

Table of contents

1	Introduction.....	3
2	The seal of Tar'am-Agade, the daughter of Naram-Sin (ARc1).....	3
3	The seal of Ewrim-atal (ARc2).....	6
4	The seal of Ishar-beli (ARc3).....	7
5	General remarks on the two glyptic corpora from AK and AR.....	9
6	The residential wing of the palace (Sector H).....	10
7	Phases in the occupation of the palacé.....	11
8	Historical implications.....	12
9	An early masterpiece of "Hurrian" art (A12.30).....	13
10	Structures on the exterior of the palace (Sectors W and X).....	14
11	The courtyard (Sector F).....	15
12	A scribal quarter in Sector C?.....	15
13	Residential quarters in the time of the "Bitumen Use Tradition".....	18
14	Publications, lectures and other research activities.....	19
15	Computer network and digital photography.....	19
16	The conservation laboratory (Sophie Bonetti).....	20
17	Architectural conservation (Ali Ali).....	22
18	Acknowledgments.....	23
	Excursus 1. The structure of seal entitlement and use.....	23
	Excursus 2. Detailed stratigraphic analysis of AK and AR.....	25
	Excursus 3. Catalog of seals and seal impressions of the Royal Family of Akkad (M. Kelly-Buccellati).....	28

- Fig. 1 ARc1 Seal impressions of Tar'am-Agade
Fig. 2 ARc2 Seal impressions of Ewrim-atal
Fig. 3 ARc3 Seal impressions of Ishar-beli
Fig. 4 The Hurrian urban ledge and the geo-political situation at the time of Naram-Sin
Fig. 5 Details of iron support for wall covers
Fig. 6 Example of close-up with digital camera
Fig. 7 General plan of Royal Palace and of Area AA
Fig. 8 Schematic section through the two major wings of the Royal Palace
Fig. 9 Schematic 3-D rendering of Royal Palace
Fig. 10 Stratigraphic sequence A for Area AA: Phases
Fig. 11 Stratigraphic sequence A for Area AA: Strata
Fig. 12 Anthropomorphic clay statuettes
Fig. 13 Perspective view of Sector X looking North
Fig. 14 Perspective view of Sector W looking North
Fig. 15 Views of Sectors W and H
Fig. 16 Views of the "scribal installation" in Sector C
Fig. 17 Wall conservation

1 Introduction

The results of the 1999 Summer's excavations in the area of the royal palace of Urkesh were little short of extraordinary. We had started out with a view towards determining whether the structure was indeed the palace. The result was gratifying because sufficient evidence was found to give a positive answer to our question. And in the process we were led to identify an even more complex architectural history than we had imagined. In addition, we found seal impressions of a new queen, Tar'am-Agade, who was the daughter of Naram-Sin, the king of Akkad. The complexity and the quantity of the evidence was such that, at the end of the season, we decided to return to Mozan for the full month of October to complete our documentation, aided by a special grant that was most graciously made available by the Samuel H. Kress Foundation. In the intervening months, Peter and Heike Pfälzner continued their excavation in Area C2, and our visit in October overlapped with the final days of their season, so that we were able to be present for the close of the official season of excavations. (We do not report here on their activities.)

An earlier version of this *Bulletin* was written in August, but we decided to revise it before general distribution, hence the delay. It is still, of course, in the nature of a preliminary report, as would be expected for the style of our Bulletins. We are currently reworking the text to derive from it two articles that will be submitted to the *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft* (concentrating on the stratigraphy) and the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* (concentrating on the seal impressions).

We wish to thank in a special way our colleagues and friends Professors Alfonso Archi, Lucio Milano, Joan and David Oates, Paolo Emilio Pecorella, Piotr Steinkeller and Gernot Wilhelm for their answers to questions that arose during the excavations and that we asked them via FAX, receiving in each case an immediate answer that helped us considerably in assessing the nature of the evidence as we first confronted it.

2 The seal of Tar'am-Agade, the daughter of Naram-Sin (ARC1)

The most important single discovery came on what was to be the last day of excavations: a sealing on which appeared the name of Naram-Sin (Fig. 1). Given the significance of the find, we decided to continue excavations in order to retrieve as many sealings as possible from the same area. In four days we had almost 200 fragments, which allowed us to reconstruct the full legend of the seal in question, and to get a glimpse of several more, very beautiful Akkadian seal impressions.

The reconstruction of the seal bearing the name of Naram-Sin is based on the match of 22 fragments. The seal from which the impressions were derived was not very large, about 3 cm high and 2 cm in diameter. The sealings were all affixed to a door, hence the seal was used locally and not on imported goods. The seal bore the name of the daughter of Naram-Sin, and reads in the usual Syro-Mesopotamian style: "(Of) Naram-Sin, the king of Akkad, Tar'am-Agade, his daughter" (the reading *Tar-àm* was first suggested by Piotr Steinkeller, for whose generous assistance we are very grateful).

