

# The Royal Storehouse of Urkesh: The Glyptic Evidence from the Southwestern Wing

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## 1. *Mozan/Urkesh and the Hurrians*

It has been a working hypothesis of the Mozan Archaeological Project since its inception that Tell Mozan might be the site of ancient Urkesh.<sup>1</sup> The reasons had been articulated in *Mozan* 1 (Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati 1988, pp. 31-38; 89-90). Briefly stated, they were as follows: (1) The lions of the foundation inscription of Tish-atal refer to Urkesh in such a way that Urkesh was very likely the city where they had been placed originally. (2) Tell Shermola, in the modern town of Amuda, where the lions were presumably sold on the antiquities market in 1948, could not qualify as the site of Urkesh, because its occupation was to be dated primarily to later historical periods.<sup>2</sup> (3) Tell Mozan, the largest third millennium site in the vicinity of Amuda, was a good candidate for the place of origin of the Tish-atal lions. (4) The general location of Urkesh in the area of Amuda, as derived from the Old Babylonian itineraries, was well suited for Tell Mozan. Still it was clear that the importance of Tell Mozan did not, in and of itself, depend on the question of the identification (this was stressed, e.g., in *Mozan* 1, p. 38), since the archaeological profile of the site was significant on its own terms, and would warrant therefore full attention regardless of whether Urkesh had been located there or elsewhere. For it had become apparent from our work that, whether or not Mozan was Urkesh, it belonged in the same class.

The study of the seal impressions found in a large storehouse labeled AK has provided now the positive evidence we needed to conclude that Urkesh is indeed to be identified with Tell Mozan. It will be noted that it was

not the discovery of a single major artifact such as another foundation deposit like the lions of Tish-atal, for instance, that gave us the clue we were seeking. It was rather the interpretation of a large and unusual group of fragmentary seal impressions, found scattered over the floor of a fairly large room. This explains the delay between the actual recovery of the fragments and the identification. The chronology is as follows. Excavations in what turned out to be the Royal Storehouse began in 1990 (our sixth season): only the top of the floor deposits was reached.<sup>3</sup> In 1992 (our seventh season) we obtained a large horizontal exposure of the south western corner of the Storehouse, and found a few sealings and a school tablet.<sup>4</sup> Since we anticipated a large number of seal impressions from the floor deposit in Sector B, we decided to skip the study season which normally comes in alternate years, and devoted our eighth season in 1993 to a slow excavation of that particular floor deposit. The total number of seal impressions recovered was more than 600, and the following season (8a, in 1994) was devoted to the documentation of these and the other finds. The study of the record during the intervening year 1994-95 led us to the conclusion already mentioned about the identification of Urkesh with our site. At that point we decided to spend a second study season (8b): our purpose was to collate the inscribed seal impressions (more than 170) and to complete the full documentation of all the material with a view towards a rapid final publication.

We provide here a comprehensive preliminary report of our findings as they pertain to the glyptic evidence.<sup>5</sup> It gives us special pleasure to have this report appear in *A/O* since it was while in residence at the Institut für Orientalistik of the University of Vienna during the Spring

<sup>1</sup>) The transcription of the name fluctuates in modern literature between Urkish and Urkesh; the former spelling is more prevalent and is the one we had used in our earlier publications. We have opted now for the transcription with *e* for three major reasons: the choice of the sign *kēš* in the earliest writings of the city name, the writing *ge-eš* attested in Old Babylonian, and the contrastive writing, in our seals, of the city name with *kēš* and the king's name with *ki-iš*.

<sup>2</sup>) Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati 1988, p. 36f.; p. 89; G. Bunnens and A. Roobaert-Bunnens, *ibid.*, p. 90-92. Faivre 1991-2, 14ff.; 1992, 133ff., also comes to the same result. Curiously, Faivre seems to imply that our own conclusions with regard to Tell Shermola depended on the French excavations there, see especially 1992, p. 135. In fact, our decision to excavate at Tell Mozan was based in part on the results of our first visit to Tell Shermola in 1983. The fieldwork conducted in 1984 by Bunnens and Roobaert-Bunnens on our behalf confirmed our initial observations. All of this clearly precedes by several years the French campaign reported on in Faivre's publication.

<sup>3</sup>) Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati 1991 with Fig. 20, which shows an aerial view of the central part of the Storehouse.

<sup>4</sup>) Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati 1994 (with Fig. 18) and forthc. a.

<sup>5</sup>) A brief announcement was entered in the ANE Electronic Bulletin Board of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago on November 16, 1995, anticipating the joint paper which we presented at the ASOR meeting in Philadelphia on November 20, 1995. In Philadelphia we had the opportunity to show our material to Jeanny V. Canby, Machteld J. Mellink and Pauline Albenda who were very generous with their comments, for which we are most grateful. The first printed report from the writers appeared in *Orient-Express* 1995/3, cover page and pp. 67-70. Other articles on specific aspects are in preparation for various journals and series, including *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, *Studies on the Civilization and Culture of Nuzi and the Hurrians*, *Subartu*. The final report will appear in the Fall of 1996 in the *Mozan* series.

1995 that we developed the argument we are presenting here. We found there a most congenial atmosphere and the enthusiastic support of colleagues and students. In particular, Dr. Erika Bleibtreu shared very generously her knowledge of ancient glyptic and her insights about the interpretation of our material, allowing us to see at the same time a number of new seals which she is preparing for publication; Dr. Renate Rems-Wernisch stimulated our thinking in a number of ways, for instance by bringing to our attention the presence of positive seals in the Old Assyrian period; and Dr. Michael Jursa suggested an important alternative reading of the Zamena seals, plus providing, with Mag. Michaela Weszeli, constant invaluable support as our bibliographical mentors. Professor Hans Hirsch was our official host, and ever the close friend: we are grateful that he made it possible for us to spend such a fruitful period in his Institute.

As a result of our research in Vienna we prepared a preliminary position paper which we circulated among a few colleagues asking for the benefit of their comments and criticisms. Their response was uniformly supportive, and for this we wish to express our gratitude to them. In particular, we will mention Mirjo Salvini, Piotr Steinkeller and Gernot Wilhelm, who provided detailed observations on various aspects of our paper, many of which are incorporated in this article, and will of course be credited in the proper place. Some of their remarks improved very substantially our argument, and contributed to provide final certainty to our conclusions.

One particular benefit that residence at the Institut für Orientalistik afforded us was the possibility for a kind of joint research that we had not conducted before: a protracted joint lecturing on Mozan. The argument for the identification of Urkesh rests on a very close integration of specialties: our joint work on an ongoing common presentation pointed up correlations among iconography, style, epigraphy and stratigraphy that were wholly unexpected. Our joint authorship of this article reflects precisely such collaboration. While M. K.-B.'s contribution is particularly directed to iconographic and stylistic analysis, and G.B.'s to epigraphy and stratigraphy, we felt that we could not easily attribute to either in isolation the various sections of the article.

Obviously, the results of our project rest on the close collaboration of the entire staff during the three excavation seasons and the two study seasons. Since here we are covering especially the glyptic finds, we will mention those who have contributed more directly to the excavation and the study of the Royal Storehouse AK. Cecily J. Hilsdale was responsible for the majority of the final drawings of the seal impressions and contributed greatly to the interpretation of the iconography. The others included, for the excavation, Rick Hauser, Federico A. Buccellati, Raju Kunjummen, Fan-Xi Xu, Jamal Omar and Lynn Swartz; for surveying, Stephen M. Hughey and Barbara Pritzkat; for drafting, Linda Mount-Williams,

Pietro Pozzi, Emmanuelle Besson, Claudia Wettstein, Julian Spykerman, Rollin Kennedy, Christopher Henson; for photography, Federico A. Buccellati, Marie-Louise Eagleton, Anwar Abdel-Ghafour and Samer Abdel-Ghafour, Mark Brawner, Charles Hartness; for the study of the sealings as objects, Jason N. Craig; for the study of figurines, Rick Hauser; for ceramic analysis, William R. Shelby, Alice Frigerio, Hélène Cooper; for registration, Sofi Tsantefskis and Claudio Peno-Brichetto; for metal analysis, Sharyn Crane and Achot Pilipposian; for palaeozoology, Sandor Bökönyi; for palaeobotany, Judith Thompson-Miragliuolo; for soil analysis, Gabriel Pesce; for physical anthropology, Rouzan Mkrttchian. The final publication will give ample credit to each individual contribution.

It goes without saying that the responsibility for the content of this article rests with us, since neither the members of the staff nor the various colleagues we have mentioned have reviewed the final draft of our paper.

As already indicated above, the identification with Urkesh is neither a surprise nor a pre-condition for establishing the importance of Mozan. It is, nevertheless, a window that opens up many new perspectives and allows us to draw significant conclusions. We have here the only known instance of an ancient Hurrian city which (1) occupied a position of prime importance in the idealized landscape of Hurrian *mythology*; (2) had reached a significant *political* status by virtue of being the seat of several kings whose names have come down to us; (3) is now identified with a specific *archaeological* site. So far, in fact, Urkesh is the only Hurrian capital to have been positively identified, whether for the early or the later periods, since the identifications of cities like Waššukanni with Fakhariya or Ta'idu with Hamidiya, though likely, are still hypothetical (see map on Fig. 1). As for Nagar/Brak we cannot say with certainty that it was a Hurrian city (it appears to be a capital from the references in Ebla). An important consequence of the identification is that we can now provenance the bronze lions of the Louvre and the Metropolitan as coming originally from Mozan. Conversely, everything that has been and will be excavated in the ancient levels at Mozan (which is practically everything, since the city was abandoned in the mid second millennium B. C.) has to be placed in relationship with Urkesh and the Hurrians.

The last statement should not be taken to mean that everything in Mozan is Hurrian. In the first place, there naturally were imported goods, and artifacts associated with resident foreigners. More importantly, the whole issue of ethnic attribution needs to be studied with great care and methodological sophistication. We cannot develop in this article our thoughts on such issues, and we will limit ourselves here to the following consideration. As we begin to identify certain stylistic traits which are distinctive of the Urkesh cultural assemblage, we can legitimately link their production with local workshops

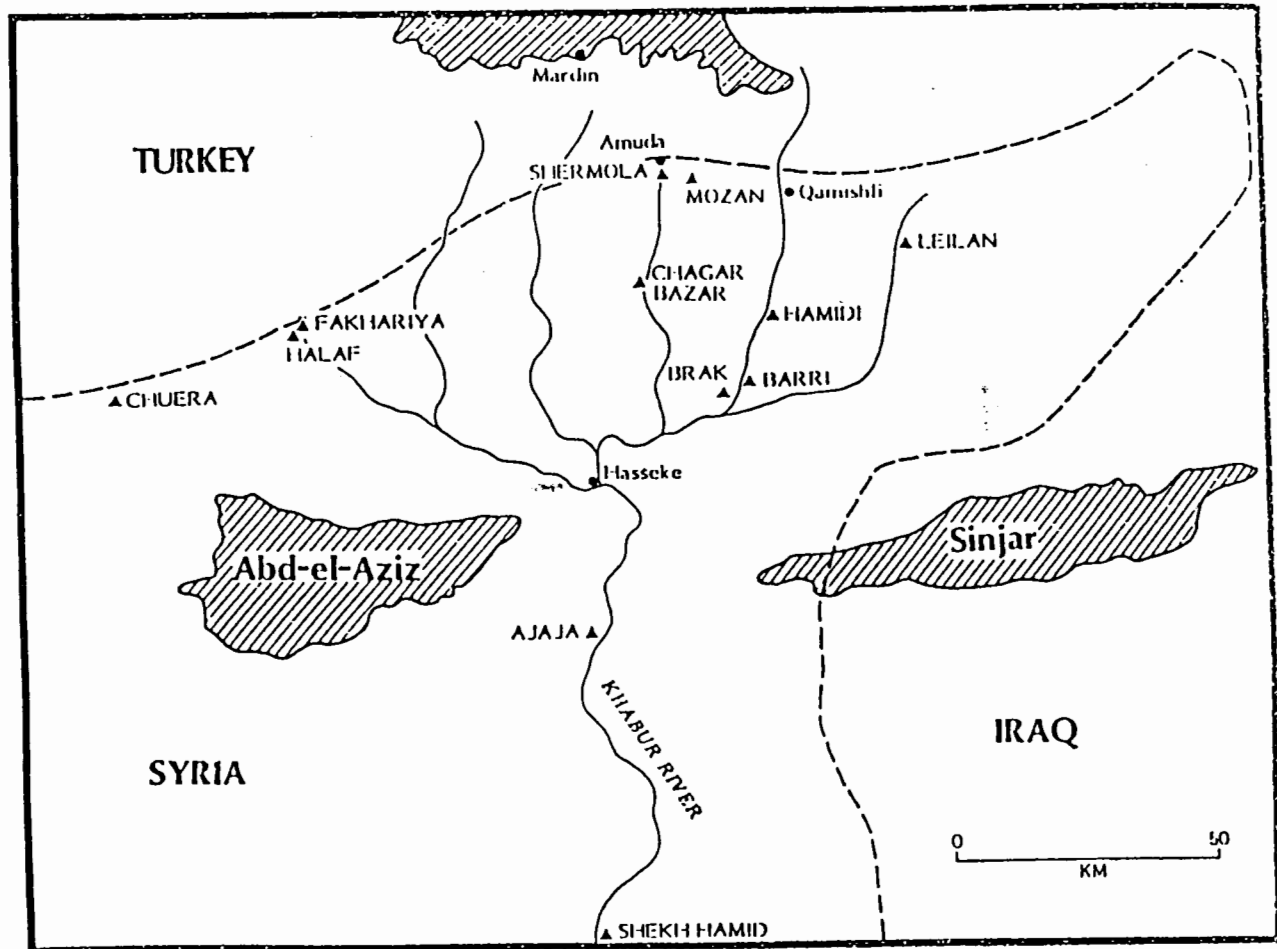


Fig. 1. Sites in the Khabur Plains

and local artistic traditions. To the extent that Urkesh was a city where (a) Hurrian was used as a language for inscriptions written for political display; (b) Hurrian onomastics was used for the political elite; (c) the royal titulary was Hurrian – to that extent we can begin to consider the possibility that ethnic awareness might have been a reality and that some of the stylistic preferences exhibited in the material culture might be associated with such an ethnic reality. In this paper we will not go any further. But it is clear that such issues as the very existence of Hurrian art<sup>6</sup> might be assessed in a new light from the vantage point of what we are beginning to know about Urkesh production centers. What is certain, at any rate, is that in the Royal Storehouse of Mozan/Urkesh we have the earliest certain attestation of anything Hurrian.

One of the important tasks ahead is the coordination of the Mozan evidence with what is historically known about this period from Syro-Mesopotamia. Of particular interest is the fact that Urkesh is not mentioned in the texts of Ebla. In the Old Akkadian royal inscriptions, only one possible mention has been proposed.<sup>7</sup> This phenom-

enon requires attention, particularly in view of the clear Akkadian presence at Tell Brak, and the probable identification of Tell Brak with Nagar, mentioned often in Ebla. Also, the assumption of a correlation between the political center Urkesh and the mythological Urkesh needs to be qualified. The evidence we are adducing from our excavations pertains obviously only to Urkesh as a political center. If we are assuming that Mozan is also the site of the mythical seat of Kumarbi it is because all that we know from the myths points in the direction of that general area (a city between Nineveh, Tuttul and the “mountains,” Hoffner 1990, 15.6; 16.4; 18.4.) and because the geographical name “Urkesh” is not otherwise commonly attested (hence a duplicate reference seems unlikely).

