

Original article

THE INTERCESSION SCENES IN ANCIENT MESOPOTAMIAN CYLINDER
SEALS TILL THE END OF THE OLD BABYLONIAN PERIOD (*)

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Abstract

By the means of the expression "intercession scenes", which this paper presents, it is generally meant a group of figurative themes which appear on Mesopotamian cylinder seals impressions since the end of the Early Dynastic period and become quite frequent since the Akkadian period. This theme also became very popular under the third Dynasty of Ur and Babylonian period. Concerning this theme it is consisted of three elements: the worshipper who stand before the god, the interceding god and the deified king or another male or female god. These are the main characters of this type of scene that I will deal with and interpret it in this article in Mesopotamian cylinder seals till the end of the Old Babylonian Period.

Keywords: *Mesopotamian cylinder seals, Intercession Scenes, Worshiper, The deified king.*

1. Introduction

A popular subject in the third early dynastic cylinder seals is the banquet scene or symposium. Presentation scenes, in which a worshiper is brought before a god, occur with some frequency in Akkadian times, and became almost the exclusive subject of seals of the Third

dynasty of Ur because the status of kingship reached a new peak at this time. This intercession scene continued in use for a time after the end of that dynasty; they are even found occasionally in the time of the first dynasty of Babylon.

2. Early Dynastic Period

In divine presentation scenes, an enthroned deity is approached by a second deity, which can be led by a third deity, as is common during the Akkadian period. The little evidence for its appearance during the early dynastic period is presented. Also common during the Akkadian period, but rare during the early dynastic period, are banquet scenes inscribed: "Pu-abi nin". From the Queen's Grave in the

Royal Cemetery of Ur, fig. (1-a) in which the participants are gods, and bull-men and heroes scenes, fig. (1-b) [1]. The Earliest group belongs to the early dynastic period, fig. (1-c,d,e). Examples of these seals are found from such sites as Ur, Telloh and Nippur, and manufactured of clay are poor imitations of the traditional repertoire [2].



Figure (1) Shows, **a.** banquet scene on the cylinder seal of “Queen” Pu-abi. early dynastic III period (2600 B.C), BM 121544, *Tsouparopoulou, Ch., Progress report: An Online Database, 2014, p.41*, **b.** bull-men and heroes scenes- early dynastic II (2700 B.C), BM 89538. *Tsouparopoulou, Ch., An Online Database....., p. 41.*

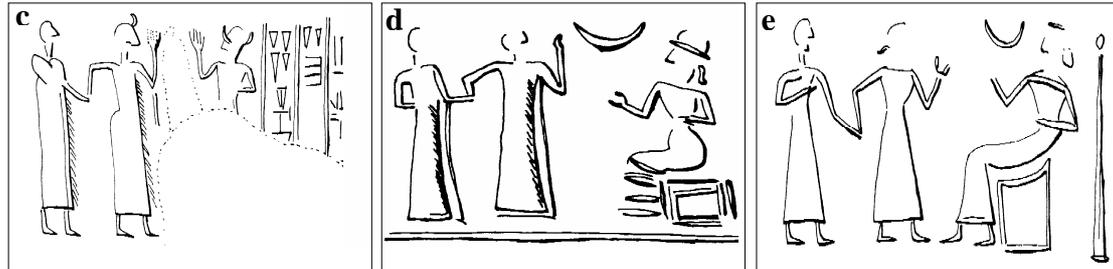


Figure (1-c,b,c) Shows, presentation scenes of early dynastic period, *Al-Gailani, L.W., Iraq, Vol. 50, 1988, pp. 31-32, fig. 5, nos. 31-33.*

