grams, 27 mm

“Also in the Ur III version of the presentation scene, the seal owner is brought by an “interceding goddess” (a LAMMA) into the presence of the seated Ur III king (Figs. 37 and 38). With his brimmed cap and the vessel he holds in his outstretched hand, the king is differentiated from the gods who might otherwise appear in this position.”

(M. Eppihimer, 2013, 39)



Fig. 37 “Modern impression of an Ur III seal with a royal introduction scene (Pierpont Morgan Library. Morgan Seal 292). Courtesy of the Pierpont Morgan Library.”
(M. Eppihimer, 2013, 40.)



Fig. 38 “Modern impression of The king Shu-Sin of Ur III seal with a royal introduction scene (VAM 697). bpk, Berlin / Vorderasiatisches Museum” (M. Eppihimer, 2013, P. 40.),
SMB / Art Resource, NY, Ht. 2.4 x 1.4 cm.

“A seal (Fig. 38) showing the king’s figure sitting before a goddess that stands hand in hand with a mantled shaven man. Above, in the field, no celestial symbols appear, while the long legend, ending in the typical ‘ir-zu’ (‘his servant’) formula (Mayr and Owen 2004, 146), mentions the king Šu-Suen.” (A. Di Iudovico, 2008, 139, fig. 5; Mayr, R. H. and David I. Owen. *The Royal Gift Seal in the Ur III Period*. In: Hartmut Waetzoldt (ed.) *Von Sumer nach Ebla und zurück. Festschrift Giovanni Pettinato zum 27. September 1999 gewidmet von Freunden, Kollegen und Schülern*. (Heidelberger Studien zum Alten Orient 9) Heidelberg: Heidelberger Orientverlag, (2004), 146; A. Moortgat, 1940, No. 253)

“And another cylinder seal (Fig. 39).” (M. R. Boehmer, 240-241, 139 f A. Moortgat, 1966, 259)



Fig. 39 Another Modern impression of The king Shu-Sin of Ur III (2036-2028 BC.) H. 2.5 x 1.68 cm. Berlin / Vorderasiatisches Museum.

6 Discussion

“The scene on this seals (Figs. 1- 39), represents the standard “presentation scene” of the Ur III period, dating to ca. 2112-2004 B.C.E. Such scenes depict a human worshipper – probably representing the owner of the seal – led by a goddess before an enthroned deity. The latter two figures are identified as deities by their horned hats – a symbol of divinity in Mesopotamian from the 3rd millennium onward. The goddess is a type of personal, protective deity known in Sumerian as lama and in Akkadian as lamassu, who often appears in presentation scenes “interceding” on behalf of a mortal.

In scenes of the Ur III period, she leads him before a seated deity; in later periods, she stands behind him and assumes a suppliant posture.

The enthroned deity does not appear to represent any one, particular member of the Mesopotamian pantheon. Although the crescent moon – a standard feature in Ur III presentation scenes – was, in later periods, associated with Mesopotamian moon god Šin, there is no evidence for such an association here, and the crescent moon appears above gods, goddesses and deified kings alike. The inscription on this seal (Fig. 26) identifies its owner as “Aḫa-nīšu, servant of Nūr-Šulgi.” Aḫa-nīšu was a fairly common name during the Ur III and later periods; the name Nūr-Šulgi. His name means “light of Šulgi” (Šulgi being the name of a deified Ur III-dynasty king)”

(<http://archaeologicalmuseum.jhu.edu/the-collection/object-stories/cylinder-seals-from-the-ancient-near-east/presentation-before-a-god/>; Presentation before a God. Johns Hopkins archaeological Museum)

7 Old Babylonian Period (2000-1600 BC.)

“The fall of the Third Dynasty of Ur around 2000 BC. was partly due to the gradual influx of Amorite tribes from the desert who settled around the cities. These tribes eventually set up a series of Dynasties, including those of the rival cities of Isin and Larsa.

Eventually, however, the First Dynasty of Babylon became dominant and, under the celebrated king Hammurabi (1792-1750 BC.), southern Mesopotamia was united. Hammurabi campaigned up the Euphrates and across the Tigris, bringing about the downfall of the kingdoms of Mari, about the downfall of the kingdoms of Mari, Northern Mesopotamia and Eshnunna.

Babylon itself collapsed in 1596 BC. When it was overrun in a void by the Hittites from central Turkey and this marked the end of what is known as Old Babylonian Period.” (J. Kist, 2003, 6 (a))

8 Presentation Scenes

“These presentation scenes are derived from those of the Neo-Sumerian period. On seals 41 the figures sit on temple thrones in the manner hitherto reserved for deities, even though they do not wear the traditional horned headdress of divine figures. The coarse cutting indicates that these seals came from areas that had only local seal cutting traditions and that the omission of a horned headdress might be owing to negligence rather than to a change in ideology. This suggestion is supported by inscriptions naming a deity which seem to occur mostly on other seals of this type which clearly represent a deity.” (B. Teissier, 1984, 22, 136, No. 102)



Fig. 40 “In southern Mesopotamia this is known as the Isin-Larsa period. Presentation scenes now have a hat on the worshipper, and so-called "space-filling" objects, while the goddess Lama typically now has two hands up (Figure 10, see also Collon 1987 fig. 153, Collon 1987 fig. 538)” (<http://www.rbmason.ca/seals.html>).