## 2. The Stratigraphic Setting

The stratigraphy of the storehouse has been presented briefly in Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati, 1995 and forthc. (a), (b) and (c). Here a minimal description is given to provide a setting for the corpus of seal impressions from which is derived the evidence pertaining to Urkesh. A

<sup>6</sup> For an overview of the subject, which must still serve as a basis for further discussion, see Mellink 1975.

<sup>7</sup> P. Steinkeller suggests (private communication) to read *Ur-ki-iš.KI* in the fragmentary text published by P. Michalowski

1986, p. 6, Text A, ii 9'.

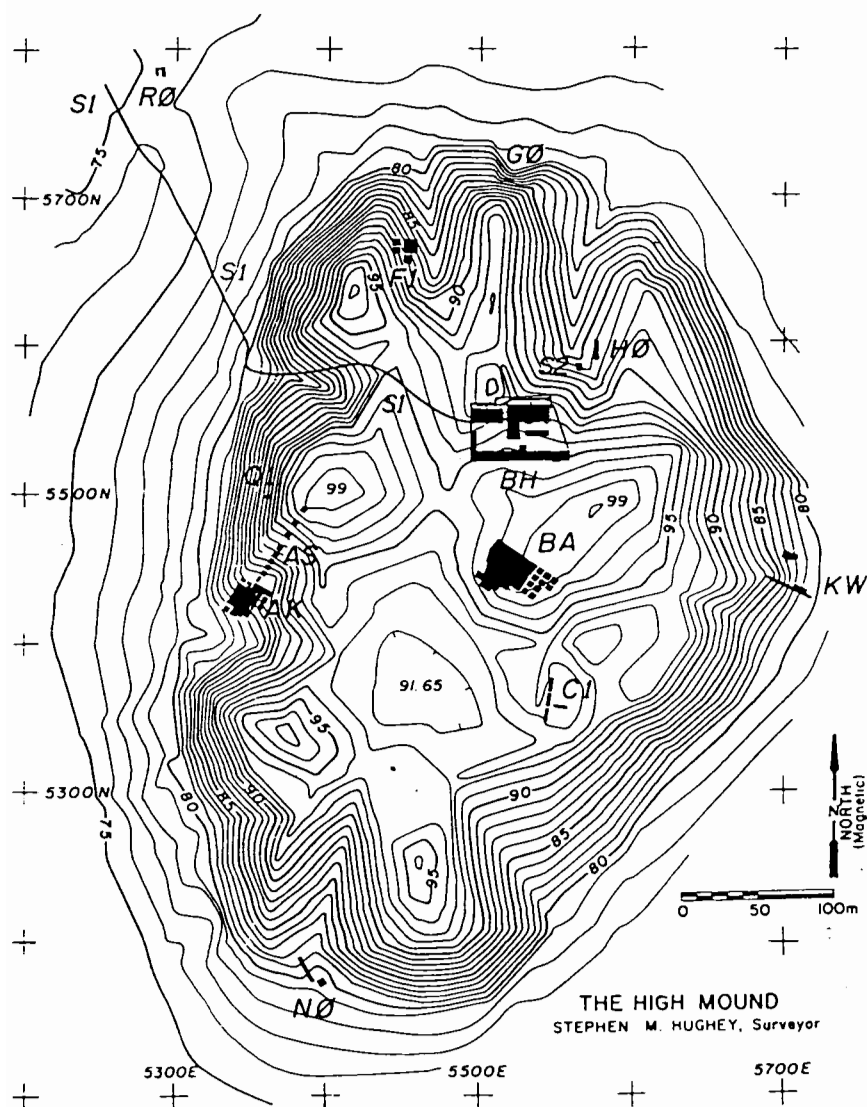


Fig. 2. Tell Mozan/Urkesh: Site Plan

description of the stratigraphic situation is particularly significant for a proper understanding of certain typological peculiarities of the corpus (especially the multiplicity of seals originating from the same authority) and of the argument linking the epigraphic evidence with the issue of site identification (both are discussed below in Section 7).

The storehouse is located on the western side of the tell (Fig. 2). It was discovered at the base of a stepped trench which was excavated on a line parallel to the presumed location of the city wall, so as to recover a sequence that would not include the wall itself. One fact must be noted, however. The widening at the base of the trench, just where AK is located, may correspond to an open area in the ancient topography of the city, just on the inside of a presumed city gate. If so, it is likely that the depositional depth in this area is not proportional to that found elsewhere on the tell, since access to the threshold of the city gate would have forced a relatively reduced, or more controlled, rate of growth in the thick-

ness of the deposit – at least as long as the city wall was in use. This would mean that the absolute elevation of the strata may be foreshortened in this location in such a way that relatively later periods may be attested at a lower elevation than elsewhere on the site. As it is, the main floors in AK are about 5 m. above the presumed elevation of virgin soil at this location, while the main floor of Temple BA, which is earlier, is about 20 m. higher.

Extrapolating from the excavated portion of the building, we estimate that we have here the southwestern corner of a building which, once excavated, may be three times as large as the present exposure. The plan (Fig. 3) consists of an accession suite (labeled A on the plan), a large hall with a closet or vault (B), and probably a working area in the back (C); the area to the south-east appears to have a plan which is, for all practical purposes, the mirror image of the south-western half. The lower courses of the walls are in stone, up to about 1 m in height, with mudbrick on top, but they are not plastered. The vault in sector B is a small closet (1.8 × 1.3 m) with thick walls, preceded by an ante-room. The notching, or rabbeting, in the doorways is for the most part structural, in that it must have served to house a door panel, the location of the door coinciding in many cases with a strongly marked brick threshold in the floor.

Several floor levels have been identified within the building, all belonging to the same architectural stratum (which is labelled B12). The floor accumulations are visible in section as clearly banded layers 5 to 15 cm thick, alternating in color between ash grey and orange. This alternation seems to be in correlation to the thresholds in the doorway, which has led to the assumption that the ash accumulations were deposited at a time when the door panel either was missing or was not very effective, so that ash could accumulate from the nearby courtyard (sector C on the plan). The great majority of seals from AK, and in any case all the seals discussed in this paper, come from a single black floor accumulation, which is also the lowermost in the sequence. In other words, the floor accumulation to which the seals belong is the first in the occupational history of the building, and corresponds to the first use of the walls.

The building is rather monumental in size and layout. However, its walls are not plastered, and there are no other indications that it was particularly well finished or that it was in any way ornamented or decorated. Also, the

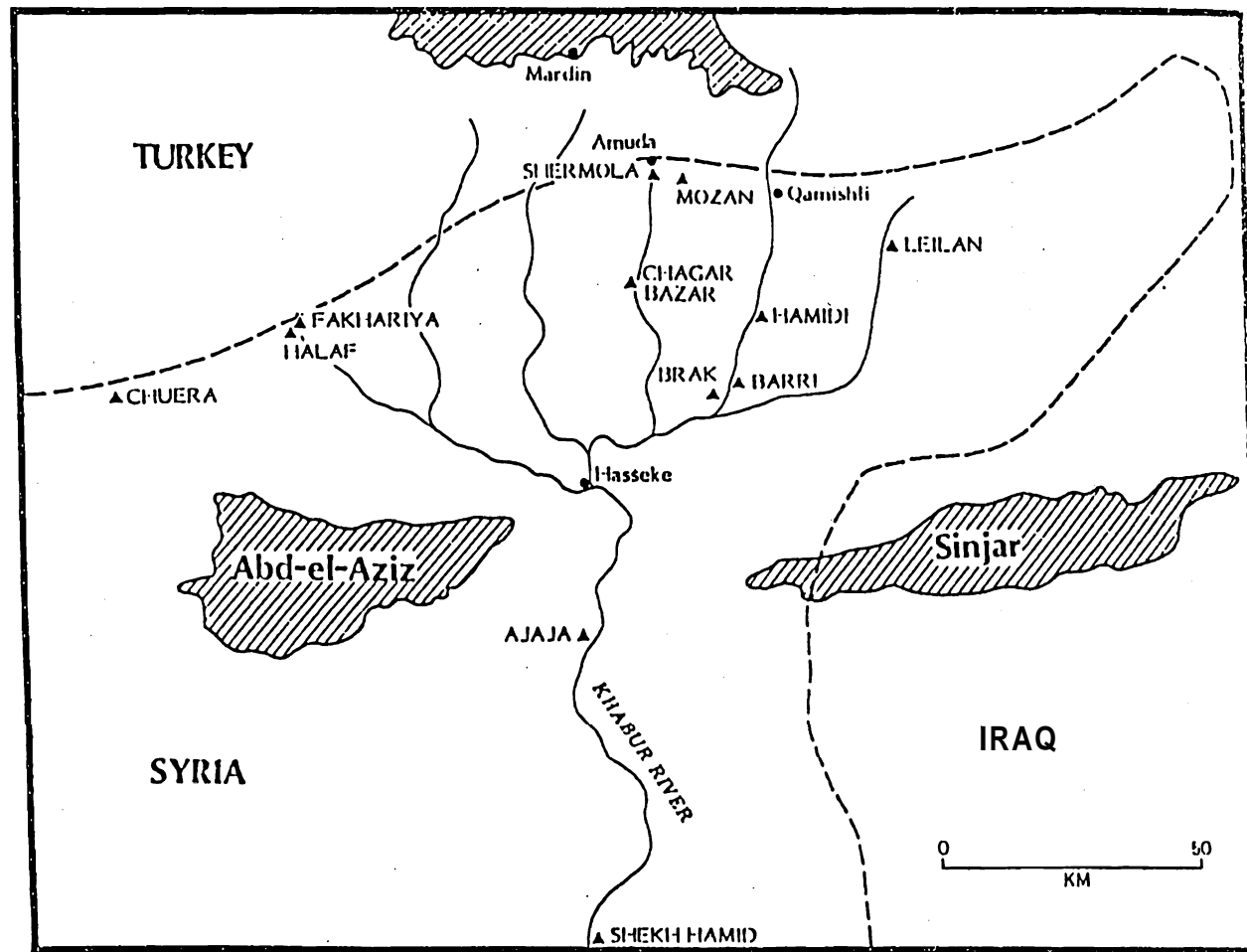
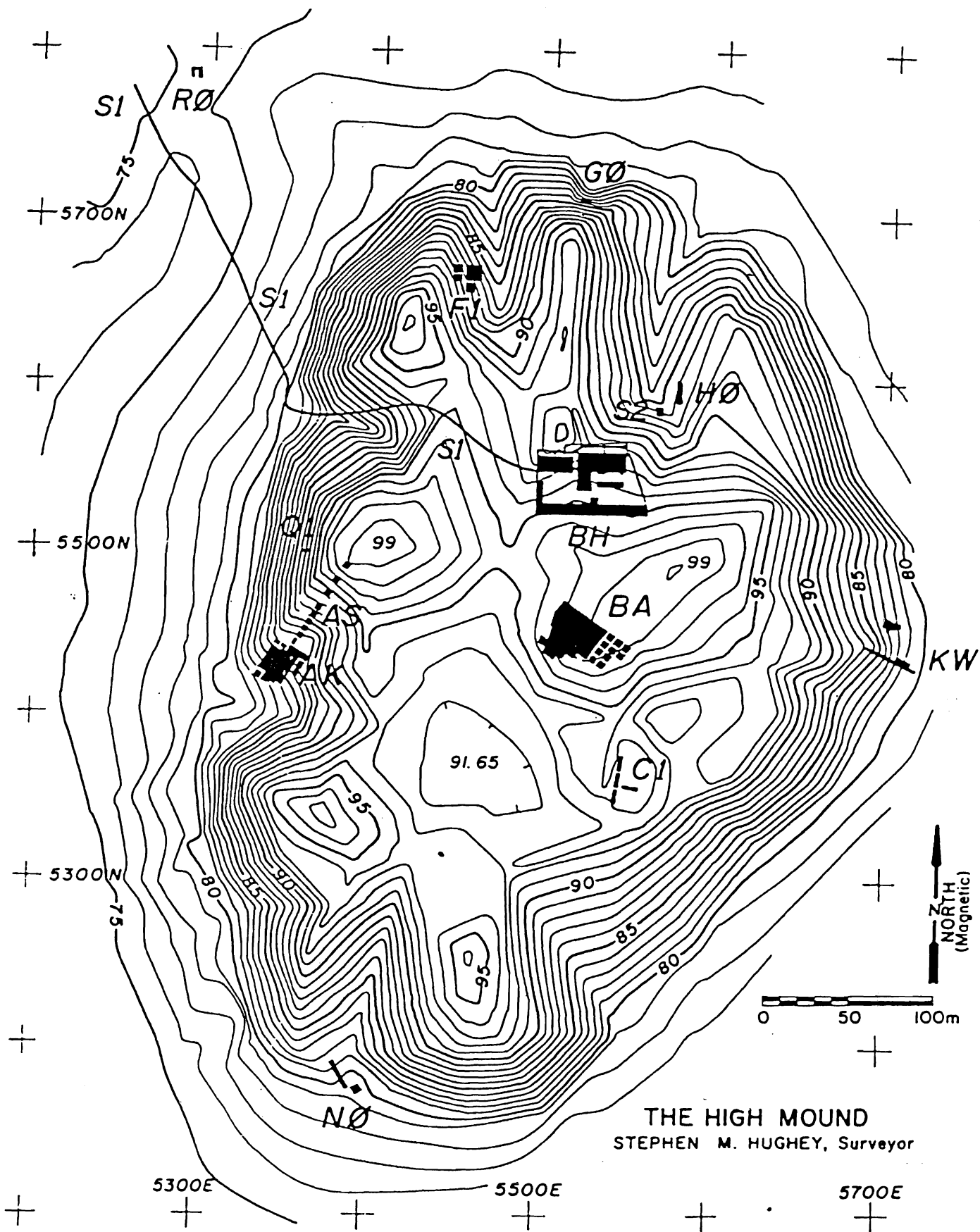