3. Akkadian Period (2334-2200 BC.)

The dynasty founded by Sargon of Akkad, fig. (2-a) produced some of the most beautiful seals of all time. In order to unify his empire, Sargon reorganized the religious pantheon, which consisted of local, mostly agrarian Sumerian city gods, and amalgamated it with the Semitic astral deities of the Akkadians. His Craftsmen created a new artistic style and iconography, and cylinder seals which became the most successful vehicle for the transmission of the new ideas. Deities had rarely been identifiably depicted before Sargon's reign. However, they were now characterized by their horned headdresses and attributes, and they were incorporated into presentation scenes and into mythological scenes. These latter depict myths which are often lost or may have survived in fragmentary form in later texts, and their meaning is unclear. They include the so-called "Battle of gods", "Bull and Winged gate", "Snake god before an Altar", "Etana and the Eagle", where the legendary shepherd-king of Kish is carried up to heaven by the eagle. The most popular deities include the sun god, shown with rays rising from his shoulders, fig. (2-b) sometimes seated with his saw-toothed knife, but frequently cutting his way through the mountains of the east

at dawn, while attendants hold open the gates. The water god Ea/Enki is depicted with streams of water flowing from his shoulders or from a vessel he holds. The banquet scenes of Akkadian Period II developed into presentation scenes, often depicting the owner of the seal presented to a deity, or processions of minor gods approaching a more important god, although sometimes figures are shown drinking together as in Period II [3]. Cylinder seal of the god Enki, fig. (2-c) [4], which was titled by Van Buren "Judgment of Bird-Man." On seal, fig. (2-d), a male divine figure leads a captured "bird-man" to the seated god with streams. Enki / Ea is one of the most often represented gods in the glyptic art of the Akkadian period. He is pictured with two streams flowing out from his shoulders, sitting inside his cosmic territory Abzu surrounded by waves of water and accompanied by fish swimming in water [5]. The seated water god on seal 6 is EA, the Akkadian equivalent of the Sumerian Enki. Only one possible representation of EA so far exists from the early dynastic period, although he was then a popular deity whose holy city was Eridu. As god of water he was considered the third deity in the major triad of which the other two were Anu

(sky god) and Enlil (god of air, earth, and wind). EA was endowed with wisdom and cunning and gave advice to both men and gods. He was also the patron deity of crafts and magic. In the Akkadian period EA was worshiped as a nature deity in several cities. On seals he is normally represented seated with streams of water issuing from his shoulders, as here, and is frequently associated with Usmu, a double-faced figure who acts as Ea's intermediary, and the nude because hero intentioned above [6]. On this seal, fig. (2-e), a half-man, half-bird creature is being led to EA. A bird-man appears in different context on several Akkadian seals that appears to illustrate a mythological cycle. Scenes such as on 83 have been related to the myth of Zu. In this myth, which may be of Akkadian origin, the bird Zu stole the insignia of power and "tablets of destiny" from Enlil in order to gain

supremacy over the gods; this scene would illustrate the Judgment of Zu [6]. On seal, fig. (2-f) a worshiper is led by the wrist and introduced to a seated deity. This subject was derived from the early dynastic worship scenes, achieved this form in the early Akkadian period, and became quite popular in the Ur III period [6]. The most popular deities include the sun god, shown with rays rising from his shoulders, fig. (2-g,h,i), sometimes seated with his saw-toothed knife, fig. (2-h), but frequently cutting his way through the mountains of the east at dawn, while attendants hold open the gates [7]. A carved banded agate cylinder seal with frieze, fig. (2-i) depicting a seated bearded figure (possibly a deity) in flounced robe holding a cup towards a standing figure in a robe with herringbone pattern, a second figure in flounced robe, a third figure (worshiper) in tasseled robe, lamp with corrugated stand [8].