The scene is less well preserved than the cuneiform legend, but this presents little difficulty as we have here a classic Akkadian contest scene, fully consonant with analogous scenes known from Tell Brak¹ and from Southern Mesopotamia.²

We assume that Tar'am-Agade was a queen of Urkesh. Her filiation alone indicates that she was of extremely high rank, as the daughter of the most important king in Syro-Mesopotamia at the time. She could not have come to Urkesh except under the most favorable conditions, hence as the main wife of the *endan*. Such interdynastic marriages are well known from Ebla³ and Naram-Sin himself had married the daughter of the king

¹Donald M. Mathews, *The Early Glyptic of Tell Brak. Cylinder Seals of Third Millennium Syria*. Göttingen 1997, e.g. #305, 308, 310-321

²Rainer M. Boehmer, *Die Entwicklung der Glyptik während der Akkad-Zeit*, Berlin 1965, #230.

³M. G. Biga, "Femmes de la famille royale d'Ebla," J.-M. Durand et al. (Eds.), *La Femme dans le Proche-Orient Antique*,

of Elam.⁴ Tar'am-Agade may have survived as the queen mother, or be the wife of the ruling *endan*, but in any case she was likely to be the most important person in the palace next to the *endan* (see presently for some remarks on her possible connection with the other known queen of Urkesh, Uqnitum). In any case, the historical implications are momentous. Knowing of the links that Ebla had with Nagar,⁵ it appears that Naram-Sin forged an alliance with Urkesh, which emerges then more clearly in the light of history as the other major power in the Khabur plains. Whether this was before or after his conquest of Nagar (about which we know from his stamped bricks at Tell Brak), it certainly strengthened his position, politically and militarily, in the North.

The possibility should be kept open that Tar'am-Agade might have been active in Urkesh not as queen, but as a priestess in the service of a local Akkadian administrator. This hypothesis is supported mainly by the fact that she does not use the title of queen nor of wife of a given *endan*. Also, three other daughters of Naram-Sin are known to have served as priestesses in Ur, Nippur and Kish.⁶ It seems on the other hand unlikely for three reasons. (1) She does not use any priestly title, either, and this would have been important had her position as priestess been designed to serve a political agenda (as it well would have). (2) Her seal impressions were found within the palace and were all on door sealings (though in a destroyed part of the building, where they were discarded, see presently): hence she is more likely connected with the palace than with the temple. (3) Other door sealings discarded together with those of Tar'am-Agade (hence presumably used for the same original function) belong to a certain Ewrim-Atal, an individual with a Hurrian name (see presently), who is unlikely to have belonged to an Akkadian garrison.

The personal name Tar'am-Agade, which means "She loves Akkad,"⁷ proclaims a political program and as such may or may not have been given at birth. If not at birth, but at the time of her presumed enthronement in Urkesh, then one wonders if this, plus the lack of an Urkesh related title, was conceived as proceeding from the deliberate intent to remind the Urkesh court of what may well have been the predominant role of Akkad in the alliance.

With the addition of this Tar'am-Agade seal known from its impressions excavated at Urkesh, we have now forty seals⁸ connected with the royal family of Akkad. Included among these seals are thirty-two persons of whom we have their names or titles or both⁹. Only one previously known seal is royal in that it belonged to a brother of Tar'am-Agade, Ukin-Ulmash.¹⁰ His seal was not found in excavations and therefore we do not know if it was his personal seal or how it was used.¹¹ The Akkadian inscribed seals connected with Naram-Sin or members of his family, for which a context is known, come mostly from Tello (12 examples), one came from Ur, one from Adab, one from Nippur while two were excavated in Brak. Therefore most of our evidence from these seals has no context or when they have been found in excavations, for the most part come from the south.

The seal of Tar'am-Agade documented in its impressions from Urkesh is the first time ever that a seal belonging directly to a member of the royal family has been discovered in use in a specific city. All the other inscribed royal seals from the entire Akkadian period, except for the seal of Ukin-Ulmash, while naming a member of the royal family, indicate that the seal is owned by (or was presented to) a servant of that family member. The Urkesh seal, while being directly attributed to Tar'am-Agade, was not used by her personally to seal a door in the royal palace, since a large number of these rollings is attested in the cache. A repeated

Paris 1987, 44-47; "Donne alla corte di Ebla," *Memoria di Ebla*, in *La Parola del Passato* 46 (1991) 298-99. See also her "The Marriage of the Eblaite Princess Tagrish-Damu with the Son of Nagar's King," *Subartu* IV,2 (1998), pp. 17-22.

⁴W. Hinz, *ZA* 58 (1967) 85 ff.

⁵See A. Archi, in press. For interdynastic marriages, see Biga, "Femmes" (1987) 46.

⁶See D. R. Frayne, *The Sargonic and Guti Period*. RIME 2 (1993)

⁷Cf. Taram-Uram, daughter of Apil-Kin and daughter-in-law of Ur-Nammu, *M. Civil RA* 66 (1962) 213.

⁸We either have the seals themselves or impressions of these seals. See Excursus 3.

⁹With the exception of Ukin-Ulmash, the remaining inscriptions are too fragmentary to determine the relationship of the seal owner to the royal person named. See R. L. Zettler, 1977 pp. 33-39 for an interpretation of the function of the seals with inscriptions of the type RN, PN servant.

¹⁰Boehmer 1964, No. 15; see also Boehmer 1965, Abb. 256.