Fig. 1. Sites in the Khabur Plains



THE HIGH MOUND  
STEPHEN M. HUGHEY, Surveyor

Fig. 2. Tell Mozan/Urkesh: Site Plan

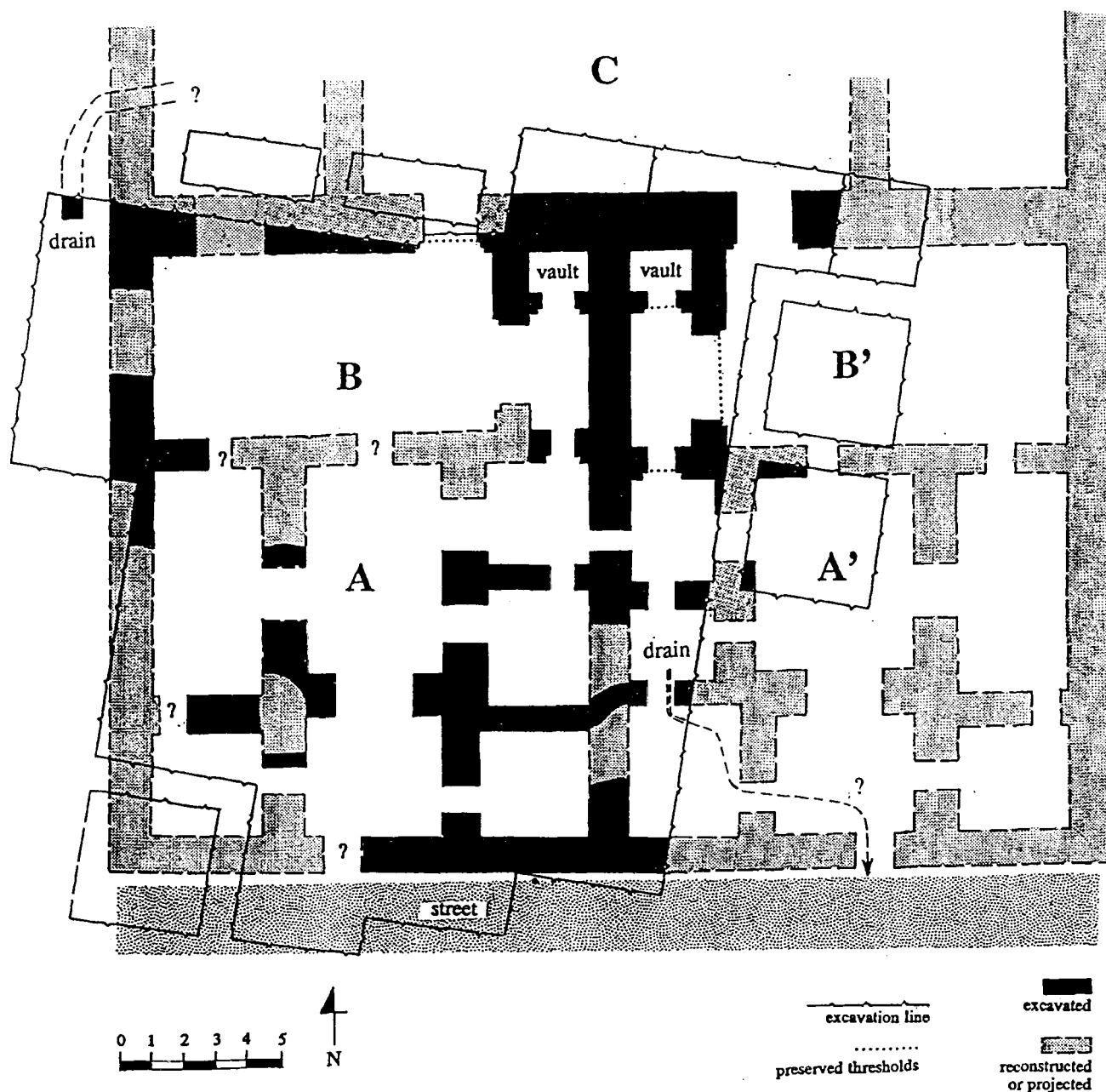


Fig. 3. Floor Plan of Royal Storehouse AK (Stratum B12)

foundations are surprisingly shallow, and they seem to adapt to topographic contours that already required terracing: subfloor packing is relatively thick to the south. It is also clear that the building was erected completely *ex novo* since there are good traces of earlier walls which are at different angles from those of the storehouse.

As mentioned already, all the seals discussed in this paper come from the earliest floor accumulation of the building, and exclusively from Sector B. It must be noted that in the Eastern wing, only partly excavated, we have not yet reached the level of the floor accumulations corresponding to those with seal impressions in the Western wing (though seal impressions have been found there in higher strata).

We assume then that the function of the vault in Sector

B (and its equivalent in the Eastern wing), and perhaps indeed the function of the whole building, was that defined in Sumerian as an *E<sub>2</sub>.KIŠIB*, in which important items were stored in sealed boxes, jars, baskets or bundles behind a locked door. For some further considerations on function see below, Section 7.

Two complete tablets and fragments of some 40 others were found in or near the same floor accumulation. One of the two tablets was a school tablet (A1.69+) with an extract from the profession list LÚ E, of which the complete text was found at Abu Salabikh, Ebla and Gasur, see Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati 1995 and *forthc.* (a).

Over one hundred figurines were found, for the most part representing quadrupeds. A full publication is being





1. Overhead of Royal Storehouse,  
after the second season of excavations  
Arrow points to floor deposit containing seal impressions,  
here excavated only in part (Photo B7-9534)



2. Frontal view of Royal Storehouse and Stepped Trench  
Looking North, after the second season of excavations (Photo B7-9532)

prepared by Rick Hauser. A human head figurine (A1.23) is significant from a stylistic point of view (see Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati *forthc.* (a)); this figurine and the school tablet were shown prominently in newspapers and magazines which covered our findings in late November – early December 1995.

The date of the sealings excavated in the AK building should be mid to late Akkadian. They are clearly different from the style of the Early Dynastic seals that we had from the storeroom in K1f16 and published in *Mozan* 1. The iconography too is different in that the ED motif of the hero fighting animals, while present in our AK corpus, places much less emphasis on the immediacy of the action and gives more space to the orderly progression of the figures across the surface of the design.

### 3. The Glyptic Evidence

The sealings found in the floor accumulation are very small as they are the remains of the clay which was used to seal containers; when the containers were opened, this clay was broken and discarded on the floor as useless. These sealings were never intended to be stored for later recording as they are scattered over a wide area of the floor. The question can be asked, why were these sealings in relatively good condition even though fragmentary? Some were recovered close to what obviously was another piece of the same sealing and could therefore have

been broken when they had been removed from the container, or through being stepped on after having been dropped to the floor. Many of our impressions are very small and might have been larger when thrown away but, being fragile, disintegrated with the use of the floor. Over 600 seal impressions make up the corpus excavated thus far in the Royal Storehouse. It appears that approximately 60 original seals are represented; since our data consist in these partial rollings on clay, we cannot be sure of the exact number of original seals they represent.

The analysis of these impressions entailed both a physical and iconographic description of each individual piece. Since it was apparent from the beginning that comparative material was going to be of limited assistance in reconstructing the individual scenes, the sealings which might make





3. Close-up of Illustration 2.

Arrow points to floor deposit containing seal impressions, here excavated only in part (Photo B7-9532)

up any one scene had to be individuated. This was complicated by the fact that the pieces were, in most cases, too small and too fragile for us to write numbers on them. Elaborate lists were kept of all possible fragments of one scene. However, it was only at the end of this process, when all the seal inscription variations of the queen's seals were combined with the known variations of the iconography, that we were confident we had what can now be determined as the queen's corpus. There are of course many details which remain unclear or which, with further clarification, would be changed.

The contents of the seal designs are quite unexpected. Generally the seals can be divided into three groups. (1) Seals carved locally in a linear schematic style. (2) Seals very similar to those carved in the south which are early Akkadian in style. (3) The most important group consists of the dynastic seals connected with the royal family. In this last group we have seals of the king, the queen (and the children connected with them) and the queen's household. The seals of this royal couple and their household emphasize the royal family as the embodiment of royal power. In this article the material is presented in a descriptive manner; a discussion of its wider significance from the point of view of art, historical development and chronology will appear in other papers.

Our sealings also show the traces of the type of containers on which the seals were used. The primary purpose of the container sealings found in the deposit in the Royal Storehouse AK was to provide a system which

allowed relative security for the items stored inside the containers. The greatest number of containers which can be identified are jars, totalling over 80. The shape of the jars varied from taller jars with high necks to relatively squat jars. The jars were covered with either leather or cloth; a piece of string was tied around the neck of the vessel and then the knot of the string was covered with a lump of mud and sealed. Box or basket sealings show the evidence of a peg along with the string impression; sometimes basket sealings have strong impressions of the reeds of the basket. There are over 73 impressions of these types of containers. We have only 3 door sealings in the corpus. If the door of the vault was sealed every time it was opened, then either it was rarely opened or the door sealings were taken somewhere else for registration (later texts from other sites describe this registration activity).

Many of the backs of our impressions are too poorly preserved to allow us to determine what type of container they were used on. In one case, a sealing was placed against an animal horn, identified by our palaeozoologist, Sandor Bökönyi, as a gazelle horn.

A remarkable feature of the Urkesh seals is the very close *correlation between seal design and seal inscription*. In the south there are no clear cases in which scenes are connected with the profession of the seal owner as mentioned in the inscription. In our corpus, however, two individuals connected with the household of the queen through their seal legends have depicted on them very clear motifs associating them with the same profession referred to in their seal inscription. These two seals are discussed in part 6. below. We will point this out in detail in the treatment of the individual seals. Also, the royal seals convey a specific dynastic message, as described below.

The style of writing, too, presents very unusual characteristics, which made a reading of the seal legends rather difficult and which must be kept in mind in order to follow the argument which led to the identification of the site. Four points deserve special attention.

(1) *Seal reversal*. M. K.-B. and Cecily J. Hilsdale had noted that certain uninscribed seal impressions appeared to be the mirror image of each other. Since there is no legend extant on these particular rollings, there is no way to determine which is the natural positive of this scene. What is clear, however, is that two distinct seal impres-

sions exist, hence two distinct seals, which present mirror images of the same scene.<sup>8</sup> In addition to seals for which we have two versions, one being the mirror image of the other, we also have cases where only one version is extant, but we can identify the rolling as a natural negative, and therefore the seal as a natural positive, on account of the inscription.<sup>9</sup> Three of our inscribed seals can be so interpreted: one of the king's seals (k1), and the two Zamena seals (h1-2).

Seal reversal affects the reading of the legend in a very significant way, such as one would not suspect at first, even though it is quite obvious once observed: it is not the sequence of signs within the case, but rather the sequence of lines within the box which are inverted. Recognition of this feature was critical in allowing a proper interpretation of the best preserved of the king's seals (k1). A first reading suggested that the inscription might refer to an *endan* of *Tupkiš* [KI], in such a way that the latter term would then have had to be the ancient name of Mozan! When it was noted that another fragment mentioning *U[r]-kèš*.KI was part of the same composite rolling, and that we had other cases of seal reversal, the proper sequence of lines became obvious.

(2) *Vertical flip*. Individual cuneiform signs are flipped vertically<sup>10</sup> within a case. This can be shown each time that the configuration of a particular sign is vertically determined (see for instance the sign DUB in the last case of the legend in h2: the two small vertical wedges on the left do not point upwards in the standard configuration of this sign). Other signs, instead, do not allow such a

determination, e.g., the sign NA in the third case of the same legend.

(3) *Transposition of signs*. As is often the case with archaic writing, sequences of signs within a word may be transposed as a matter of purely graphic preference (well known examples are GAL.LU<sub>2</sub> for LUGAL or ZU.AB for AB.ZU). In our seal legends, this is found with the alternation ZA.GÌN-*ni-tum* and GÌN.ZA-*ni-tum*.

(4) *Transposition of sign elements*. Special treatment can also be given to individual component elements of complex signs. For example, the left component of the sign TUM is treated as if it were a separate sign, so much so that in the first case of the legend in h1 it appears as an altogether different element belonging to the sign to the left, with the result that it acquires the appearance of a DUB/KIŠIB sign. Similarly, the two components of the sign TU (h4) are written almost on two different registers. See the table below in Fig. 10. A crucial example of this phenomenon occurs in the spelling of Urkesh in k1, which is discussed presently.

There is one additional observation pertaining to the arrangement of the legend on the Urkesh seals which is unexpected. In one of the queen's seals (q1), the *direction of the legend box* is the same as that of the scene, rather than to a 90° angle as otherwise regular. This indicates the extent to which the Urkesh seal carvers were experimenting with compositional techniques.

In the presentation that follows, and in the synoptic charts given below in Figs. 5-8 (where one will also find the transliteration of the cuneiform signs), we use the following terms and symbols. A *composite* is an idealized rolling (seal impression) reconstructed from a number of physical rollings (most of the time the rollings are on different sealings, but in several cases the same sealing contains more than one rolling). A *conflated* drawing results from the combination into a single scene of different scenes, which are identical except for minor variations. Thus while a composite renders the impression of what is assumed to be an actual seal, a conflated drawing is an abstraction for which no actual seal need have existed. An *impression* is the trace left by any item on another, e.g., the surface of a tablet on the inside of an envelope. A *rolling* (or seal impression) is the physical impression left by a seal. A *sealing* is the physical object (in our case, it is always a lump of clay) on which the seal has been rolled. A *scene* is an iconographic composition, which may be repeated with minor variations on different seals.

An upside down exclamation mark (!) in the transliteration indicates a vertical flip. An equivalence sign (~) before a transliterated line of cuneiform indicates that the reading renders the mirror image of the original. A vertical line (|) indicates line break within the case of an inscription box.

The total number of rollings given below refers generally to the rollings on which at least part of the inscrip-

<sup>8</sup> To our knowledge, this has not been noted for other corpora. A significant possible case of seal reversal is found in the publications of Ebla seal impressions. One of the drawings published in Matthiae 1995, p. 136, is the reverse of a similar drawing published in Matthiae 1977, Fig. 18. No field numbers are given for these drawings, but the drawings are sufficiently dissimilar to suggest that they be two different seal impressions, rather than a typographic error whereby the drawings were inverted in printing. It seems unlikely that the published reverse drawing refers to the situation described in Matthiae 1977, p. 101, whereby seal rollings on jar stoppers had left an impression on the back of sealings placed on top of the stopper itself.

<sup>9</sup> This phenomenon has been noted in the literature, see, e.g., Collon 1988, p. 105, who says that reversals are "provincial, late or unskilled ... pieces"; clearly, none of these qualifications apply to Urkesh glyptic. Many of the Old Assyrian seal inscriptions are in mirror image, see, e.g., Teissier 1994, NN. 40, 47, 135, 384. Note how in other cases, e.g., N. 186, the writing is positive on the rolling, but the direction is opposite to the norm (the left of the line of cuneiform text is at the bottom, rather than the top, of the scene). For individual signs that are written in reverse in Old Assyrian seals, see Teissier 1994, p. 67. We are grateful to Renate Rems-Wernisch for calling our attention to the reversals in Old Assyrian.

<sup>10</sup> For a possible vertical flip of an individual sign on an Old Akkadian seal see E. Sollberger in Collon 1982, N. 110. For individual wedges that are flipped vertically see an Old Akkadian example in Reade 1971, esp. pp. 94-95.

tion is preserved. There often are other rollings from any given seal, which are not listed here.

We only give figures of composites in this article (except, of course, for items of which only one rolling is extant). Three different graphic styles are used. (1) A plain line drawing (the standard in glyptic studies) renders scenes which are too fragmentary to allow a real understanding of the overall composition. (2) A black background is used for scenes which retain a certain degree of compositional integrity. It should be noted that this device (which we have used already for the Terqa seal impressions) does not serve solely aesthetic purposes. The black corresponds to anything in the seal which is at the lowermost plane on the impression. Note that the black lines in general indicate the point of intersection between any volume that is raised and the field which is depressed. The black background is omitted in the inscription boxes because the raised lines are at times too thin to retain their distinctiveness. Hatched lines indicate that the item is broken, and uniform stippling that the surface is abraded. (3) A few seals have also been rendered in a stippled style which is aimed at rendering the aesthetic quality of the piece. While still close to the original, stippled drawings may at times be slightly more interpretive than those in either of the other two styles.

The final rendering of all drawings published here is the work of Cecily J. Hilsdale, except for the three drawings in Fig. 4, k3 in Fig. 5, and Fig. 9 f, which are by Pietro Pozzi. Some of the revisions were made by Lily Tsai. The scale is 3:1 in Fig. 4, 2:1 in Figs. 7, 9, and 10, and slightly less than 2:1 in Figs. 5, 6, and 8, where it is shown by the physical scale with the caption. For composites, the scale is sometimes approximative, since different rollings show various degrees of distortion. We must emphasize that, in spite of all the care taken in sorting the seal impressions into discrete categories, it is likely that some of the seal impressions attributed to a given seal in our current understanding may in fact belong to a different and new seal. In other words, we have been conservative in establishing as few seals as possible, which makes the high incidence of multiple attribution all the more significant.

#### 4. The King's Seals

##### Scene 1: Attendants with globular object

k1 ~ *Tupkiš endan U[r]keš* "Tupkish, king of Urkesh" (Fig. 5)

4 rollings: A1q1036.10; A5.163; A5.187; A5q951.4

The seal impression is a negative; our reading of the cuneiform is based on the positive as it would have been on the seal. Fig. 5 shows both the rolling as we have it and its mirror image.