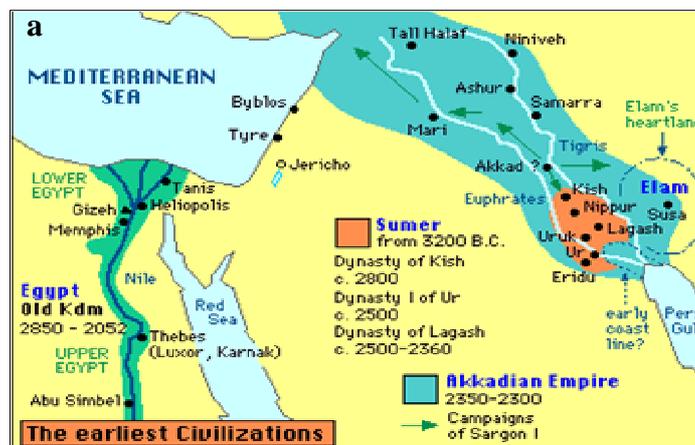




Figure (2) Shows, **a.** a map of the earliest civilizations (Sumer and Akkadian Empires) in ancient Mesopotamia. (<http://ancientmesopotamians.com/ancient-mesopotamia-videos.html>), **b.** the sun god, shown with rays rising from his shoulders, Akkadian seal, BM 89115. Tsouparopoulou, Ch., 2014, p.41, fig. 4b., **c.** judgment of Bird-Man (<http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/amgg/listofdeities/enki>), **d.** a seated deity with streams of water issuing from the shoulders receives a bird-man held and presented by secondary deities., Teissier, B., 1984, p.132, no. 83, **e.** intermediary figure presents a worshiper to a seated deity, Teissier, B., 1984, p. 132, no. 85., **f.** cylinder seal of Akkadian period shows the sun-god with rays rising from his shoulders, Kist, J., 2003, p. 6., **g.** cylinder seal impression of the sun god shamash, Kist, J., 2003, p. 6., **h.** cylinder seal impression of sun god, Kist, J., 2003, p.6., **i.** Akkadian Cylinder Seal, 18th-17th Century BC (<https://www.tumblr.com/search/akkadian%20history>).

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

The collapse of the Akkadian empire adversely affected the quality of seal-cutting. Context scenes survive but with two heroes on either side of a lion or lion griffin, instead of the well-matched pairs found on the best Akkadian seals. Presentation scenes also survived in a simplified form and the Period II eagle and prey motif reappears [3]. A revival of centralized power under the Third Dynasty of Ur led to presentation scenes becoming extremely stereotyped, with a worshiper led before the seated deified king or before a seated deity, generally a goddess, with strict rules dictating what each person was to wear, and what type of seat they were to sit on. These scenes were accompanied by an inscription giving the name of the owner and his title. Sometimes people who did not have seals had to have their names inscribed on a blank seal, generally made of gypsum, specially made for a transaction [3]. The

classification of seals that belong to the time between the end of the Akkadian period and the beginning of the Ur III periods is not clear yet, although an attempt has been made at dividing the seals into three styles. Different terms, such as "Post-Akkad", "Guti", and "Neo-Sumerian" have also been used. The term Post-Akkad/Early Neo-Sumerian best describes the seals below, because they contain iconographic lines with both the Akkadian period (worship of the sun god and with the Ur III period (bald worshiper figure) [6]. Cylinder seal, fig. (3-a) shows an inter-mediary female figure presents a worshiper to a seated deity. A figure with a raised arm stands behind the worshiper. In the sky: crescent [6]. Another cylinder seal, fig. (3-b) shows an intermediary female figure presents a worshiper to a seated figure. In the field: stand. . In the sky: crescent [6]. Another cylinder seal, fig. (3-c) shows

an intermediary female figure presents a worshiper to a seated figure. In the field: laden table before seated figure, table between the standing figures. [6]. Another cylinder seal, fig. (3-d) shows an intermediary female figure presents a worshiper to a seated figure. In the field: a stand before the seated figure [6]. Another cylinder seal, fig. (3-e) shows an intermediary female figure presents a worshiper to a seated figure. In the field: indeterminate shape [6]. Certain presentation scenes are less sketchy. Impressions of them have been found at Tello where Gudea, the local governor, who seems to have set himself up as a virtually independent ruler, initiated a period of prosperity and stable government, and led a Neo-Sumerian revival, fig. (3-f) [7]. Cylinder seal impression shows a presentation scene of Gudea, king of Lagash, about 2130 BC., from Girsu, fig. (3-g). Gudea, with shaven head, is accompanied by a minor female diety. He is led by his personal god, Ningishzida, into the presence of Enlil, the chief Sumerian god. Wind pours forth from of the jars held by Enlil, signifying that he is the god of the winds. Another cylinder seal of Gudea (c. 2144-2124 BC.) Figure. (3-h), shows the sun god in an ascending position with his foot resting on a small stool, receives a