¹¹We also do not know if he was a brother or half-brother of Tar'am-Agade. In this article "brother" or "sister" can also mean half-brother or half-sister.

administrative activity of this nature would not be suited for a figure of her rank; therefore it can safely be excluded that Tar'am-Agade herself would have been sealing these doors. However her seal must have been used by an official closely connected to her, so closely connected that they could seal in her name. Administratively then, the use of this seal belonging to the queen (her position in the court of Urkesh is less likely that of a priestess, see above) can be connected with sealing practices well documented in Urkesh from the time of Tupkish and Uqnitum. During their reigns, multiple seals were employed by members of the royal household to seal containers that were delivered to the storehouse section of the royal palace.

In all the inscribed sealings contained in this cache, the figurative scene is less well preserved than the seal legend. This is typical for preserved rollings of inscribed Akkadian seals and the reason why it is thought that in the Akkadian period, for the first time, the inscriptions were considered more important than the seal design. In the case of Tar'am-Agade and Ewrim-Atal the reconstruction of the seal design presents no difficulty since both have a standard Akkadian contest scene for their design with two antithetical pairs flanking a full length inscription box. The reconstruction of the Tar'am-Agade seal shows a full-face bull-man fighting a lion carved with his head in profile. The second pair is a nude hero shown full-face fighting a rampant water buffalo. The seal is carved in a classic Akkadian style with special attention placed on the depiction of the musculature of all the figures, on the harmony of the proportions of the various parts of the bodies and where appropriate on the edges of the relief. The contest scene was the most popular design for officials directly connected, through their seal inscriptions, to members of the royal family. The two royal seals of Tar'am-Agade and her brother Ukin-Ulmash both have a standard contest scene.

We do know, through seal inscriptions, of two sisters (Enmenanna and Tutanapshum) and two brothers (Binkalisharri and Ulkin-Ulmash) of Tar'am-Agade.¹² The seals of the servants of both her sisters, for whom we have seals or seal impressions, Enmenanna and Tutanapshum do not have contest scenes. The choice of their scenes may be connected with their position as priestesses: Enmenanna in Ur and Tutanapshum in Nippur. One of the servant seals of Enmenanna shows a banquet scene and the second a divine presentation scene. The single seal connected with Tutanapshum shows a seated woman with a pointed crown; in front of her stands a woman holding a musical instrument. A tree may indicate an outdoor setting. It is always possible that this unusual scene may be associated with unknown cultic practices. However there is a very distinct probability that the figure seated here is Tutanapshum herself depicted in a setting which also would identify the figure as Tutanapshum. This latter interpretation would then link her seal with the representation of the seal owners on earlier Urkesh royal seals, specifically Tupkish, Uqnitum, and the nurse Zamena. So for instance, in one of the seals of Tupkish we see him seated with a lion at his feet. The lion may be a living lion as opposed to a statue of a lion since the very finely carved figure in front of the lion holds an overflowing bowl and in front of the lion a tall jar is placed. The identity of the figure with the bowl is unclear. The finely rendered profile combined with the fact that the bull beneath the inscription is not facing Tupkish but rather this figure may indicate that it is a divine figure, or even a statue of one. However the headcovering of this figure, while not clear on the Urkesh sealings, seems to exclude a horned crown. This scene has been interpreted by us as a depiction of Tupkish and the crown prince in the throne room or some other important room in the palace. Uqnitum too has herself depicted in her part of the palace surrounded by women attendants. The distinctive setting includes musical entertainment by a singer and lyre player and in some seals a table that has legs in the shape of two birds facing each other. This table must have been important in the palace setting since it is seen on other contemporary seals and in one Post-Akkadian seal. Into this group of Akkadian seals representing specific persons in specific settings can be placed the seal of a servant of Tutasharlibbish, the wife of Sharkalisharri. In it a woman is seated outdoors with a smaller female attendant standing behind her and another in front. It may be that the seal owner, Dada, her majordomo, can be

¹² Other known daughters of Naram-Sin are Shumshani, an entu priestess of the god Shamash in Sippar, and ME-Ulmash. These two daughters are known from inscriptions on two bronze bowls found in Mari. This does not necessarily mean that they were themselves in Mari but could have sent the bowls as offerings. Other sons of Naram-Sin, in addition to Sharkalisharri his heir, include Nabi-Ulmash, governor of Tutub (we know also of his daughter Lipush-ia'um), Lipit-ili, and Rigmush-alshu, D. Frayne, *The Sargonic and Guti Period*. RIME 2 (1993), p. 84ff. Earlier in the reign, the name of the wife of Sargon, TasLULtum, and two sons, Shu-Enlil and Ilaba'is-takal, are known., see Frayne, (1993) pp. 36-37.

identified as the figure greeting her.¹³ Also the seal found in an Old Babylonian drain at Nippur of a servant of the crown-prince Sharkalisharri probably depicts this prince in a presentation scene.¹⁴

In the seal impressions from Urkesh both the text of the seal inscriptions and the iconography of the inscribed royal seals are loaded with the same political meaning. That is the text and the icon are combined to carry the same political message, a message that is both unified and specific. It is the only excavated body of evidence from a context within which these seals were actually employed and therefore the only example of how the message was specifically promulgated.¹⁵