The sign KÈŠ<sup>1</sup> is written DINGIR.U.RÉC215 as in the



4. Fragment of Rolling from Seal k1  
A5.163 (Photo E8b-0301)

personal name *Ur-kèš*.KI found in a pre-Sargonic text.<sup>11</sup> Only a faint trace of the sign UR is visible. As it happens, in none of the other rollings does the sign UR occur. There is however no reason to assume that it should not have been on the seal where the break occurs in our rollings, so that the reading *Urkeš* seems to be beyond any reasonable doubt.

The legend box occupies the entire height of the seal.

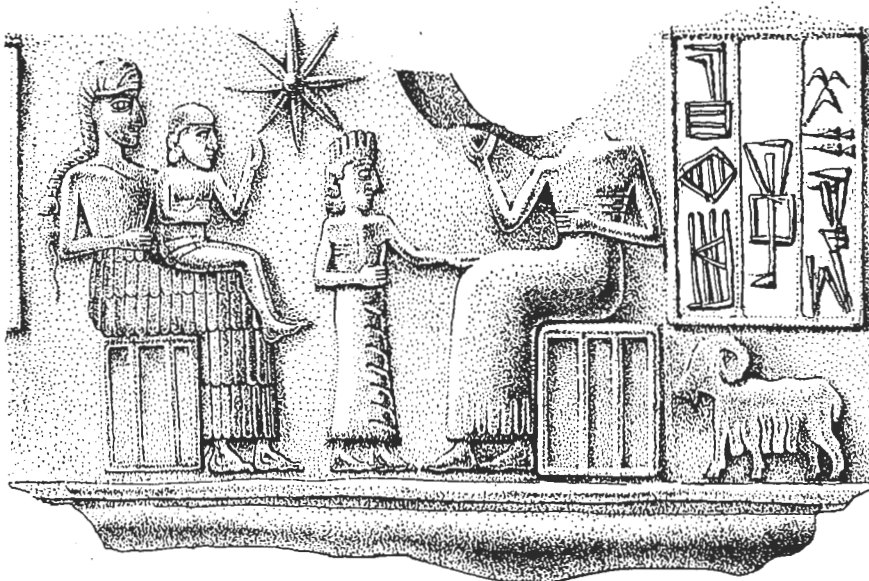
The personal name *Tupkiš* is the first element of a two-element Hurrian personal name, such as *Tupki-Šenni*, *Tupki-Tešub* or *Tupki-tilla* (Gelb *et al.* 1943, p. 269). The noun *tupki*, without a known meaning, occurs elsewhere in Hurrian (Laroche 1977, p. 272f.). An analysis giving the Hurrian interpretation of the name has been provided by both G. Wilhelm and M. Salvini, and will appear elsewhere.

The Hurrian word *en-da-an* is well known. Nougayrol (Parrot and Nougayrol 1948) had interpreted it as equivalent of "king" (see also Salvini in Pecorella and Salvini 1982, p. 15). Laroche 1976, 82, sees it instead as a derivation from Akkadian *entu*, of which it would have retained the meaning and the gender determination: "priestess." This meaning is applicable to some of the examples cited by Laroche. But his conclusion clearly does not fit our context or that of *Tiš-atal*. Why would a priestly title be followed by the name of a city? And why would a priestess leave two foundation deposits? The evidence from our seals argues clearly in favor of an interpretation as king, because there is ample attestation of his wife who bears the title of "queen."

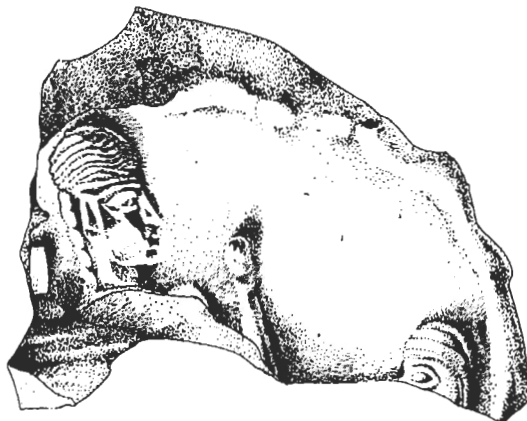
<sup>11</sup>) P. Steinkeller and N. Postgate, *Mesopotamian Civilizations* 4, N. 10, 1.3 (reference courtesy of P. Steinkeller). The archaic forms of the sign KÈŠ show considerable fluidity in the arrangement of their component elements, see Matthews, R. 1993, p. 37, Figs. 12: 5-7.



**a. Seal k2**  
**Reclining Lion**  
**Endan b**



**b. Seal q2**  
**Royal Consorts**  
**DAM Tupkiš**



**c. Uninscribed fragment**  
**(A1.237)**  
**Portrait of the Queen?**  
**(possibly belonging**  
**to Seal q8)**

**Fig. 4. Stippled Style Rendering of Select Royal Seals (Artist: Pietro Pozzi)**

Scale 3:1 |—————| 1 cm

Note. Here and in the following figures, seal labels refer to the scene (e.g., Reclining Lion) and the legend (e.g., Endan b).

	Original rolling	Mirror image of original rolling
<b>k1</b> Globular object Endan a <i>['U][r]-ikēš¹.KI</i> <i>ien-ida-an</i> <i>īTup-ki-i'š'</i> ~ <i>Tup-ki-i'š'</i> ~ <i>en-da-an</i> ~ <i>['U][r]-kēš¹.KI</i>		
<b>k2</b> Reclining lion Endan b <i>Tu[p-ki-i]š</i> <i>[en-da-an]</i> <i>[Ur]-kēš.KI</i>		
<b>k3</b> Warrior with helmet Endan c <i>Tup-ki-i[š]</i> <i>en¹-[da-an]</i> <i>[Ur.kēš.KI]</i>		
<b>k4</b> God with raised foot Endan d <i>Tu¹p-ki-iš</i> <i>en-[da-an]</i> <i>[Ur-kēš.KI]</i>		
<b>k5</b> No scene preserved Endan e <i>[Tup-ki-i]š</i> <i>[en-da]-an</i> <i>[Ur-kēš].KI</i>		
<b>k6</b> No scene preserved Endan f ? <i>[Tup-ki]-i'š'?</i> <i>[en-id]a¹-[an]</i> <i>[Ur-k]ēš².[KI]</i>		

Fig. 5. The King's Seals

Scale 2:1  1 cm



All we have of the scene are two standing figures facing left, dressed in what appear to be long garments; they are probably female as males are shown with a beard. In front of them is another object but so incomplete as to be uninterpretable. It is possible that the object is a table placed in front of a seated figure (only a portion of the chair is visible). The first figure on the left wears a cap which is striated on top and comes down at the level of the chin; the figure has both arms together and may be holding something small in front. The second figure wears a soft hat and is balancing on the outstretched palm of the right hand a rather large globular shaped object. The identification of this object is intriguing. It is generally rhomboid in shape with indications of striations. The object is evidently light given the way it is balanced. It may be an oversize ostrich egg<sup>12</sup> or a ball of yarn.<sup>13</sup> The spacing and design of these figures is striking. Since the rhomboid shaped object is held high, at the level of the heads, there is a very clear alternation of shapes. That is, the two heads are wider at the top than at the bottom, while the object being held is wider at the bottom than at the top. The seal carver had a pronounced sensitivity for geometric design which is emphasized by the similarity in the size of these three elements and their even spacing across the upper portion of the scene.

## Scene 2: Reclining lion

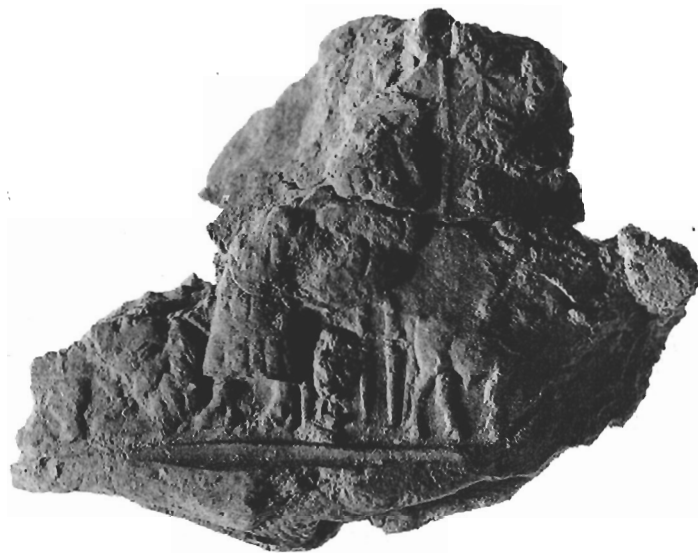
**k2** *Tu[pkiš endan Ur]keš* “Tupkish, king of Urkesh” (Figs. 4-5)

3 rollings: A1.221; A1.455; A1q922.7.

In this case, the sign KĒŠ is written with the standard sequence of elements.

The legend box is placed above the figure of a standing bull.

Of the four seals which can be attributed to the king this one is the most complete example. On the left is a standing figure (probably female) clad in what appears to be a long garment; the hair or hat/crown (?) of the figure is unclear. This figure is unusual in that she is holding with both hands, and out in front of her, a small bowl (?) with unclear strands (?) coming off of it. A very well carved star is in the field; below it, there appears to be a vessel. What is not clear about this vessel is whether or not it is connected with what the standing figure is holding or is rather connected with the lion. The other figures in the scene are all physically connected. A smaller child wearing a feathered crown and long dress is standing on the head of a reclining lion who is placed behind the throne of the seated figure, whom we are



5. Fragment of Rolling from Seal k2; see Fig. 4a  
A1.455 (Photo E8-5843)

interpreting as the king. The left arm of the child is unnaturally elongated, with the elbow raised in an awkward manner so that the fact that he is touching the lap of the seated king is visually emphasized. The king wears a tiered garment and holds a mace. He is seated on a throne which has vertical panels but which allows the view also of the tail, hindquarters and leg of the lion. This last detail is not entirely clear. Under the inscription a standing bull faces right.

On the basis of comparative material from later Hittite art, we can identify the small figure standing on the head of the lion with the crown prince, who is also shown in the same long garment and feathered (?) hat on one of the queen's seals; in both instances he is touching the lap of the seated figure on the right of the scene. Unfortunately in neither seal is the head of the seated figure preserved. In this seal the child is standing on the head of an extraordinary lion who appears to be at ease near the stool of the seated figure. His left paw, mane and even a portion of his facial musculature are clearly delineated.

The seal is beautifully carved with a classic dignity given by the standing figure on the left. The air of calmness and stability of this figure connected with the subtleness of the carving of the elegant profile and torso almost makes an identification of the figure as a statue possible. The facial profile of the figure is well preserved and shows very finely carved details in the nose and mouth. The lion, too, is beautifully rendered, especially the mane. It is clear that this seal was made by a master seal carver who was equal to any of the seal carvers working at the same period in the south.

## Scene 3: Warrior with helmet

**k3** *Tupki[š] en[dan Urkeš]* “Tupkish, king of Urkesh” (Fig. 5)

<sup>12</sup>) We do have fragments of ostrich eggshells from this building.

<sup>13</sup>) Prof. Erika Bleibtreu has noted that in the twelfth delegation on the Apadana staircase at Persepolis the last two men are carrying oval shaped objects interpreted as wool.



6. Fragment of Rolling from Seal k3  
A1q922.6 (Photo E8b-1410)

1 rolling: A1q922.6

From what is extant, we cannot tell whether the legend box was placed above a secondary motif or not.

In this scene a bearded figure, wearing a pointed helmet with flaps in front of his ear, is facing right. He is nude on his upper body. A portion of an unidentified geometric object is shown in the upper part of the field.

#### Scene 4: God with raised foot

k4 *Tupkiš en[dan Urkeš]* “Tupkish, king of Urkesh”  
(Fig. 5)



7. Fragment of Rolling from Seal k4  
A1q914.8 (Photo E8b-0725)

2 rollings on the same sealing: A1q914.8

The legend box may have been placed above a secondary motif, but it is hard to judge, because the rolling is fan-like (i.e., the seal has been rotated with a slight pivoting motion around the bottom), and this makes it difficult to judge how much space may be left below the box (the lower edge of which is abraded).

The most complete figure of this scene is a bearded god wearing a tucked up skirt. He holds a scimitar in his right hand with the left outstretched. His left leg is raised on an object not preserved in our rolling. A second rolling on this sealing includes traces of an unknown object in front of a reclining lion (?) at the feet of a figure in a long skirt. This figure may be interpreted as seated on a stool which has a different pattern than the throne in scene k2. (What is interpreted here as a stool looks like a KI sign in a legend box, but on close inspection this is unlikely.) It is also possible that here we have a case of a double rolling from two different seals and that this is a variation of the k2 scene.<sup>14</sup>

#### No scene preserved

k5 *[Tupkiš] [end]an [Urkeš].KI* “Tupkish, king of Urkesh”

1 rolling: A1q981.19

k6 *[Tupkiš] [end]a[n [Urkeš]* “Tupkish, king of Urkesh”

1 impression: A5.46



8. Fragment of Rolling (?) from Seal (?) k6  
A5.46 (Photo E8b-0718)

<sup>14</sup>) The various possibilities for interpreting this rolling will be discussed elsewhere. There is otherwise only one example of a sealing with two rollings from different seals.



The signs are larger than in the other legends, and give more the impression of handwriting than of carving. They are definitely in relief, hence this is not the fragment of a tablet. One may consider the possibility that this is the inside face of an envelope, the outer face of which, however, does not preserve any trace of writing. The reading is very uncertain.

### 5. The Queen's Seals

In all of her seals, the queen is depicted in a very similar manner, so much so that she is recognizable even on the smallest fragment. This is clearly the case in Fig. 4 c where her head, through an accident of preservation, is isolated on the fragment and therefore emphasized. This is probably a head from one of the four seals already known in the corpus where she is seated facing right holding a cup; however, given the consistency with which she is represented, it is possible that it is a portion of another seal belonging to her or her household.<sup>15</sup> In this fragment and other seals where she is depicted she is characterized by her hair style. The portion of her hair on top of her head is shown high and with diagonal lines. Her attendants' hair at this point is also rendered in the same manner (e.g., in q4). The rest of her hair is long and clearly braided. The hair of her attendants is held up in a bun which is a typical Akkadian hair style for both men and women. The queen's hair is decorated with a braid ornament.<sup>16</sup> She is also depicted as having an overlarge eye; this is a characteristic feature of the figures in all the queen's seals, but not those of the king.<sup>17</sup> In those scenes where she is not holding a child, she is holding a cup. On her own seals she wears a tiered garment (where we have

evidence for her garment) but on the seals of Zamena, her nurse, she is shown wearing a fringed robe. Therefore from our present evidence it appears that the tiered garment is viewed as a more important dress and adds to the impression that the seals of both the queen and the king are oriented toward a dynastic program.

### Scene 1: Bending figures

q1 *Uqnūtum* NIN "Uqnitum, the queen" (Fig. 6)  
3 rollings: A1.301; A1q977.15; A5.78



9. Fragment of Rolling from Seal q1  
A1.301 (Photo E8a-2605)

<sup>15</sup> The depictions of the queen (and probably the two older royal children) are meant to represent a specific person who can be recognized even when there is no identification in the inscription. However, this is not a specific portrait in the full sense of the word. This subject will be addressed further in future articles on the seals of the king and queen. For the possibility of portraiture on seals see Franke 1977, p. 66, see also p. 63.