worshiper led by another deity. The inscription refers to the scribe of Gudea of Lagash [9]. Cylinder seal impression, fig. (3-i) shows an interme-diary goddess lead a worshiper to a seated deity of Post-Akkadian period [6]. Cylinder Seal. B16299, fig. (3-j). Ur from Gipar-ku, Larsa leve Period: Pre Ur Iii Date: c. 2500 BC Early Date: -2550 Late Date: -2450 Section: Near Eastern Materials: Diorite. Description: CBS Register: cylinder seal. Diorite votary before Namar. Ninigalzalid, dumu, Ur pa... ka-ai-de-a, dub? c. 2500 BC UE VII: cylinder seal published as B16229 UE X: bare-headed worshiper introduced by the assistant goddess to the seated god. Elongated crescent. Cubi stool with a short back. Double inscription: Mes-sig-gi (?), son of Ur nannar (?), and KA-zide-a, son of Nam-sag-ga. Grey steatite cylinder. Length: 2.8cm Width: 1.5cm. British Museum/Univ. Museum [7]. For the presence of Ningizzida at Eshnunna there is good evidence. The caduceus appears on two seal impress-ions fig. (3-k left). In figure (3-k right), we notice two snakes rising from the god's legs. There is extant an omen text stating that a child born with a head like a serpent is an omen sent by Ningizzida [10].





Figure (3) Shows, **a.** cylinder seal of an intermediary female figure presents a worshiper to a seated deity, Teissier, B., 1984, fig., 91, **b.** cylinder seal shows an intermediary female figure presents a worshiper to a seated figure., Teissier, B. , 1984, fig. 92., **c.** cylinder seal shows an intermediary female figure presents a worshiper to a seated figure, Teissier, B., 1984 fig. 93, **d.** cylinder seal shows an intermediary female figure presents a worshiper to a seated figure, Teissier, B. , 1984, fig. 94, **e.** cylinder seal shows an intermediary female figure presents a worshiper to a seated figure, Teissier, B., 1984, fig. 95. , **f.** inscribed Gudea, governor of Lagash, Collon, D. , 1987, p., no. 14., **g.** cylinder seal of Gudea of Lagash, (<http://sumer/ianshakespeare.com/25401>), **h.** cylinder seal of Gudea shows the sun god in an ascending position with his foot resting on a small stool, receives a worshiper led by another deity, Teissier, B., 1984, p.23., **i.** cylinder seal (2160-2110 BC.) shows an intermediary goddess lead a worshiper to a seated deity, Orthmann, W., 1975, S. 240, Abb. 138 i., **j.** cylinder seal shows a worshiper introduced by the assistant goddess to the seated god, (<http://www.penn.museum/collections/object/135043>), **k** two seal impressions shows presentation scenes to god Ningizzida at Eshnunna. Frankfort, H., 1934. figs. 2-3, p. 11...