The seals of the servants of Binkalisharri, like that owned by Ukin-Ulmash, show contest scenes. Both these brothers may have had administrative-political positions within the dynasty because we know from inscriptions that one other brother, Nabi-Ulmash was governor of Tutub. Although we have no seal for a third brother, the crown prince, Sharkalisharri, may have been the governor of Nippur before he succeeded his father.¹⁶ It appears then that the seal designs connected with the royal family are closely linked to their individual political position within the dynasty. The standard contest scene, exemplifying the monumental struggle of the most powerful wild beasts with each other or with supernatural creatures would be considered an appropriate image of their dynastic power, especially during the period of Naram-Sin when the image of a strong secular government was at its height. In this regard it is also interesting that the water buffalo, an animal found mainly in seals of the Akkadian period,¹⁷ is usually connected with contest scenes although in Urkesh one is shown beneath the inscription of Ishar-Beli (see below). With regard to the importance of the contest scene during the reign of Naram-Sin we may conclude that this scene did indeed represent the power of the dynasty and as such was employed to project a specific political message.¹⁸ If so then it is not surprising that it had all but disappeared by the Ur III period when the new dynasty wanted to project a more theo-centric image. The fact that the presentation scene becomes more prominent in the late Akkadian period may reflect a certain dissatisfaction with the dynasty, a feeling which resulted in serious political disturbances during the reign of Naram-Sin.

3 The seal of Ewrim-atal (ARc2)

The only other seals which recur frequently in the Tar'am-Agade cache are those that belong to two individuals whose name is given, without title, in the legend of the seals. They are very significant in different respects.

The first (Fig. 2) has the very distinctive Hurrian name Ewrim-Atal but an equally distinctive Akkadian contest scene, very similar to that of Tar'am-Agade (see above, nn. 1-2). The reading of the name is IB-ri-im-a-

¹³ The seal of a servant of Ubil-Eshtar, "brother of the king" had already been interpreted in a similar sense by Frankfort, 1939, Pl. XXIVc and p. 140; see also Collon, 1982, No. 141.

¹⁴ Mc.Gibson, 1977, p. 30-32. In this seal the god Ea stands with his hand forward in a gesture of greeting while the standing man in front of him has his hand up in a gesture of homage; the vizir Usmu stands between them. In Akkadian presentation and adoration scenes it is rare for the deity to be standing which gives the impression of a more equal relationship between the god and the worshipper. Also the greeting gesture of the god toward his obviously human subject is rare in this period; for one example see See Boehmer 1965, Fig. 650.

¹⁵ The Akkadian monumental stele also did convey a specific political message but we have none of them in their original context, so we don't know the setting within which this message was conveyed. For a reconstruction of one of these monuments see G. Buccellati, "Through a Tablet Darkly. A Reconstruction of Old Akkadian Monuments Described in Old Babylonian Copies," *The Tablet and the Scroll Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William W. Hallo*, (1993), pp. 58-71.

¹⁶ See Mc.Gibson, *Archaeology* 1977, p. 32 and P. Michalowski RA 2 1981, p. 175.

¹⁷ Boehmer, 1975; water-buffaloes are prominently found in a scene belonging to a servant of Enheduanna showing two crossed buffaloes with a third under the inscription box. This scene is not a contest scene but obviously connected to this type of image.

¹⁸ With a different message but just as prominently displayed within the city of Urkesh, is that of the Urkesh dynastic program.

tal, and the first sign looks in some impressions more like a LA, but this may be attributed to a poor rolling of the seal. We owe to the kindness and promptness of Gernot Wilhelm the following remarks on the interpretation of the name:

There is a Hurrian name *ew_x/eb-ri-ba-tal* (evri=b=adal) attested twice at Umma (TCL 5, 6039; DV 5, 329) I am not yet sure how we should interpret the element *b~m* in this case, but this is a long grammatical story. *-b* and *-m* are suffixes of verbal forms [discussed by the author in *BiMes* 26.....]. But they should not interchange in a verbal form before a vowel, and apart from that we presumably do not deal with a verbal form but with a noun (*evri*, Nuzi *ervie* "lord").

Ew(PI)-ri-a-tal "The Lord is strong" or "The Strong One is lord" (both are possible in Hurrian names of different areas, the distribution pattern is not yet fully understood) is attested in the Tigunanu Prism I 4 (Late Old Babylonian period), also in Nuzi (with the typical metathesis) *er-wi-a-tal*, *e-er-[wi-a-tal]*, also with a pronominal element of 3rd ps. sg. *-n*: *er-wi-na-tal* (erve/I =n=adal).

A LA would cause some trouble. Though Urkeš apparently does not know the phonological rule which does not allow /l/ in initial position, or at least does not apply it as strictly as other Hurrian areas (to judge from Lubadag-, elsewhere Nubadig), a root *lar- should appear as *nar- elsewhere. There is Naraya and Naria at Nuzi, but apparently phrase names of the type *narib-... or *narim-... are not attested.