<sup>16</sup> This detail was the subject of much lively discussion with Cecily J. Hilsdale in the field and with our colleagues in Vienna. One of the possibilities seriously considered was that this was a spool for winding thread and therefore was a symbol for the queen (and her daughter who is also shown connected with it in q4, the best preserved of the queen's scenes). A spool was a possible interpretation because we noted that the hair or thread extended down from the piece only on one side showing that the hair or thread is wound around the exterior of the object. (We made very detailed photographs of this in the field which will be included in the final publication.) This seemed more likely with thread than with thicker hair. We opt here for the braid ornament interpretation, also owing to useful discussions with Jeanny V. Canby and Elizabeth Barber, for whose contribution we are grateful.

<sup>17</sup> The question of style and local seal carving workshops will be discussed in the future.

The sign NIN is very clear, hence there is no need to assume that it is an incomplete form of DAM.<sup>18</sup> The legend is placed horizontally as if being supported by the back of the two bending figures – though only the back of one figure almost touches the frame. This is remarkable on two counts. First, it is very unusual for legend boxes to be placed horizontally. We do not know of any examples for the third millennium.<sup>19</sup> Even in later periods, a parallel orientation of writing and scene seems to be relatively rare, and limited to special cases.<sup>20</sup> Second, the

<sup>18</sup> For two Early Dynastic examples of a woman whose name occurs with both titles NIN and DAM PN (on the same seal) see Nagel 1959, p. 153.

<sup>19</sup> Boehmer 1965, Abb. 509, shows a small empty horizontal frame, but this can hardly qualify as an inscription box.

<sup>20</sup> In general see Collon 1988, p. 107. See also Teissier 1986, p. 172-73 (Aramaic!); Matthews, D. 1990, # 129, 138, 151, 154, 156, 308.

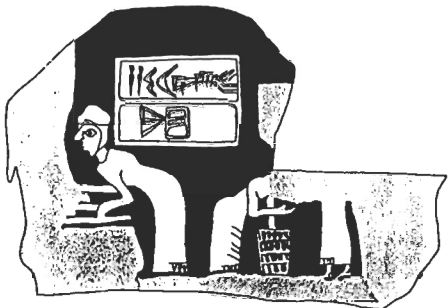



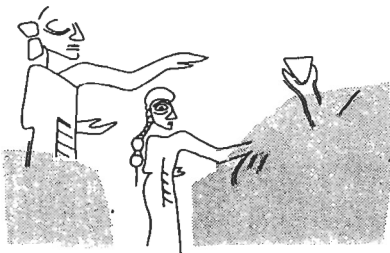
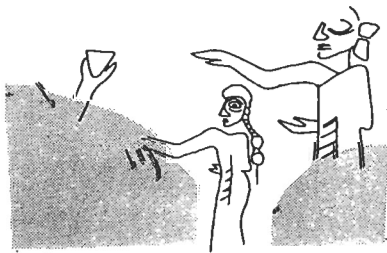
	Original rolling	Mirror image of original rolling
<p>q1</p> <p>Bending figures</p> <p>NIN</p> <p>ZA.GÌN-ni-tum</p> <p>NIN</p>		
<p>q2</p> <p>Royal consorts</p> <p>DAM Tupkiš</p> <p>GÌN.ZA-ni-tum</p> <p>DAM</p> <p>Tup-ki-iš</p>		
<p>q3</p> <p>Boar</p> <p>DAM a</p> <p>GÌN.ZA-ni-tum</p> <p>DAM</p>		
<p>q4</p> <p>Lyre a</p> <p>DAM b</p> <p>ZA.GÌN-ni-tum</p> <p>DAM</p>		
<p>q5</p> <p>Lyre b ?</p>		

Fig. 6. The Queen's Seals (q1 - q5)

Scale 2:1  1 cm

placement above the backs of two persons, without a secondary motif, suggests a close integration, on the compositional level, between legend and iconography; the two persons cannot be interpreted as a secondary motif since both are shown as being only partly beneath the inscription box. Since this is a recurrent feature of Urkeš glyptic, we may well assume that a message is intended, for instance the submission of the servants made to carry as a burden the legend box with the name of their mistress. (See also the case of the cook's seal, h3). Since this is the only scene where the title NIN "queen" occurs, such a message seems particularly appropriate.

To the right of the legend as shown in our drawing, there are traces (preserved in A1.301 only) of what may be a third case, which would flank asymmetrically the other two showing clearly (with an effect somewhat analogous to what we have with the two seals of the nurse, h1-2). But the traces are too faint and inconclusive.

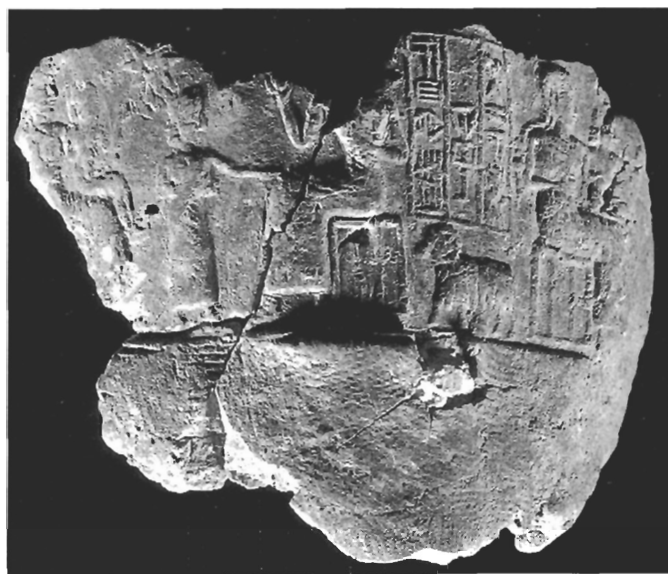
The reading *Uqnitum*, Akkadian for "lapis-lazuli girl,"<sup>21</sup> has been suggested by P. Steinkeller, and seems more plausible that the alternative reading *Zakuryatum*, Amorite hypocoristic from a perfect *dakur-a*. Graphemically, the alternation ZA.GÎN ~ GÎN.ZA is more suited for a logogram than for a syllabic writing; also the value *iā* for the sign NI is less probable. Historically, too, it is more likely that at this early date the position of the queen of Urkeš may have been held by an Akkadian than by an Amorite, assuming that onomastic use reflects ethnic affiliation.

The rolling shows two figures bending in opposite directions. The one on the left wears a fringed skirt. The smaller one on the right bends over a tall basket. Facing her is a figure in a fringed garment. The two bending figures are different in size and the inscription box is off center and closer to the head of the figure on the left.

## Scene 2: Royal consorts

### q2 *Uqnitum DAM Tupkiš* "Uqnitum, the wife of Tupkish"

<sup>21</sup>) Attested in Old Babylonian, see *AHW*. Admittedly, the reading *Uqnitum* should be accepted with caution. For instance, we still ignore what might have been local peculiarities of the Urkeš scribal tradition in dealing with both logographic and syllabic writing; while on the other hand, if the queen's ethnic affiliation is Akkadian, that might have conditioned the way her name was written even in Urkeš. There are further questions about the reading of the logogram and of the following NI sign, as well as of the overall meaning of the name. While it would be safer to retain the logographic reading ZA:KUR.NI-tum or KUR:ZA.NI-tum, as the case might be, or perhaps a transcription followed by a question mark (*Uqnitum*?) to underscore the fact that there remains an element of uncertainty, we decided, for the sake of simplicity, to use *Uqnitum* throughout, interpreting it as an Akkadian name. We also plan to return to a fuller discussion of this topic elsewhere. We are particularly grateful to Hans Hirsch for discussing this matter with us.



10. Fragment of Rolling from Seal q2; see Fig. 4b  
A1.162 (Photo B8a-0730)

(Fig. 4 and 6)

6 rollings: A1.162; A1.231a; A1.231b; A1.231c; A1.388; A1q963.27

The legend box is placed above a ram as a filler motif.

This is the only legend which mentions the name of the husband after the title DAM "wife."<sup>22</sup> It is also the only seal which represents two seated figures facing each other. We understand the mention of the husband's name to convey the same message represented by the iconography, namely a position of near equality between the two seated figures, the queen on the left and the king on the right.<sup>23</sup> If there is a difference between the two seated figures, it is because the smaller figures face in the direction of only one seated figure, the king, who is thus the center of attention. We assume that there is a double dynastic message behind such a representation. (1) The queen stresses her role as the king's principal wife; this is further stressed by seals q3-8, where the title DAM occurs, strangely, in isolation, i.e., without a following genitive referring to the husband – something for which we do not know of parallels from third millennium glyptic. This indicates that she is *the* wife, as distinct from secondary wives or concubines. (2) The smaller figure touching the lap of the figure to the right may well be the crown prince. He bears a certain resemblance to the small figure in the king's seal with the crouching lion (k2). If so, the dynastic implication is that *the* wife of the king is the one who is at the same time the mother of the heir apparent.

This scene is an important dynastic statement in that it shows the queen, two royal children, and a figure who

<sup>22</sup>) Such titulary occurs frequently on seals, see, e.g., Nagel 1959, p. 153ff.

<sup>23</sup>) This figure, however, wears a fringed garment which appears to be a less important robe. It may be that he wears this precisely because it is a seal belonging to the queen.

may be the king. The queen is wearing a long tiered dress and holds a child on her lap. The child has different proportions than the child she holds in the seals of Zamena (h1-2).<sup>24</sup> Here the child appears nude and holds one hand out. Above this hand is a star. Next is a smaller figure facing right wearing a long fringed garment and feathered crown (hat?). He appears to be the same child as in k2 because he is in the same position and dressed the same; even some of his facial features are quite similar. While in this case he is standing on the ground, he is touching the lap of the seated figure opposite him. This seated figure wears a fringed garment and holds a cup. Both stools are patterned with vertical panels. The second seated figure, unfortunately, had no identifiable head in the corpus so it is not clear whether it is male or female. Since this is the only seal inscription in which the queen is identified as the wife of Tupkish, we think that the second seated figure is indeed Tupkish. The fact that the young person is touching the lap of the (presumed) king may suggest a special dynastic link; i.e., it may suggest that he is the crown prince. A very well articulated ram is depicted under the inscription.

### Scene 3: Boar

q3 *Uqnūtum* DAM “Uqnitum, the wife” (Fig. 6)

8 rollings: A1.73; A1.173; A1.390 ?; A1q808.cx1; A1q923.7; A1q973.7 ?; A5.145; A5.189



11. Fragment of Rolling from Seal q3  
A1.390 (Photo E8b-1423)

<sup>24</sup>) Children appear in a few Akkadian seals from the South, e.g., Boehmer 1965, Abb. 555-559. It seems, however, that the representation of children is more common in the North, as seen from Chuera and Halawa besides Urkesh. See also Canby 1986. We will treat the comparative material in future articles.

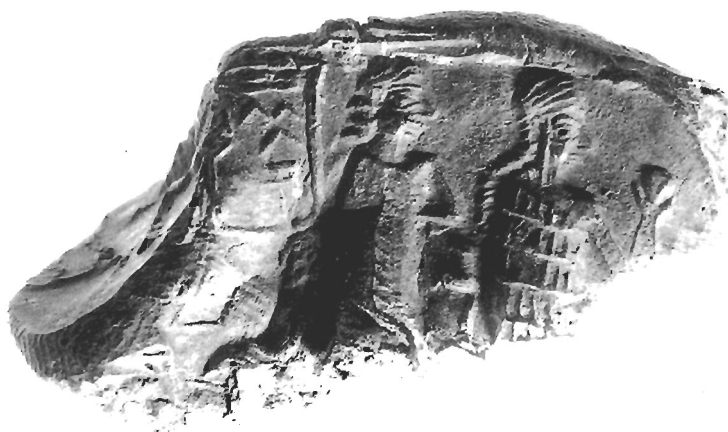
For the use of DAM in isolation see above, q2.

The seal inscription shares more traits with q2 than with q4-8: the transposition of the first two signs in the queen's name, and the fact that the name of the queen is not split on two lines. However, the scene shares with q4-7 the fact that a smaller figure is touching the lap of the queen, who is facing left, with an attendant standing behind her. Her position, namely the fact that she is seated on the right, is unusual as it only occurs in a reversal (q5); it is possible that this, too, is a reversal of a scene which we do not otherwise have in the corpus. The secondary motif below the inscription box is a boar or pig, which is very rare in third millennium art.

### Scene 4: Lyre

q4 *Uqnūtum* DAM “Uqnitum, the wife” (Fig. 6)

For the use of DAM in isolation see above, q2.



12. Fragment of Rolling from Seal q4  
A1.293a (Photo E8b-2712)



13. Fragment of Rolling from Seal q4  
A1.293b (Photo B8b-0410)



14. Fragment of Rolling from Seal q4  
A5.50 (Photo E7-1705)

34 rollings: A1.89a; A1.89b; A1.93; A1.107 ?; A1.186; A1.226; A1.258; A1.259; A1.266; A1.293a; A1.293b; A1.300; A1.312; A1.335; A1.358; A1.386; A1.399; A1.428; A1.481; A1.498; A1q809-c; A1q885.6; A1q903.3; A1q903.5; A1q922.1; A1q966.26; A1q974.18; A1q982.52; A1q982.55; A1q1007.40; A1q1021.3; A1q1029.4; A1q1052.1; A5q922.1

The arrangement of the legend is identical in q4-8: the name of the queen is written with the same sequence of signs, split in two lines within the same case. Apart from palaeographic peculiarities affecting the individual signs, the main difference is that the legends belonging to Scene 4 are slightly larger than those belonging to Scene 5.

Two groups of scenes belonging to the queen are characterized by having under the inscription box a depiction of a lyre player on the right and what we have interpreted as a singer on the left. They wear fringed garments and are seated on stools with a vertical pattern. The main scene includes a female attendant standing behind the seated queen who sits on a stool with a patterned seat. Facing the queen is a smaller figure, obviously a girl, in a long dress with long hair decorated with the same type of hair ornament near the bottom. She is shown touching the lap of the queen. Behind her is a female

attendant in a fringed dress and hair in a bun. In her left hand she holds a vessel (or a bag) while her elongated right arm is extended out over the head of the girl toward the queen. Since this girl is touching the lap of the queen and has the same hair style and ornament, we have interpreted her as a royal princess. This too is a scene which appears to have dynastic significance. The touching of the lap, here and in other seals of the queen (q2, q5-7) and of the king (k2) is done by the royal children and appears to have a bearing on the line of succession.

q5 ~ [Uqni]tum D]AM' "Uqnitum, the wife" (Fig. 6)

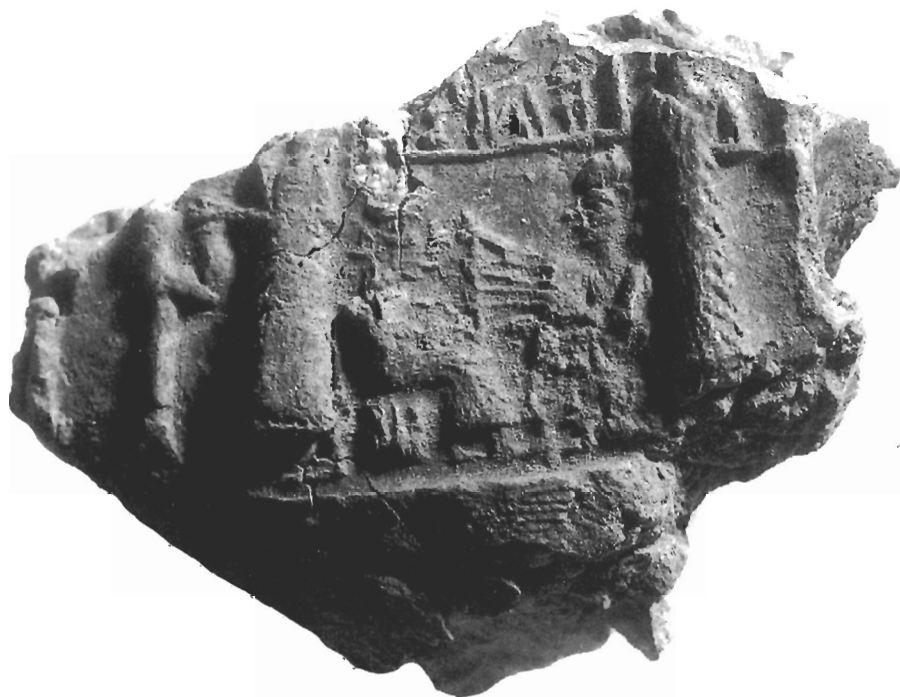
3 rollings: A1.86; A1.161; A1.165

For the use of DAM in isolation see above, q2.