5. Ur III period (c.2112–2004 BC.)

Towards the end of the third millennium BC, southern Mesopotamia was united under the control of the city of

Ur. The empire, which stretched onto the Iranian plateau, fig (2-a), was founded by King Ur-Nammu (2112-2095 BC). He

was a prodigious builder, constructing ziggurats at various cities. A revival of centralized power under the Third Dynasty of Ur led to presentation scenes becoming extremely stereotyped, with a worshipper led before the seated deity, deified king or before a seated deity, generally a goddess, with strict rules dictating what each person was to wear, and what type of seat they were to sit on. These scenes were accompanied by an inscription giving the name of the owner and his title. Sometimes people who did not have seals had to have their names inscribed on a blank seal, generally made of gypsum, specially made for a transaction [11]. Cylinder Seal (and its modern impression), fig. (3-a) found in Babylon in southern Iraq and dated by its cuneiform inscription to the reign of Ur-Nammu, first king of the third Dynasty of Ur (2112-2005 BC.): "Ur-Nammu, strong man (the mighty hero), king of Ur; Hash-hamer, governor of Ishkun-Sin, is your servant (his servant) [3]. An interceding and a leading goddess introduce the owner of the seal before the king, who wears the round, high-brimmed headdress of royalty and sits on a bull-legged throne on a dais beneath a crescent moon [12]. It shows two goddesses, one of whom is leading the owner of the seal by the hand in a way that is distinctive of this period; while the other stands with both hands raised in the posture which was to become almost universal for interceding goddesses in the second millennium [12]. Another cylinder seal impression of the third dynasty of Ur, fig. (3-b), The presentation scene before a deified king, inscribed Ibbi-Sin, god of his country, King of the Four Quarters: Aham-Arshi, the scribe, son of Babati, is your servant [13]. A star disc and crescent in the field, with a finely cut cuneiform inscription to Ibbi-Sin, King of Ur, fig. (3-c) [14]. On later official seals the king holds a cup which symbolizes the office he is conferring on his servant; he is seated on a distinctive fleece-covered stool, and the crescent moon is generally replaced by

a combined symbol with a star, within the arc of the crescent. Along inscription, divided into two panels one above the other, is also typical of the period [13]. The owner of this chlorite seal, fig. (3-d) is led by a goddess before a bearded god whose seal resembles a temple. H. 1.8 cm [13] Sometimes a deity replaced the king, but deities do not hold cups and they sit on thrones resembling inched temple facades. These seals, fig. (3-a,b,c) are repetitive but their iconography corresponds to extremely precise rules regarding the dress of the figures in different combinations, their types of headdress and their seals; the rules apply as much to these Court seals as to the smaller, cruder seals of private individuals, with brief, two-line inscriptions, where the worshipper is generally led by a goddess in a vertically striped robe before another goddess who is seated [13]. The direction of the scenes also becomes established with the deity or king who is the focus of the scene sitting or standing on the right, facing left, when viewed on the impression [13]. Cylinder seal (and its modern impression), fig. (3-e), a clean-shaven man is presented before a seated, bearded god. In the spaces between the figures are a cluster of three drill-holes, a crescent moon, and a tall, narrow-necked jar on a small table. The inscription on this seal identifies its owner as "Aḥa-nīšu, servant of Nūr-Šulgi." Aḥa-nīšu was a fairly common name during the Ur III and later periods; the name Nūr-Šulgi, though less common, is also attested (e.g., on another presentation-scene seal also dating to the Ur III period [BM 89180, published in Collon 1982 no. 452]). His name means "light of Šulgi" (Šulgi being the name of a deified Ur III-dynasty king) [15]. Cylinder seal, fig. (3-f) shows a deity sit on temple throne on the manner hitherto receives a worshipper led by a goddess [7]. Cylinder seal impression, fig. (3-g) shows figure in presentation scene wearing a flounced robe and a brimmed cap and holding a cup in his extended right hand sits on a padded stool beneath a sun disk in moon crescent. Appr-