The contest scene on the seal of Ewrim-Atal has a composition known in other Akkadian contest scenes from the Naram-Sin period but not frequently found in them. In our seal there are two pairs of contestants with a full-face nude hero fighting a bull placed in a mirror image composition on either side of the inscription. This type of organization of the contest scene is found in the seal of the son of Naram-Sin, Ukin-Ulmash.¹⁹ Both these seals are characterized by their very fine carving and the large amount of space between the figures. In Urkesh for the first time we have a person with a Hurrian name obviously connected in some official capacity with prominent figures of the royal house of Akkad. In addition it is striking that he chose a scene so closely connected with the Akkadian dynasty, and specifically with the type of contest scene characteristic of the period of Naram-Sin. If, as has been discussed above, this type of scene reflects an emphasis within the period of Naram-Sin on the secular power of the dynasty, then the use of this scene by Ewrim-Atal is even more striking. If his seal was employed to seal the same door or doors in the Urkesh palace, as did the seal of Tar'am-Agade then it appears that he was on the same high administrative level as the official who sealed Urkesh palace doors in the name of Tar'am-Agade. Urkesh is the only certainly identified third millennium Hurrian city and as yet we know little of its administration. The interconnection within the palace setting of high Akkadian royal figures with presumably local administrative figures on what appears to be an equal footing may be indicative of the interrelationship of the two powers in the northern portion of Syro-Mesopotamia.

4 The seal of Ishar-beli (ARc3)

The second seal of which impressions have been found together with those of Tar'am-Agade has an Akkadian name (*Išar-bēlī*) but a scene which offers some remarkable peculiarities (Fig. 3). While the style is Akkadian, the subject is unknown in the South and is instead characteristic for the Northern regions of the Khabur plains, namely an equid in a position of prominence within the framework of a divine presentation scene.

The figurative representation is of extreme interest, on account of both style and iconography. The seal of Ishar-Beli has the most unusual scene in all the inscribed and un-inscribed sealings from the cache. His is a divine presentation scene showing a bearded god leading another bearded god before a seated god facing left. The

¹⁹ His seal has different figures in the contest. In it the two pairs are a lion fighting a water-buffalo. For a seal with the same participants as that of Tar'am-Agade but in a different arrangement since the inscription is here a terminal element see the seal of Ishtar-alsu, M. Roaf, *Cultural Atlas of Mesopotamia and the Ancient Near East* 1990, p. 73.

unique aspects of the scene do not center around its general subject. The composition of the scene with the water-buffalo under the inscription but with its head and body extending beyond the inscription into the scene and looking up at the small equid being brought as an offering gives the feeling of a harmonious continuity within the design. This linkage between the scene and the inscription is found in other Akkadian seals, especially those dating to the reigns of Naram-Sin and Sharkalisharri, but is usually carried out in a manner which stresses the symmetry of the design and not as much the continuous flow of the figures.²⁰ Unique to this seal is its iconography, and specifically the fact that in front of the seated god is a prominently placed equid. This animal is in a prancing position as if expecting something pleasurable from the seated deity. Another possibility is that he is engaged in some kind of performance before the deity. The seated deity is holding a three-pronged object in his right hand and a staff with an unclear terminal portion over his left shoulder. He wears a flounced robe typical for divinities in this period. The other two gods are dressed differently; the god in the center of the composition wears a long pleated garment while the god holding the offering wears the fringed garment often connected with the human worshipper in presentation scenes. This god holds a small animal over his right shoulder. While this scene from Urkesh has no direct parallels, there are seals in the Akkadian corpus which show caprids at the level of the knees of a seated deity.²¹ Boehmer considers them gods feeding animals. This is still a possible interpretation but it is put in doubt by the scribe's seal from Brak and now the Urkesh seal of Ishar-Beli. The Brak seal shows a seated god facing a seated bearded man,²² both have what appear to be young equids at their knees and both extend one hand toward the mouth of the equid. While the bearded man is associated with a horned animal indicated with a clearly long hair pattern, the god has at his knees a differently shaped animal without horns, now interpreted as an equid.²³ On the Ishar-Beli seal an equid, probably an onagre or hybrid is clearly shown.²⁴ He is short in stature and has the typical tail and mane of these animals.

Evidence for the breeding of expensive hybrids comes from the Ebla and the Beydar texts.²⁵ These animals were bought from Nagar by merchants from Ebla and cost more than the normal price of an ass. Onagres have the advantage of being sturdy and fast animals but untameable. They could not therefore be used in agricultural activities or in pulling vehicles. They were important however in breeding and their hides were sold. Also at Brak in Area FS there is a temple interpreted by the excavators as being dedicated to Shakkan the god of steppe animals.²⁶

At first the animal on the Ishar-Beli seal was identified as an early form of a horse. Since Sandor Bokonyi identified both wild donkey bones and horse bones from Mozan this seemed possible. In the large corpus of figurines from the AK sector of the palace there are a number of specimens that appear to be horses, some with bridles attached. The fact that one god in the Ishar-Beli seal is presenting a young animal seems to stress the reproductive aspect, as do the texts. Therefore we have now interpreted the Ishar-Beli animal as either an or one of these hybrids. From the Ebla texts it appears that Nagar was the principal provider not only of these hybrids, probably some type of mules, but also equestrian specialists.²⁷ Since the term for these specialists is connected with the word for jumping, HUB, it may be that this is the activity actually being represented by our animal

²⁰ See for instance in the chart below in Excursus 3 the seal of Ibni-sharrum (No. 32), a servant of Sharkalisharri. Frankfort in discussing this seal points out its symmetry but also the static nature of the composition (1939, pp. 84-5). Seals with this type of composition are not suited to a medium where the continuous flow of the design is important. The seal of Ishar-Beli instead does have an integrated design, conceived to produce a continuous pattern

²¹ Boehmer 1965, Abb. 561-564

²² C. Felli in Brak 2

²³ D. Oates and J. Oates, Brak 2

²⁴ Quote Strommenger articles

²⁵ Karel Van Lerberghe, "The Livestock," in *Administrative Documents from Tell Beydar, Subartu II* 1996, especially pp. 112-116.