The remainders of the legend on the three rollings are very fragmentary, hence we prefer not to give a copy of



15. Fragment of Rolling from Seal q6  
A1.101 (Photo E8a-2103)



16. Fragment of Rolling from Seal q6  
A1.412 (Photo B8-7770)



the cuneiform at this time. There appear to be traces of a DAM sign in the first case of the legend, which would indicate a negative rolling; the reading given above renders the positive.

The scene is in fact a mirror image of q4, from which it otherwise differs in that the attendant does not hold anything in her left hand, and her left hand is outstretched differently.

### Scene 5: Lyre and table

Three variations of the scenes where the lyre player and singer are depicted under the inscription include a table in the main portion of the scene. The best preserved is q6 which shows the same three figures as q4 on the left. It is not clear whether or not the girl wears a hair ornament in this scene. Behind the girl a high table is placed so that the second attendant has her arm extended

over the table instead of the girl. Scene q7 shows this same scene but on a smaller scale while the figures in q8 are larger. The attendant standing behind the queen is not preserved in either q7 or q8.

#### q6 *Uquītum* DAM “Uqnitum, the wife” (Fig. 7)

13 rollings: A1.101; A1.120; A1.129; A1.200; A1.261; A1.328b; A1.412; A1.435; A1.463; A1q963.24; A1q999.1; A5.86; A5.88

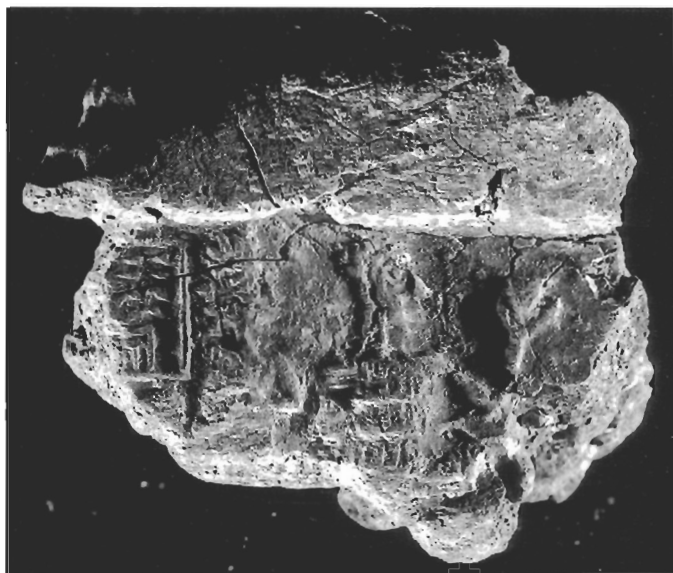
For the use of DAM in isolation see above, q2.

#### q7 *Uquītum* DAM “Uqnitum, the wife” (Fig. 7)

2 rollings: A1.7; A1.354

For the use of DAM in isolation see above, q2.

#### q8 ~ *Uquītum* DAM ? (Fig. 7)



17. Fragment of Rolling from Seal q6  
A1.120 (Photo E7-2113)



19. Fragment of Rolling from Seal q8  
A1.307 (Photo E8b-1502)



18. Fragment of Rolling from Seal q6  
A5.76 (Photo E7-1702)



20. Fragment of Rolling from Seal q8  
A1.403 (Photo E8b-1421)


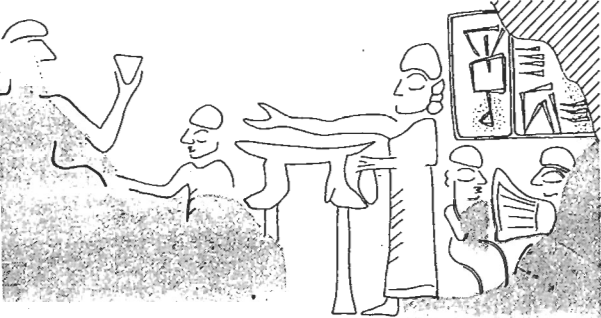

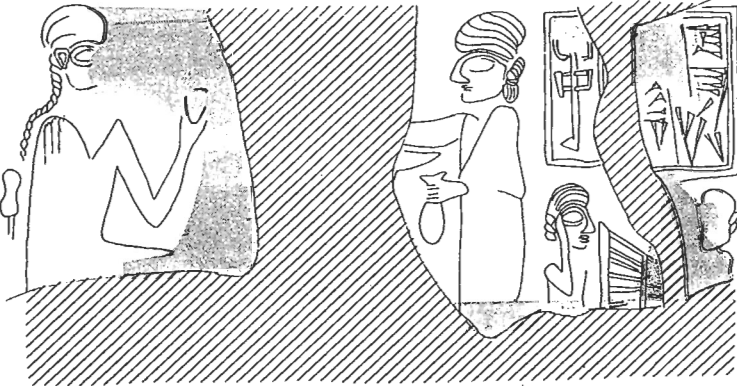
	Original rolling	Mirror image of original rolling
<p>q6</p> <p>Lyre and table a</p> <p>DAM c</p> <p>ZA.GÌN-ni<sup>1</sup>- -tum<sup>1</sup> DAM</p>		
<p>q7</p> <p>Lyre and table b</p> <p>DAM d</p> <p>[ZA.GÌN]-ni<sup>1</sup>- -tum<sup>1</sup> DAM</p>		
<p>q6-7</p> <p>Lyre and table</p> <p>DAM</p> <p>(conflated)</p>		
<p>q8</p> <p>Lyre and table c ?</p> <p>DAM e</p> <p>GÌN<sup>1?</sup>.ZA<sup>1?</sup>-ni<sup>1?</sup>- -[t]um<sup>1?</sup> D<sup>1</sup>AM</p>		

Fig. 7. The Queen's Seals (q6 - q8)

Scale 2:1 | 1 cm





21. Fragment of Rolling from Seal q8 (?); see Fig. 4c  
A1.237 (Photo E8a-0506)

4 rollings: A1.403; A1.307a; A1.307b; A1.237 (?)

For the use of DAM in isolation see above, q2.

It is not certain that the various sealings belong together, but the iconography contains variations of the main Lyre and Table scene. The cuneiform signs are also different from other DAM legends. In the second case there is a clear DAM sign, distinct from the others in our corpus. The signs at the top of the legend (from rolling A1.307a; A1.307b, not copied here, seems to have KUR in first position on the second line) may render a complex TUM sign at the top, followed by traces of KUR and by a full NI; if so, we would have a negative rendering of the name, with inversions of the lines: -<sup>1</sup>tum<sup>1</sup> | [ZA:K]<sup>1</sup>UR<sup>1</sup>-ni-. But this seems very unlikely, especially since the title DAM would not occur in final position, and since the scene is not reversed. Notice, also, that there seems to be a double frame around the top of the legend box.

It seems certain that the finely carved female head A1.237 (Fig. 4c) belongs to the seated person on the left of this scene, thus making it a “portrait” of the queen.

## 6. The Queen’s Household

### Scene 1: The nurse (seals of Zamena)

There are two seals with a similar scene belonging to the nurse Zamena. This is one of the instances in the Urkesh seal impressions in which the profession of the seal owner is clearly indicated by the iconography of the scene. Furthermore, one of the figures in the scene can even be interpreted as the nurse herself! On the far left is a standing attendant in a fringed dress with her left arm raised. In front of her is a seated figure interpreted as the queen mentioned in the inscription. The seated figure can

be identified as the queen herself for a number of different reasons: she is the same figure as in the other seals belonging to the queen and in each case is depicted with an elaborate ornament in her long hair,<sup>25</sup> she is mentioned in the seal inscription, and she is holding a child on her lap who is obviously the charge of the nurse. The queen sits on a simple stool wearing what appears to be a fringed dress.<sup>26</sup> The child sitting on her lap wears a fringed garment and may have a hat on. This child seems to be smaller than the child in the q2 seal and may indeed be a different child; the fact that here the child is dressed may indicate that it is the elder of the two small children depicted in these scenes (see q2 for the other child). Over the raised hand of the child is a star. The nurse is represented in a fringed garment with her hair tied in a bun. What is immediately striking about this figure is her obviously intimate connection with the child: she is holding both the hand and the wrist. The royal seals are characterized in part by the intimate hand gestures of the figures and this one is particularly striking and appropriate. Under the inscription is a reclining human-headed bearded bull which has his right front leg bent in the same fashion as the recently discovered statue from Brak (Oates and Oates 1994). The inscription box is truncated above his head so that it reflects the outlines of his body; the integration of the shape of the inscription box with the secondary motif and in some cases with the overall seal design is one of the characteristics of the royal seals.

h1 ~ ;KIŠIB ;Zamena ;UM.ME.DA ;Uqnūtum “seal of Zamena, the nurse of Uqnūtum” (Fig. 8)

17 rollings: A1.88; A1.139; A1.196; A1.208; A1.286; A1.298; A1q935.15; A1q944.7; A1q968.5; A1q985.4; A1q1007.12; A1q11032.8; A1q11051.12; A5.43; A5.73; A5.186; A5q712.2

The reading is based on a mirror image of the rolling, an interpretation which was first suggested by Michael Jursa. Note the transposition of the first two signs in the queen’s name, and the peculiar shape of the sign TUM (the reading of which is, however, beyond doubt given all the parallels from our corpus).

The use of the word KIŠIB “seal” in first position occurs in Old Assyrian.<sup>27</sup> The name Zamena is Hurrian, based on an interpretation by both Wilhelm and Salvini, which will be published elsewhere. The nurse (UM.ME.DA)<sup>28</sup> identifies herself as being in the service

<sup>25</sup>) In her own seals it is clear that her hair is braided.

<sup>26</sup>) Her dress is not well preserved in the rollings of either of the two Zamena seals; however a small fringe at the bottom of her dress is indicated. In her own seals she wears a tiered robe.

<sup>27</sup>) Teissier 1994, p. 262. Collon 1988, p. 105, says that the expression “*seal of X*” originated in Syria in the Old Babylonian period and spread to Mesopotamia subsequently.”

<sup>28</sup>) We owe the reading to Steinkeller and Wilhelm. For the role of the nurse, and the interesting correlation to the Daguna seal, see P. Steinkeller, “More on the Ur III Royal Wives,” ASJ

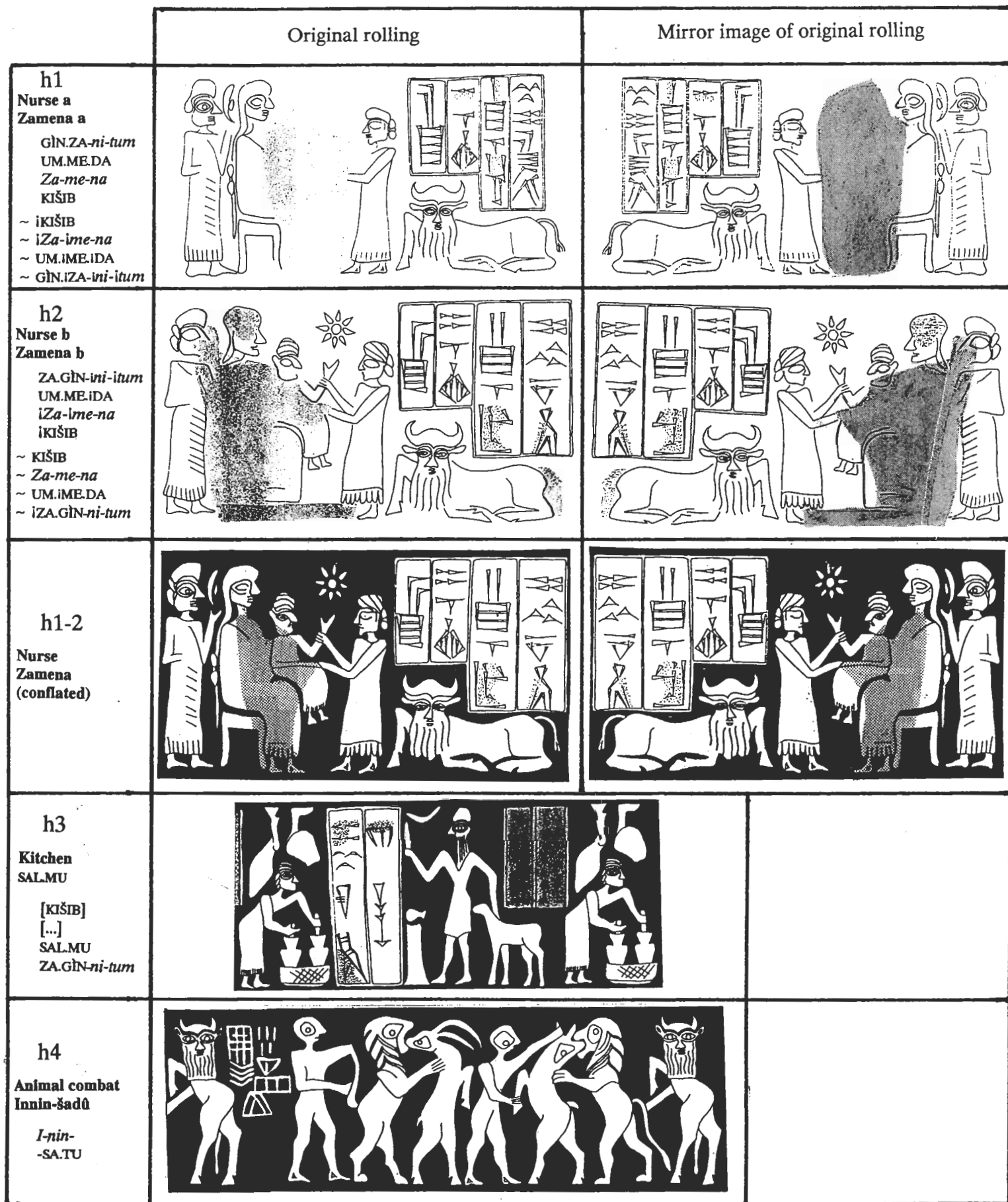


Fig. 8. Seals of the Queen's Household

Scale 2:1  1 cm



22. Fragment of Rolling from Seal h1  
A1.139 (Photo B7-5739)



23. Fragment of Rolling from Seal h2  
A1.148 (Photo E8a-3003)

of Uqnitum, on behalf of her child, who is presumably sitting on the lap of the mother.

**h2 ~ KIŠIB Zamena UM.ME.DA Uqnitum** “seal of Zamena, the nurse of Uqnitum” (Fig. 8)

11 rollings: A1.78; A1.112; A1.131; A1.148; A1.485; A1q902.2; A1q949.11; A1q978.8; A1q965.10; A5.54; A5.81

The seal is slightly larger than h1. Note the vertical flip of 5 different signs. Other than for this and other differences in the writing of the inscription, h2 is identical to h1.