oaching is a goddess leading a baldheaded worshiper. An eight-line framed inscription [16]. Another cylinder seal impression, fig. (3-h) shows a deified king in presentation scene wearing a flounced robe and a brimmed cap and holding a cup in his extended right hand sits on a padded stool beneath a sun disk in moon crescent. Approaching is a goddess leading a worshiper [17]. Cylinder seal of Ninkhillia, the wife of Ayakala, god of Umma shows a usual presentation scene, fig. (3-i) [17]. Cylinder seal BM 104496, fig. (3-j), shows a typical Ur III “presentation scene”. From the standpoint of the adopted formalization strategy, the legend is in the “origin” of the scene, and the “receiver” (that can be detectable in each scene, and is thus called “Person 1”) is a sitting goddess: before her a goddess (or Person 2, since this character is the closest one to the receiver) standing hand in hand with a shaven man (or Person 3). Of this scene, for instance, the data set records the dress, headgear, hairstyle, position of arms and legs and other attributes of each character (1, 2 and 3). There are also two integrative motifs, both between Person 1 and Person 2 that is the moon sickle and the goose, respectively located in the upper part and the middle of the field. The specific kind of niched throne and dais of the receiver have also been recorded, as well as the shape (two lines in a frame) and content (the typical formula: “x, son of y”) of the legend. Below, the verso of NBC 3401 (Yale Bab. Coll.), an administrative document which shows the juxtaposition of different kinds of impressions of the same seal: impressions of the legend on the right and in the middle, impressions of the scene on the left [18]. By the Ur III period (c.2112–2004 BC.), the standard theme was a presentation scene, either to a deity or the king. Several variations of this occur: an audience with the king, the introduction of a worshiper to a deity, or the king by the goddess Lama, fig. (3-k), salutation scenes, and others. There

are still found, however, some contest scenes, as well as a few ritual scenes, especially depicting libations. Chlorite was the predominant material used, while seals made of serpentine and steatites were also ubiquitous; there also exist seals made of marble, hematite, and lapis lazuli [19]. Presentation to a deity is derived from the Akkadian repertoire. Except for more elaborate seals, deities are shown without attributes, as here, and this cannot be identified except for their gender. They are invariably shown wearing a horned head-dress and are seated on a throne in the shape of a temple façade [6]. A bald worshiper figure, fig. (3-l,m) and an intermediary goddess with one hand raised in suppliant gesture are commonly found on seals from the time of Gudea. Antecedents for both these figures occur in the Akkadian period; the bald figure is found on seals and the goddess on reliefs from Susa [6]. Scenes of Presentations to kings, fig. (3-n) became especially popular during the Ur III periods because the status of kingship reached a new peak at this time. Although Gudea called himself “god of Lagash”, kings of Ur 111 dynasty from Shulgi onward not only assumed divine titles but instituted their own cults during their lifetimes. Shulgi, for example had temples erected to himself at Lagash, Umma, and Drehm. The King is distinguished from deities by his round cap and the covered stool on which he sits. He also holds a cup, a tradition that goes back to the Early Dynastic period. The inscriptions on seals with this subject suggest that the majority of dedications were scribes [7]. Near eastern Ur III figural lapis lazuli cylinder seal circa 2100-2000 BC., fig. (3-o). A carved mottled lapis lazuli cylinder seal divided into two fields: above, a minor goddess leads a worshiper before a seated goddess, with cuneiform script; below, a procession of three long-necked birds. Fine condition [20]. Also in the Ur III version of the presentation scene, the seal owner is brought by an “interceding goddess” (a LAMMA) into the presence of the seated Ur III king, fig. (3-p,q). With his

brimmed cap and the vessel he holds in his outstretched hand, the king is differentiated from the gods who might otherwise appear in this position [21]. A seal, fig. (3-q) showing the king's figure sitting before a goddess that stands hand in hand with a mantled shaven man. Above, in the field, no celestial symbols appear, while the long legend, ending in the typical 'ir-zu' ('his servant') formula (Mayr and Owen 2004, 146), mentions the king Šu-Suen [18]. And another Neo-Sumerian cylinder seal, fig. (3-r), depicting the presentation of a worshiper to a seated deity.

An interceding goddess in a tiered dress leads the worshiper, who holds one hand before his face in a pious gesture [22]. The seal, fig. (3-s) depicts the presentation of a worshiper to a seated deity. An interceding goddess in a tiered dress leads the worshiper who holds one hand before his face in a pious gesture. The three-line inscription records the seal owner's name and occupation: "Lugal-dugedu, the scribe, son of Ur-dingira "During the Neo-Sumerian period, the administrative function of scribes increased and included witnessing the sealing of documents [23].