²⁶ David and Joan Oates, "Excavations at Tell Brak 1992-93," *Iraq LV* (1993), especially pp. 161-7.

²⁷ Alfonso Archi, "The Regional State of Nagar According to the Texts of Ebla," *Subartu IV,2* (1998), pp. 1-16, especially pp. 8-12. In this article he quotes the evidence for horse-riding in the region during the early second millennium and concludes that "It is likely that, in these regions, riding was already in use during the third millennium." (p. 11).

before the seated god.²⁸

That a high official in the Urkesh court would have such an unusual scene is very interesting. He has an Akkadian name so may be an Akkadian official who came north with Tar'am-Agade. However his seal has what can only be characterized as a northern motif. At the same time it is clear that the seal cutter either came from the south or was a northerner who was well trained in the south. If he comes from the south would this be a new seal he had cut on assuming his new role in Urkesh? Or did he have the opportunity of having a seal carved by a seal carver trained in the south when Tar'am-Agade came north with her retinue? Hopefully some of these very tantalizing questions and more will be answered by future excavations.

The name written *I-šar-be-li* occurs in two southern contexts which are potentially of considerable significance:²⁹ first, as a recipient of goods along with other members of the royal house of Akkad,³⁰ and, second, as a steward of the estate (ŠABRA.E2) of queen Tutaššar-libbiš³¹, wife of Šar-kali-šarrī. While the name is not infrequent (it occurs also in Gasur), it is generally assumed that the name mentioned along with members of the royal house refers to the same individual. If so, it is tempting to assume in turn that our Išar-beli may also be the same individual: in this case, he would have followed Tar'am-Agade in her new northern residence, presumably before³² having served as the steward of the estate of her sister-in-law Tuta-šar-libbiš. In support of considering that a name linked with the royal house of Akkad may refer to the same individual in spite of the far-flung geographical horizon (Umma, Akkad and Urkesh)³³ reflected in the texts mentioning him, one may refer to the case of Tuta-napšum, who is mentioned in texts from Girsu, Umma, Nippur and Eshnunna.

An analogous case may possibly be made for Innin-shadu. We listed already³⁴ the references to an individual by that name occurring as a witness from Girtab in the Obelisk of Manishtushu (add also C xvi, where the son of an individual by that name is mentioned as a witness from Marda), and as the recipient of an additional payment in the Sippar Stone. In the case of the Obelisk of Manishtushu, the link with the Royal House is much more tenuous than in the case of Išar-beli, but the possible correlation bears mentioning (as we in fact did already, *ibid.*). The suggestion then would be that Innin-shadu is to Uqnitum (about whom, however, we do not know of any links with the royal house of Akkad) as Išar-beli is to Tar'am-Agade. The stratigraphic sequence (see presently) of the two pairs fits with the chronological sequence of the written sources.

5 General remarks on the two glyptic corpora from AK and AR

There is a certain symmetry in the distribution of key figures in the two periods of occupation of the royal palace. It is summarized graphically in the chart that follows. The queen (assuming that Tar'am-Agade is such)

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹The important role has been pointed out by P. Michalowski in "Tudanapšum, Naram-Sin and Nippur," *RA* 75 (1981) pp. 173 and 176.

³⁰Along with the LUGAL, the NIN, and a ŠABRA.E2 in *CT* 50 172 and *ITT* 1 1472. In *RA* 9, p.82, an unnamed ŠABRA.E2 is mentioned along with the LUGAL, the princes Šar-kali-šarri and Bin-kali-šarri, and the princess Tuta-napšum.

³¹This is from the inscription on his seal, Boehmer N. 560, as corrected by R. Whiting in R. L. Zettler, "The Sargonic Seal. A Consideration of Sealing in Mesopotamia," in M. Gibson and R. D. Biggs (eds.), *Seals and Sealing in the Ancient Near East*, Bibliotheca Mesopotamica 6, Malibu 1977, p. 38, n.5. See also Michalowski, *loc. cit.*. The name of the queen is read *Tutaššar-ānēš* in *AHW* For the reading of the name as *Tuta-šar-libbiš(a)* see D. Frayne.....

³²This is inferred on the basis of three considerations (all admittedly quite hypothetical). First, the accession of Šar-kali-šarri to the throne must follow the time when Tar'am-Agade appears in Urkesh with the qualification of "daughter of Naram-Sin." Second, being steward of the queen of Akkad would presumably represent a step forward in the career of a court official. Third, since the information about Išar-beli being a steward of the queen of Akkad comes from his seal, and since this may presumably have come from his grave, it would follow that this was the latest stage in his career.

³³The *mu.iti* texts come presumably from Umma, his seal with the qualification as steward of the estate of the queen of Akkad may possibly come from Akkad, and our seal obviously is found in Urkesh.