24. Fragment of Rolling from Seal h3  
A1.213 (Photo E8a-1804)

### Scene 2: Kitchen (seal of the cook)

**h3 [KIŠIB ...] SAL.MU Uqnitum** “[seal of PN], the cook of Uqnitum” (Fig. 8)

27 rollings: A1.152a; A1.152b; A1.152c; A1.171; A1.182; A1.213; A1.233; A1.247; A1.309a; A1.309b; A1.353; A1.396; A1.397; A1.430; A1.469; A1.493; A1q809.5; A1q903.6; A1q935.16; A1q968.3; A1q982.51; A1q1022.7; A1q1050.7; A5.149a; A5.149b; A5.182; A5q707.2x1

The legend box is split in two. The first two cases are placed above the figure of a lamb, which is, however, not a secondary motif, but an integral part of the composition. The cuneiform characters in these two cases are completely missing, and nothing can be read, apparently because the original seal was badly worn. It is possible, however, that they may have contained the word KIŠIB followed by the personal name of the cook, as with the seals of the nurse, Zamena (h1-2). The other two cases occupy the entire height of the seal. The figures of the woman bending and of the butcher leading the animal with one hand, and wielding the knife with the other, are facing the two tall cases. It is likely that this is intended, in order to convey a particular message (similar to what is the case with the NIN seal, q1): the servants who do the actual work in preparing the food are facing (in sign of respect) the legend box with the profession of the female cook<sup>29</sup> of the queen. It seems certain, at any rate, that the woman who bends down doing menial work is not the female cook to whom the seal belongs.

The two pots contained in a basket are reminiscent of the pictograph which lies behind the sign GĀR (Deimel 319: 9), which represents the logogram for *lildu* “cream.” While the container corresponding to the pictograph might have been hung for churning, the scene shown on our seal might represent another means of achieving the same goal.

While the nurse has two seals in this corpus, the cook has only one. She too has a scene which reflects her

3 (1981), p. 88-90. For the possible provenience of the Daguna seal from Urkesh, hence from Mozan, see Nougayrol 1960, p. 213.

<sup>29</sup>) Two instances of (male) cooks owning seals are known from the Akkadian corpus, see Edzard 1968-69, p. 18. For the Ur III period see Franke 1977, p. 62f.

profession. A female servant bends over her work; she is apparently churning, the slight difference in the level of the two hands suggesting a vertical motion, as is to be expected with a churn. Above her are hanging two legs of meat. On the other side of the centrally placed inscription is a man with knife in hand leading a lamb. In front is a stand with an unclear object on it; a crescent moon is placed in the field. As mentioned above, the inscription which gives her profession is quite worn and the one where her name was presumably carved is gone. In contrast, the scene is clear and showing no signs of wear; it may be that for some reason the scene was recut but not the inscription.

### Scene 3: Animal combat (seal of Innin-šadū)

#### h4 *Innin-šadū* “Innin-šadū” (Fig. 8)

26 rollings: A1.90; A1.96; A1.146; A1.193; A1.223; A1.229; A1.256; A1.347; A1.389; A1.421; A1q928.11; A1q931.28; A1q937.23; A1q937.25; A1q960.12; A1q963.26; A1q975.16a; A1q975.16b; A1q976.15; A5.49; A5.79; A5.80; A5.82; A5.170; A5q933.7; A5q947.6.

For the interpretation of the name as “Innin-is-the-mountain” see Gelb 1960, p. 74, 2.

The name occurs twice in early Old Akkadian inscriptions. In the obelisk of Maništušu it refers to one of thirty witnesses of the sale of the large field of Girtab (Gelb *et al.* 1991, p. 128, #40 B xiv 5), and in the Sippar kudurru it refers to the recipient of an additional payment (*ibid.*, p. 150: 41 l.e. 10). It also occurs once as the name of an individual in an administrative text from Eshnunna (MAD I 163 ii 33).

Given the relatively high number of rollings, the pos-

sibility may be considered that Innin-šadū resided in Urkesh at the time the containers sealed in his name were stored. Since these containers were deposited in the wing of the Storehouse associated with the queen, who also bears an Akkadian name, we may hypothesize that Innin-šadū was a southern dignitary, possibly even related to the queen. Even if the seal was carved locally (see presently), the clear employment of southern models would fit the presumed ethnic affiliation of the owner. Of course, all of this is purely inferential, and it could very well be that Innin-šadū is not a member of the queen’s household.

The legend is given without a box, and is placed partly above the back of a human headed bull.

Note the dislocation of the two components of the TU sign.

This scene is close to southern models dating to ED III or early Old Akkadian. The motif of groups of contestants involving animals and humans is common in the south. Our contestants are seen in two groups which involve almost the same figures but with an exchange of position in the case of the lion and the horned animal. A rampant human headed bull stands next to the inscription which is not contained in a box and only gives the name of the seal owner. A nude figure has his hand raised toward a rampant lion attacking a rampant gazelle or antelope; his other hand holds its tail. The second group again begins with the hero who this time has his arm extended up toward the head of a horned animal, shown with short horns; he holds the hoof of the animal. The lion attacks this animal in the same manner as before except that they both face the opposite direction. With these reversals, not only is the integration of the figures different in the total design but the second lion, especially, is depicted as the mirror image of the first except for the tail. Given the interest in the queen’s seals for reversals and slight changes in the iconography and composition, it would seem that this seal was carved in Urkesh by a local seal carver very familiar with southern models.

### 7. The Uninscribed Seals

The corpus of uninscribed seals can be divided into two groups. Seals carved locally in a northern schematic style (not illustrated here) and seals related to those carved in the south which are early Akkadian in date. Among the seals related iconographically to Akkadian seals, some have motifs identical to those used in the south while others have been inspired by southern examples but contain variations either not found or not common in the south.<sup>30</sup> It is possible that even those seals

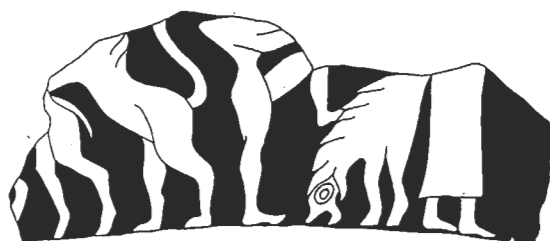


25. Fragment of Rolling from Seal h4 A5.80 (Photo E7-2211)

<sup>30</sup>) We will not discuss here the question of whether or not the various actual seals were present in Urkesh/Mozan; that will be discussed elsewhere in connection with the horizontal distribution of all the seal impressions. For the schematic seals see Kelly-Buccellati, *forthc.*



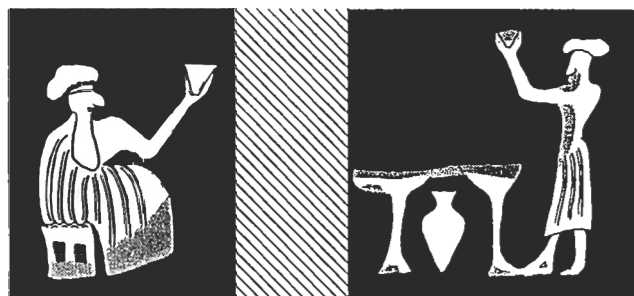
a. Stylized animal combat



b. Contest



c. Pottery making



d. Banquet



e. Double-faced god



f. Etana myth

**Fig. 9. Uninscribed seals**

Scale 2:1 |—————| 1 cm



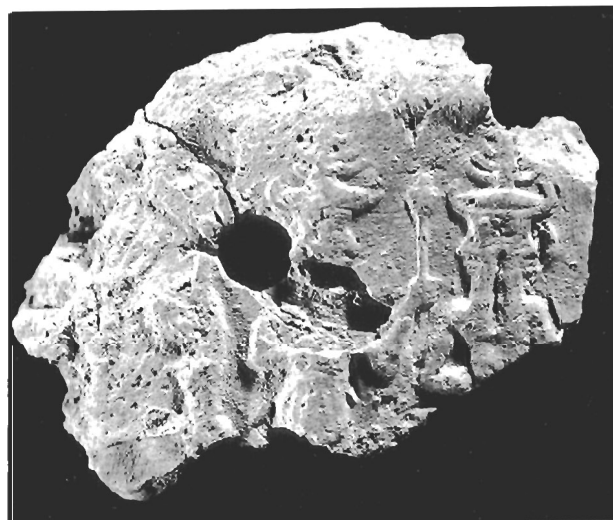
26. Fragment of Rolling from Uninscribed Seal:  
Contest  
A5.135 (Photo E8b-1411) – see Fig. 9b

which follow closely southern models were carved in Urkesh given the lively seal cutting tradition exhibited in the city.

Included in our motifs are animal combat scenes which show two pairs of contestants. In Fig. 9 a (5 rollings: A1.284; A1.290; A1.292; A1.465; A1.503) two interlocking pairs of animals can be identified as lions attacking horned animals. The style is very close to southern examples.<sup>31</sup> A second, incomplete scene (Fig. 9 b; a single rolling, A5.135), represents animals and humans in combat. Here the scene shows a lion attacking an animal and a human with his leg up on the back of a reversed lion; a long skirted human stands beyond. While there are seals in the south showing a nude hero with his leg on the back of an animal, long skirted figures are not part of this scene. A secondary motif found in the Urkesh corpus appears to show a stage of pottery making.<sup>32</sup> Fig. 9 c (a single rolling: A1.364) depicts a double register behind a standing figure in a soft hat and fringed garment. The upper register, which is similar to a shelf, includes two jars placed on pottery stands while the bottom shows a woman working on a jar which in this case is placed on an open stand of a type not found in our ceramic inventory. A banquet is represented in an incomplete scene; in this case we are not sure of the shape of the table and the relationship of the vessel to it, Fig. 9 d (three rollings on a single sealing, A5.91). The bearded man on the left wears a soft cap which is found on other scenes in this corpus. Some of our impressions represent deities known from Akkadian seals. One example, Fig. 9 e (single rolling: A1.483), depicts the Double-Faced god, the vizier of the water god, Ea; another god is shown holding a mace. One Akkadian myth, that of Etana, is represented in our corpus Fig. 9 f (single rolling: A5q680.o). Our preserved portion of the sealing shows three caprids, the



27. Fragment of Rolling from Uninscribed Seal:  
Banquet  
A5.91 (Photo E8-2012) – see Fig. 9d



28. Fragment of Rolling from Uninscribed Seal:  
Double-faced God  
A1.483 (Photo E8a-2502) – see Fig. 9e

dog, and part of the bird's tail. While this is a short selection of the uninscribed rollings in the Royal Storehouse, it does reflect the richness of the corpus.

## 8. Notes on Function

The seal impressions found in the storehouse AK provide an excellent opportunity for studying the institutional setting within which seals were used. We have in

<sup>31</sup>) Boehmer 81, dated to Akkadisch Ib; this example has a tree between the horned animals while ours may be legs which have been multiplied in order to obtain the patterned effect.

<sup>32</sup>) Porada 1984, pp. 21-5.






















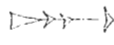















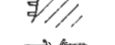









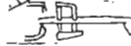
















































1. 13 AN  k1  k5	 q3  q4  q6  q7  q8 ?  h1  h2 ~  h3	14. 335 DA  k1 ~  k6 i  h1  h2 ~	18. 546 KEŠ <sub>3</sub>  k1 ~  k2  k6
2. 58 TU  h4			19. 554 SAL  h3
3. 61 MU  h3		15. 366 KUR  q1  q2  q3  q4  q6  q8 ?  h1  h2 ~  h3	20. 556 NIN  q1  h4
4. 70 NA  h1  h2 ~	11. 212 IŠ  k1 ~  k2  k3  k4  k5  k6  q2		21. 557 DAM  q2  q3  q4  q6  q7  q8
5. 99 EN  k1 ~  k3  k4			
6. 104 SA  h4			
7. 134 UM  h1  h2 ~	12. 231 NI  q1  q2  q3  q4  q6  q7 ?  q8 ?  h1  h2 ~  h3	16. 461 KI  k1:1 ~  k1:3 ~  k2  k3  k4  k5  q2	22. 586 ZA  q1  q2  q3  q4  q6  q8 ?  h1:1  h1:3  h2:2 ~  h2:4 ~ i  h3
8. 138 DUB  k1 ~  k2  k3  k4  k5		17. 532 ME  h1:2  h1:3  h2:2 ~  h2:3 ~ i	
9. 142 I  h4	13. 314 KIŠIB  h1  h2 ~		
10. 207 TUM  q1  q2			

Fig. 10. Complete Sign List

Scale 2:1  1 cm

Note. The symbol ~ indicates that the sign is taken from the mirror image of the original rolling;  
the symbol i indicates that the sign is flipped vertically.



fact a diversified inventory which can be studied within a context that is equally rich of information: a large repertoire of seal designs with informative cuneiform legends; a well defined assemblage of items on which the sealings were used; a well stratified floor accumulation that contains a good number of other artifacts and samples, for which a very detailed accurate recording of emplacement is available; a building with a clear layout and a well understood depositional history; and a historical setting which is already relatively well known. A full study of all these dimensions of our data will require more time and effort, and from such a study we will be able to derive much new insight into the nature and function not only of our specific finds, but also of such larger issues as sealing and storage procedures. But for now we can offer already the following interrelated considerations, which will serve as a conclusion.

(1) Most of the items documented through the impression they have left on the sealings are containers, whereas *door sealings* are missing almost completely. This may be explained assuming that the latter were registered and discarded in a controlled way, and thus did not come to be deposited on the floor of the room.

(2) The proper function of the small spaces which we have called “vaults” (see above, Section 2) need not necessarily be related to security factors. It is quite possible that the thickness of the walls was due more simply to such practical considerations as the need to keep perishable goods in cold storage. This would account well for the symmetrical position of the two vaults in the center of the building, where they are placed side by side and against an interior wall which is thicker than the others (it has the same thickness as the perimetral walls). The presence of a series of sealings with the impression of the seal of the female cook of the queen may suggest that what was being stored were important food supplies which needed to be kept in a cool place, such as wine.

(3) There is *multiple attribution* of seals to the same individual: four (possibly six) are attested for the king, and eight for the queen.<sup>33</sup> Note that in no other case are

there as many instances of multiple attribution as are known for queen Uqnitum. In addition, the presence of uninscribed seals in the Assur grave cited by Larsen (cited in the last note) suggests the likely possibility that some or several of the impressions of uninscribed seals found in Sector B of the royal storehouse AK may also belong to queen Uqnitum. It must be stressed that the cases of Mozan and Mari (also cited in the last note) are very distinct from other examples of multiple attribution, because in these two cases we have a synchronic use of different seals attributed to the same authority, whereas in the other cases multiple attribution is distributed through time. The stratigraphic definition of the Mari seal impressions is not as well known, however, so that the analysis of the seals from Mozan/Urkesh becomes all the more significant.

(4) Given the nature of the building in which the sealings are found, it is clear that the king and/or the queen would *not personally* affix their seal(s) on the goods being stored. Hence we need not assume a personal appropriation of the seals by the originating authority.

(5) We must assume, instead, *multiple entitlement*, i.e., a situation whereby several distinct individuals were entitled to act as representatives of the person whose name was on the seal (see also Larsen 1977, p. 99f.). It is possible that entitlement applied not so much to single individuals, as to offices dealing with certain commodities, so that there would be a correlation between the type of goods stored and the seal used.

(6) The representatives entitled to use the royal seals were not necessarily identified by name on the seal legends. In other words, they *would seal on behalf of the originating authority* rather than in their own name. The same may apply to the other inscribed seals, in the sense that people other than Zamena, the cook or Innin-šadū may have sealed the goods at the point of origin on behalf of the individual seal owners.