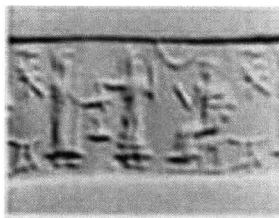


Fig. 41 A worshiper is led a seated figure. In the field: vessel. In the sky: crescent. Terminal: inscription: UTU (The god) Shamash. Hematite. 15 x 7 mm. Old Babylonian period (c. 2000-1900 BC.).

9 The Sun God and the God with a Scimitar

“Shamash, the sun god, was perhaps the most universally and consistently popular deity of the Old Babylonian period. He was the justice and law who in his role as arbiter gave protection to the poor and wronged. He was also the god of soothsayers. His importance had begun to increase with the rise of the Larsa Dynasty; it was in Larsa that he was worshiped until it was sacked by Hammurabi, Sippar then became the center of Shamash worship. At Tell Harmal, in the north, his popularity seems to have suffered a decline after c. 1800 BC.

Shamash is normally shown in an ascending position with his foot resting on a small stool or, in the late Old Babylonian seals of the drilled style, a mountain. Rays no longer issue from his shoulders as they did in previous periods but he still carries a small saw or Saššaru. Judicial Texts of this period record that oaths were taken in front of the Saššaru of Shamash. His name appears frequently alone or with that of his consort Aya on early seals of this period. The saw held vertically (Fig. 42), rather than horizontally or obliquely was a feature characteristic of sealings dated to king of Sin-iddinam of Larsa (c. 1849-1843 BC).” (B. Teissier, 1984, 23, 138, No. 109) (Fig. 40).

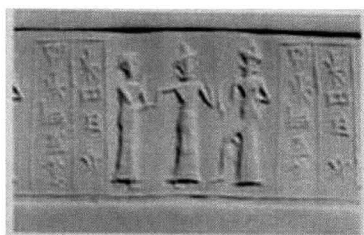


Fig. 42 Intermediary goddess lead a worshiper to adeity in an ascending position holding a saw. Hematite 24 x 11 mm. 1900-1800 BC. Inscription. Lb. Il-Kurub, son of Sin- Illat.

10 Babylonian Seals

“The presentation scenes are dominate: The earliest Old Babylonian presentation scenes still show the worshiper being led by a goddess before a seated deity or before the seated deified king who holds a cup, as he did on Ur III seals. In the nineteenth century (during the Isin/Larsa period) this

was replaced by a composition in which the seated deified king was approached by a robed figure with hands clasped, behind whom stood a suppliant goddess in a flounced robe with both hands raised in intercession for him.

Presentation Scenes before standing deities also developed and gradually replaced presentation scenes before seated deities and kings. The better quality seals had an inscription naming the owner, his title and his patron deity or ruler. Often, however, such seals were re-used and the inscription was either erased or re-cut.

The King: appears in various aspects. He never represents a specific king, but seems to stand for the concept of kingship in various robes, for stability and for protection. He may, indeed, be a protective being with royal connotations.

The king was seated on a padded stool and holding a cup, continues from Ur III times. He wears ceremonial robes, and on later seals he is shown standing before a deity, sometimes carrying an animal offering.

The so-called "king with the mace", generally shown facing the suppliant goddess, is the image of the active warrior king and Wiggermann (1985-86) has suggested, that he is to be equated with the *edu*, the threshold protector and bringer of happiness. The kilted king is also shown vanquishing enemies.

Other humans: The owner of the seal, robed, clean-shaven and sometimes shaven-headed, stands with hands clasped before the seated deified king. Priests, depicted clean-shaven wearing kilts and holding a libation vessel or frond and a bucket, occasionally appear on presentation scenes.

Deities: Gods and goddesses are identified by their horned headdresses which can have one or more pairs of horns.

The suppliant or interceding goddess seems to be the personal goddess (or Lama) of the owner of the seal. She wears a flounced robe and raises both hands in prayer. On presentation scenes she replaces the leading goddess found on Ur III and some early Old Babylonian presentation scenes. She appears very often before the king with a mace."(J. Kist, 2003, 8)

11 Matrix: The Intercession Scenes and its Elements through Ages

The elements	Intercession scenes	The interceding deity	The worshipper	The seated or standing figure
Early Dynastic Period	Rare	God or Goddess	Exist may be represent the owner of the seal.	Seated god only exist.
Akkadian Period	Common	Goddess	Exist	Seated deity always wears the rich flounced garment was exist. (Shamash- Enki)
Post Akkadian Period(Gudea)	Few	Goddess	Exist	Only seated deified king (Gudea) wears a plain and low turban, have long beard.
Ur III Period	Dominate and accompanied by an inscription giving the name of the owner and his title.	Goddess Lamma, She wears a flounced robe and raises both hands in prayer.	Exist	The deified seated king with his brimmed cap and the cup he holds in his outstretched hand was dominated. Sometimes a deity replaced the king, but deities do not hold cups and they sit on thrones resembling inched temple facades.
Old Babylonian Period	Dominate	She appears very often before the king with a mace.	Exist	He seated deified king who holds a cup and a deity were exist. (the sun god Shamash)

Symbols	The followers	Headdresses
	1-Another goddess holding up both hands in the same attitude 2-Of worship or a servant carrying a pail of basket	
Only a crescent of flat style as an emblem on the field was exist.	Not exist	horned headdresses
Only a crescent of flat style as an emblem on the field was exist.	Two exist	horned headdresses
Not exist	The first exist	Plain Flat turban of Gudea (human headdress)
He crescent moon is generally replaced by a combined symbol with a star, within the arc of the crescent.	The first exist	The classical headdress of the gods (horned headdress).
Only the crescent moon was exist.	Two exist	horned headdresses

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