³⁴In *AJO* 42-43 (1995-96) p.24.

has an Akkadian name and so does an important³⁵ male individual, whose name is given without title. There is another important individual whose name is Hurrian – the nurse Zamena and Ewrim-atal. Only for the corpus from AK do we have an *endan* mentioned, whose name is Hurrian, Tupkish. We do not have a male counterpart for Tar'am-Agade. If she is a queen of Urkesh, then we would expect another *endan*, presumably also with a Hurrian name. If instead she is a priestess representing her father next to an Akkadian governor, we would expect a male individual with an Akkadian name and a title such as EN.SI.

The symmetry is broken when it comes to the figurative component of the seals. This need not be necessarily a result of the temporal sequence. It may well be due to the functional difference between the service wing (AK), where Urkesh style and motifs predominate, and the residential wing (AR) where Southern style and motifs predominate instead.

	name (and title)	seal	
		subject	style
seal impressions from AR (later)	(endan)?	?	?
	Tar'am-Agade	Southern	Southern
	Ewrim-atal	Southern	Southern
	Ishar-beli	Urkesh	Southern
seal impressions from AK (earlier)	Tupkish endan	Urkesh	Urkesh
	Uqnitum NIN	Urkesh	Urkesh
	Zamena UM.ME.DA	Urkesh	Urkesh
	Innin-shadu	Southern	Southern

6 The residential wing of the palace (Sector H)

That building AK, as excavated in earlier seasons, was a royal building, was beyond doubt. It was also certain that its purpose was to function as a service sector, and the question remained open whether or not it was linked with a residential and ceremonial wing, with which it might properly be considered a royal palace. To determine this, our strategy in 1999 was to excavate mostly along the eastern side of AK to look for a definition of the AK building itself, and for possible connections with other structures to the east.

The first priority was the definition of the southeastern corner of AK, in room C1 (Fig. 7). Assuming that C1 might have proportions similar to those of A1, we had projected the corner to be closer to the center of the building than it turned out to be. We eventually discovered this corner further to the east than we had expected, and this corner also showed us that an equally massive wall had been built right against the wall of AK, and that the lower stone courses were founded at the same elevation for both buildings. This suggested that we had here evidence for the residential wing of the royal palace we had been searching, and found ourselves committed to expand the excavations in this zone. The scale of the building is such that we could not achieve an adequate architectural definition of the new structure, but the results were impressive.

The new wing (which we call AR³⁶) is raised by about 2 m above the level of the main floor in AK (Figs.

³⁵“Importance” is gauged in terms of both the iconography of the seal and the large amount of seal impressions that was found bearing the impression of their seal.

³⁶The letter A in the labels stands for the topographical zone A. The letter K in AK stands for the Sumerian word KIŠIB, which means “seal”: an É.KIŠIB was a house which was sealed and in which sealed goods were kept, an appropriate

13-15). This difference in elevation between the two buildings is demonstrated convincingly by a thick packing (some 2 m in height) which underlies a well laid calcareous floor surface (itself some 25 cm thick) in room H1 (the packing is exposed through an ancient pit that cut wall, floor and packing down to the stone foundations).

That the two buildings AR and AK are linked is shown by the fact that they share the wall between sectors C and H, and by the presence of a doorway between rooms H3 and C4. (For a more detailed analysis of elements pertaining to our overall stratigraphic interpretation see below, Excursus 2.) An element of doubt remains with regard to this doorway. There is a clear break in the brickwork, but this might be explained as a later intrusion, although we could not properly define the contours of a pit. What supports the possibility that this might be a door (as shown on the floor plan in Fig. 7) is the fact that the stone substructure is interrupted just below the break in the brickwork, and that this opening in the wall is in the right position for a doorway. However, we have not reached the level of the floor itself, and so we do not have as yet evidence for a threshold. Further excavation will certainly clarify this point beyond doubt. If there is indeed a doorway, then there must be a stairway that bridges the difference in elevation between H3 and C4. Against the possibility that this might be a doorway it must be noted that the width and general disposition of room C4 seems ill suited for a normal stairway, which would have to be contained in the eastern portion of the room.

We still do not know where the entrance to the palace might have been. An entrance from the West, through Sector E, may still be possible, but it seems more plausible to envisage Sector H as the main entrance. It would have opened onto the main street that would have passed along platform X2 and the U-shaped structure in area W (see presently). The buttresses or projections in the southern wall of H1 suggest that they may flank a monumental entrance, but the wall is poorly preserved, and of course we have not yet excavated the area to the east, which would show, if present, the counterpart one would expect (projected on the plan in Fig. 7 and the sketch rendering on Fig. 9). The small room H2, though not clearly defined because both floor surfaces and walls have been damaged, made use of a stone drain. There is no evidence for a toilet, and the drain is rather small, though it is built with great care. A possible interpretation is that this small room was linked with the access to the palace, from the south, so that as people entered, they had a chance to wash up, before entering what seems to have been a large, stone paved courtyard, H3. But this remains a speculation that should easily be confirmed or dispelled by future excavations.