(7) The phenomenon described as a multiple entitlement of seals may provide an explanation for a puzzling aspect of our inventory, namely the recurrent use of such seal cutting techniques as *seal reversal and vertical flip*. The Mozan seals are of high quality in terms of manufacturing and belong to the highest ranks of society, hence economy, carelessness or incompetence on the part of the seal cutter do not seem to be the motive for either reversal or vertical flip. Given the clear pattern of multiple entitlement, the need might have been felt for no two seals to be exactly identical, so as to trace, for instance, the subordinate who had used the seal on behalf of the seal owner on any given occasion.

(8) The seals used for containers that were stored in the AK building are “*royal*” seals in a special sense. Neither were they reserved for personal royal use, nor

<sup>33</sup> For parallels in the Early Dynastic period see Nagel 1959, pp. 154-56 (3 seals of Lugalanda-nutunga of Lagaš). – For Ur III see Steinkeller 1977, p. 46 and p. 51, n. 40 (3 seals of Arad-Nanna the sukal-mah; 2 seals of Ur-Lisi, ensi of Umma; 2 seals of Aradani, a judge of Ur; 2 seals of a certain Gudea of Lagaš; 2 seals of Abbakalla of Lagaš; and 2 seals of Ninlilia, wife of the ensi of Umma); also for Ur III see Waetzoldt 1991, p. 641 (each scribe had at least 2 seals, some had 3 or 4, and only one had 6 or possibly 7). – For Mari see Parrot 1959, p. 162-67 and G. Dossin, *ibid.*, p. 253 (3 or possibly 4 seals of Zimri-Lim, and 1 of queen Shiptu). – For the Old Assyrian period see Larsen 1977, p. 98 (3 cylinder seals buried in a grave in Assur, one of them inscribed) and p. 99f. – For the Nuzi period see Stein 1993, p. 72-73 (higher level functionaries have 2 or 3 seals, except for one with 5, while lower level administrators and herdsman have

more, specifically: one with 7, five with 6, four with 5, four with 4, fourteen with 3). – See also Haussperger 1991, p. 65.

were they seals of office granted by the king to his officials (Zettler 1977): in the latter case, the name of the king appears in first, that of the official in second position. Our seals belong to a third category: seals of the royal administration used anonymously by officials who represent directly the royal authority.

One may consider the following scenario with regard to what we have called multiple entitlement. The seals could have been placed on their respective containers not within the storehouse itself, but rather at the point of origin. In this case they would have served almost as much the function of an address label as that of identification of ownership. Such a situation would have obtained only if the point of origin was within the immediate sphere of influence of the city, so that the goods from any given place could be sealed each time by the same functionary working in direct relationship with the storehouse. One may note that the administrative texts from area F1 in Mozan/Urkesh refer to workmen from villages and workshops which are presumed to have been in the immediate vicinity of Mozan (Milano 1991, p. 22f.).

It is tempting to explain the great preponderance, in our assemblage, of the queen's seals by assuming that the western wing of the storehouse (excavated down to its earliest floor) is the queen's wing, and that the mirror image wing to the east might be accordingly the king's wing. It could also be, of course, that the entire storehouse belongs to the queen and her household, and that it might thus provide archaeological evidence for the institution known in Sumerian as é-MÍ (see Van De Mieroop 1989, 57f.). Future excavations will undoubtedly provide the answer, because the eastern wing appears to be better preserved than the western wing. This does not necessarily mean that we are likely to find some of the items that had been stored there, because the building was not destroyed, and thus it had been properly emptied of its major objects before the higher (later) accumulation took place; apart from small discarded items like the seal impressions, and the equally small tablet fragments, nothing of importance has been found in this floor accumulation nor is it likely to be found in the adjacent sector. (It is interesting to note that several tablet fragments were also found immediately outside the building, along its western wall, where there is a drain that leads to an outside street (?) and presumably comes from Sector C of the storehouse (see Fig. 3). This leads us to hypothesize that sector C might have housed scribal quarters.)

The location near a presumed city gate suggests that this may have been a storehouse placed next to the access to a major western road on which the goods that were being stored were travelling. What seems certain, in any case, is that we have here a royal storehouse, and that most seals were used locally, rather than having been placed on containers with goods imported from elsewhere. In the eventuality that the goods were sealed before reaching the storehouse, as has just been sug-

gested, this would still have happened within the immediate territorial hinterland of the city and the palace. This has two important consequences for us. (1) The workshop or workshops to which we owe the manufacturing of the seals must be Urkesh workshops. (2) The argument for the identification of Urkesh as Mozan is all the stronger.

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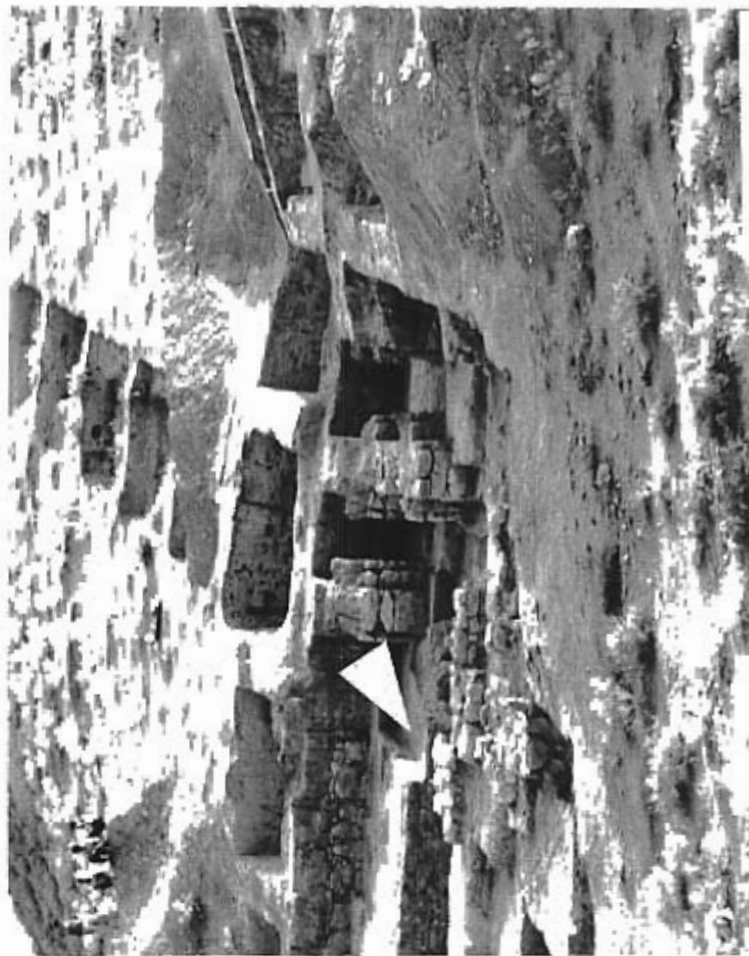
### Index by Field Number

A1.7	q7	A1.200	q6	A1.312	q4	A1q808.cx1	q3
A1.73	q3	A1.208	h1	A1.328b	q6	A1q809-c	q4
A1.78	h2	A1.213	h3; III. 24	A1.335	q4	A1q809.5	h3
A1.86	q5	A1.221	k2	A1.347	h4	A1q885.6	q4
A1.88	h1	A1.223	h4	A1.353	h3	A1q902.2	h2
A1.89a	q4	A1.226	q4	A1.354	q7	A1q903.3	q4
A1.89b	q4	A1.229	h4	A1.358	q4	A1q903.5	q4
A1.90	h4	A1.231a	q2	A1.364	Section 7	A1q903.6	h3
A1.93	q4	A1.231b	q2	A1.386	q4	A1q914.8a	k4; III. 7
A1.96	h4	A1.231c	q2	A1.388 ?	q3	A1q914.8b	k4
A1.101	q6; III. 15	A1.233	h3	A1.389	h4	A1q922.1	q4
A1.107 ?	q4	A1.237	q8 ?; III. 21	A1.390 ?	q3; III. 11	A1q922.6	k3; III.6
A1.112	h2	A1.247	h3	A1.396	h3	A1q922.7	k2
A1.120	q6; III. 17	A1.256	h4	A1.397	h3	A1q923.7	q3
A1.129	q6	A1.258	q4	A1.399	q4	A1q928.11	h4
A1.131	h2	A1.259	q4	A1.403	q8; III. 20	A1q931.28	h4
A1.139	h1; III.22	A1.261	q6	A1.412	q6; III. 16	A1q935.15	h1
A1.146	h4	A1.266	q4	A1.421	h4	A1q935.16	h3
A1.148	h2; III. 23	A1.284	Section 7	A1.428	q4	A1q937.23	h4
A1.152a	h3	A1.286	h1	A1.430	h3	A1q937.25	h4
A1.152b	h3	A1.290	Section 7	A1.435	q6	A1q944.7	h1
A1.152c	h3	A1.292	Section 7	A1.455	k2; III. 5	A1q949.11	h2
A1.161	q5	A1.293a	q4; III. 12	A1.463	q6	A1q960.12	h4
A1.162	q2; III.10	A1.293b	q4; III. 13	A1.465	Section 7	A1q963.24	q6
A1.165	q5	A1.298	h1	A1.469	h3	A1q963.26	h4
A1.171	h3	A1.300	q4	A1.481	q4	A1q963.27	q2
A1.173	q3	A1.301	q1; III. 9	A1.483	III. 28	A1q965.10	h2
A1.182	h3	A1.307a	q8; III. 19	A1.485	h2	A1q966.26	q4
A1.186	q4	A1.307b	q8	A1.493	h3	A1q968.3	h3
A1.193	h4	A1.309a	h3	A1.498	q4	A1q968.5	h1
A1.196	h1	A1.309b	h3	A1.503	Section 7	A1q973.7 ?	q3

A1q974.18	q4	A1q1021.3	q4	A5.76	q6; Ill. 18	A5.170	h4
A1q975.16a	h4	A1q1022.7	h3	A5.78	q1	A5.182	h3
A1q975.16b	h4	A1q1029.4	q4	A5.79	h4	A5.186	h1
A1q976.15	h4	A1q1032.8	h1	A5.80	h4; Ill. 25	A5.187	k1
A1q977.15	q1	A1q1036.10	k1	A5.81	h2	A5.189	q4
A1q978.8	h2	A1q1050.7	h3	A5.82	h4	A5q680.o	Section 7
A1q981.19	k5	A1q1051.12	h1	A5.86	q6	A5q707.2x1	h3
A1q982.51	h3	A1q1052.1	q4	A5.88	q6	A5q712.2	h1
A1q982.52	q4	A5.43	h1	A5.91	Ill. 27	A5q922.1	q4
A1q982.55	q4	A5.46	k6; Ill. 8	A5.135	Ill. 26	A5q933.7	h4
A1q985.4	h1	A5.49	h4	A5.145	q3	A5q947.6.	h4
A1q999.1	q6	A5.50	q4; Ill. 14	A5.149a	h3	A5q951.4	k1
A1q1007.12	h1	A5.54	h2	A5.149b	h3		
A1q1007.40	q4	A5.73	h1	A5.163	k1; Ill. 4		



1. Overhead



2. Frontal - B7-9532



4. A5.163 - F58b-0301

*inverted print*



5. A1455 - E8-5843



6. A1q922.6 - E8b-141C



7. A1q914.8 - E8b-0725







11. A1.390 - E8b-1423





13.A1.293b - D8b-0410



14.A5.50 - E7-1705

15.A1.101 - ESa-2103



16.A1.412 - B8-7770



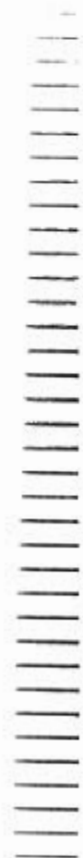
17. A1.120  
E7-2113

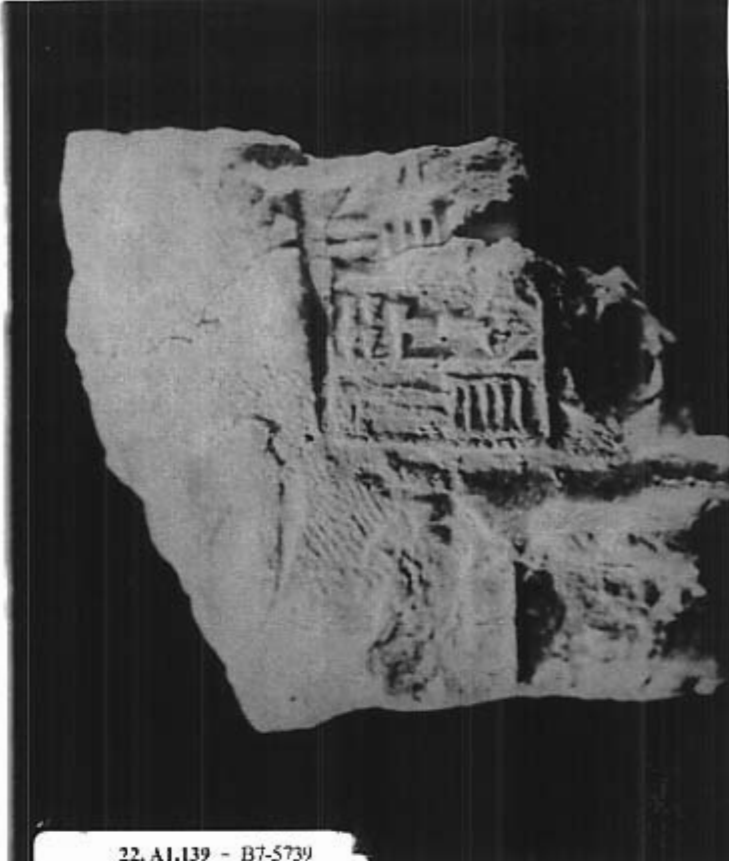


18. A5.7



19. A1.307 - E86-1502





22. A1.139 - B7-5739



23. A1.148 - E8a-3003



24. A1.213 - E8a-1804



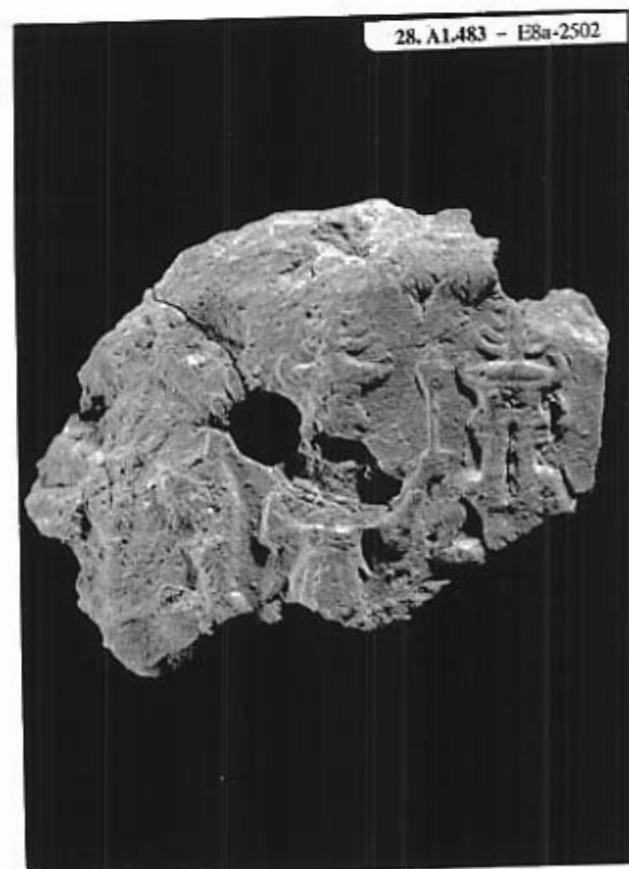
25. A5.80  
E7-221



27. A5.91 - E8-2012



26. A5.135 - E8b-1411



28. A1.483 - E8a-2502

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