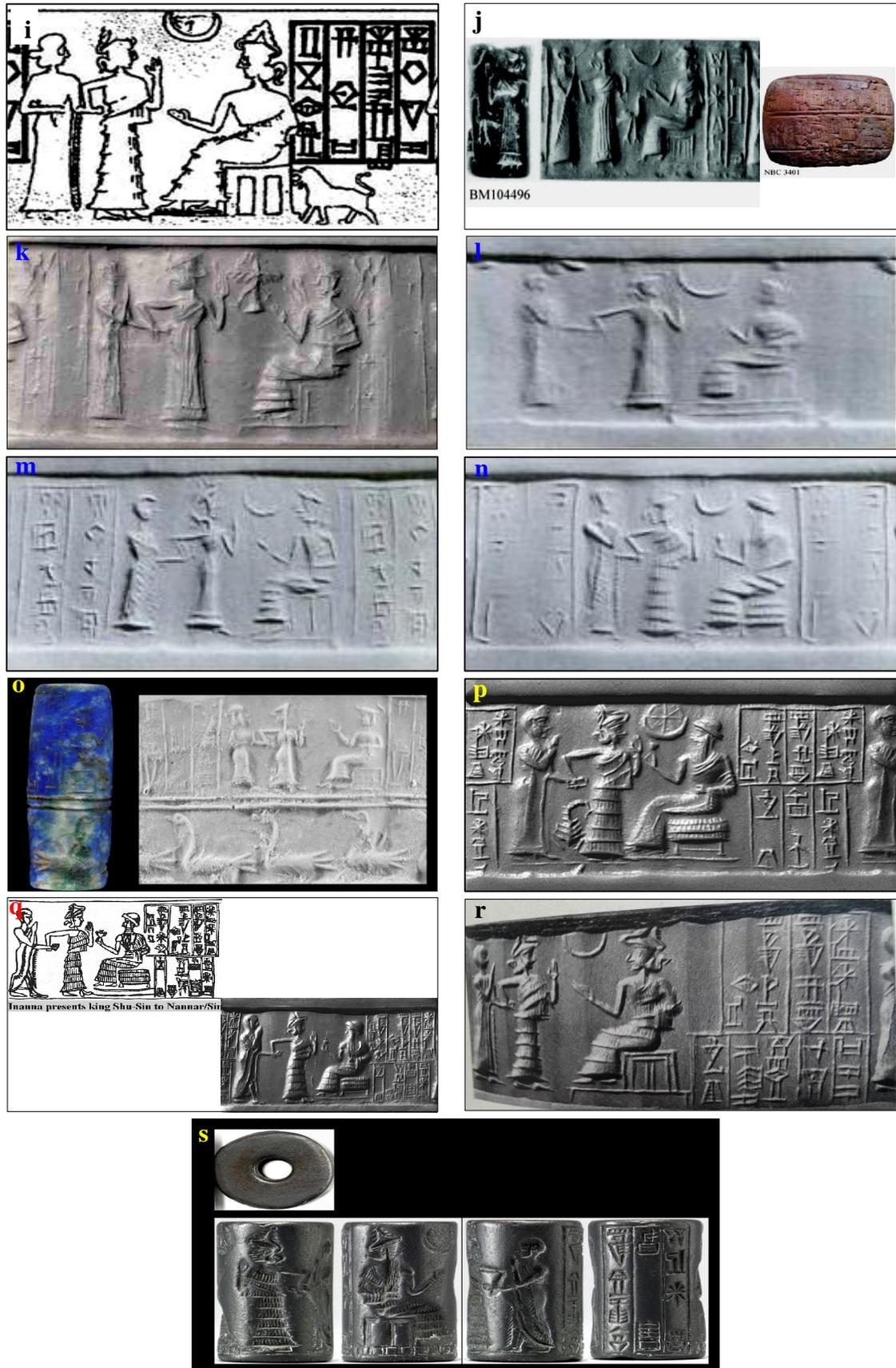


Figure (3) Shows **a.** cylinder seal of Ur-Nammu, king of Ur III, 2112-2095 BC., (<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/12947917651534327/>), **b.** cylinder seal impression of king Ibbi-Sin. Ur 111, Collon D., 1987, p. 36, no. 118, **c.** last Mesopotamian Ur III hematite cylinder seal with inscription reign of IBBI-SIN (<http://www.christies.com/lotfinder/lot/a-mesopotamian-ur-iii-haematite-reign-of-4470046->

[details.aspx?intObjectID=4470046](#)), **d.** the owner of this chlorite seal is led by a goddess before a bearded god, Collon, D., 1987, p. 81. fig. 60b, **e.** a clean-shaven man is presented before a seated, bearded god, (<http://archaeologicalmuseum.jhu.edu/the-collection/object-stories/cylinder-seals-from-the-ancient-near-east/presentation-before-a-god/>), **f.** cylinder seal of Neo-Sumerian (2110-2000 BC.) shows a deity sit on temple throne, Orthmann, W., 1975. 240-41, Abb. 139 d, **g.** presentation scene - Ur III, ca. 2112-2004 BC., Pittman, H., 1987, P. 56, no. 23, **h.** cylinder seal of Erra-bani, son of Ur-Ningishida from Eshnunna. Ur III period, Otto, A., 2013, no. 35, **i.** cylinder seal of Ninkhillia in presentation scene. Ur III period. Otto, A., 2013, no. 33, **j.** cylinder seal BM 104496 shows a typical Ur III “presentation scene”, Di Iudovico, A., 2008, P. 136, fig. 1, **k.** an Ur III period - black chlorite cylinder seal, shows the introduction of a worshipper to a deity, or the king by the goddess Lama, Tsouparopoulou, Ch., 2014, p. 41, fig. 5. , **l.** intermediary goddess leads a worshipper to a seated female deity, Teissier, B., 1984, no. 97, **m.