7 Phases in the occupation of the palace

The floor surfaces in H1, H2 and H3 were badly damaged, and non-palace accumulations, including two *tannurs*, were laying right on top. There is some evidence of a fire, although we cannot identify any trace of warfare (in other words, the fire may have been accidental and localized). Similar evidence for an immediate re-use of a palace floor with a non-palace function is to be found in the courtyard F1, where the low retaining wall at the western end contains ash that accumulated in that part of the courtyard: the notion of such an accumulation and the poor nature of the construction are at variance with everything else we know about the palace, so that we may reasonably conclude that these areas were no longer used as a part of the palace, even though they had not been abandoned.

Accordingly, we may distinguish five major occupational phases in the history of area AA (Figs. 10-11).

(1) *Pre-palace structures in AO*. — The platform X2 immediately pre-dates AK because the foundations of AK overlay it and the outlet of the drain coming from Sector C is at a higher elevation.

(2) *Palace occupation of AK*. — This corresponds to the first 40/50 cms. of deposit within the walls and is the period documented for king Tupkish and queen Uqnitum. Sector AR is in use at the same time.

(2a) *Fire in portions of AR (including H) and perhaps in rooms C1 and C4 of AK*. — The fire is documented

designation for the royal storehouse. The letter R in AR refers to the "residential" function of this wing as we understand it at present. The letter H in AH stands for "Houses," i.e. for the private residential quarters which were built on the hill that resulted from the collapse of the royal building. Analogously, AP stands for the Palace complex as a whole, and AO for the palace related strata outside the perimeter of the palace. The label AA stands for the overall area regardless of period or function.

only indirectly, and may have been localized, but of sufficient intensity to affect the use of the complex. An immediate re-occupation with different functions took place in Sectors H and F, as just mentioned. The sealings of Tar'am-Agade and Išar-beli belong here: they were discarded, presumably from the other sectors of AR, which continued to remain in use.

(3) *Non-palace occupation of AK.* — This corresponds to the mid to high floors within AK, and no evidence is available at this point for what happened to AR during this period. The accumulations within AK are very considerable, up to 2 m in height. None of the features known for the early floors (baked brick floors and platform in F, central tannur and hearth in D, toilet, drain and basin in C) remain in use.

(4-5) *Post-palace settlement above the palace.* — Very little is in evidence for AK, partly because of erosion, partly because it seems that the settlement preferred higher grounds, and placed various retaining walls along the edge facing AK and the courtyard. Hence the houses of the Bitumen Use Tradition and Khabur period are arranged in an L-shaped configuration around the lower grounds corresponding to sectors E,F,G and to the AK building.

In terms of chronology, this suggests the following approximate correlations with the southern Mesopotamian sequence (Figs. 10-11):

- (1) AO structures (pre-palace) – Sargon
- (2) Tupkish/Uqnitum material in AK – (Rimush) / Manishtushu (/Naram-Sin)
- (2a) Tar'am-Agade material in AR – Naram-Sin / (Shar-kali-sharri)
- (3) Mid to high floors in AK (with correlations to F1) – Shar-kali-sharri
- (4) Early post-palace settlement AH (Bitumen Use Tradition) – Dudu/Shu-Durul / (Guti ?) / Ur III / Isin-Larsa
- (5) Later post-palace settlement AH (Khabur ware) – Old Babylonian

This combined evidence of a connection with the court of Akkad and the early date for the initial building of the Royal Palace should dispel the prevailing notion of Urkesh being a petty kingdom that came to a position of power only as a result of the collapse of the Sargonid dynasty.

8 Historical implications

Whether Tar'am-Agade is a queen or Urkesh married to an *endan*, or a priestess representing her father alongside an Akkadian governor, the discovery of the door sealings with the impression of her seal is of great consequence. Here we will make briefly to three points.

(1) With regard to chronology, the sequence just outlined suggests two important considerations. The first is that the extensive AK accumulations belong at the very latest in the early Naram-Sin period, but may possibly be earlier as well, reaching into the period of Manishtushu or even Rimush. This provides us with one of the best stratified sequences for the central portion of the Akkadian period not only in the Khabur region, but in the whole of Syro-Mesopotamian.

A second consideration is that the palace and post-palace sequence stretches over a period of time that is of considerable significance, in that it goes from Naram-Sin to the Khabur period with a deposit that is in places 6 m thick. Even though there is a major functional change (from palace to settlement), there seems to be a gradual change without any long period of abandonment. Not that there was no abandonment altogether: we have in fact so labeled stratum 13 (see Fig. 11) But indications are that the period was not long, on account of both typology (ceramic sequences show considerable continuity, if with some limited degree of change) and stratigraphy (there is no indication of a hard compaction layer above the abandoned palace).

Indications are mounting that the Guti period was of more limited duration than it was generally assumed, so that Gudea of Lagash and Ur-Nammu of Ur would follow shortly after the end of the dynasty of Akkad.³⁷ Four radiocarbon determinations that we have obtained for the AK accumulations of phase 2 give as a mean date 2175 B.C. Since we can now attribute this phase to the period of Manishtushu or early Naram-Sin, we may have in our C14 determinations a confirmation of a lower date for that same period. If so, the stratigraphic sequence

³⁷See R. Dittmann, "Glyptikgruppen am Übergang von der Akkad- zur Ur III-Zeit," *Baghdader Mitteilungen* 25 (1994) 75-117, Pl. 1-3