** intermediary goddess leads a worshipper to a seated female deity, Teissier, B., 1984, no.98, **n.** intermediary goddess leads a worshipper to a seated king holding a cup, Teissier, B., 1984, P. 136., **o.** near eastern Ur III figural lapis lazuli cylinder seal c. 2100-2000 BC. 27 mm. (<http://www.timelineauctions.com/lot/ur-iii-figural-lapis-lazuli-cylinder-seal/13251>), **p.** modern impression of an Ur III seal with a royal introduction scene, Eppihimer, M., 2013, p. 40, **q.** modern impression of The king Shu-Sin of Ur III seal with a royal introduction scene modern impression of an Ur III seal with a royal introduction scene, Eppihimer, M., 2013, (<http://www.mesopotamiangods.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/5-Inanna-presents-spouse-King-Shu-Sin-to-Nannar1.jpg>), **r.** another modern impression of The king Shu-Sin of Ur III (2036-2028 BC.), Orthmann, W., 1975, S. 240-41, Abb. 139 f, **s.** hematite cylinder seal with presentation Scene, between 2150 and 2000 BC (Neo-Sumerian; Ur III), (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lugal-dugedu-Cylinder_Seal_with_Scene_of_Ritual_Worship_Walters_42595_View_A.jpg.)

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

him and assumes a suppliant posture. The enthroned deity does not appear to represent any one, particular member of the Mesopotamian pantheon. Although the crescent moon - a standard feature in Ur III presentation scenes - was, in later periods, associated with Mesopotamian moon god Šin, there is no evidence for such an association here, and the crescent moon appears above gods, goddesses and deified kings alike. The inscription on this seal, fig. (3-e) identifies its owner as “Aḫa-nīšu, servant of Nūr-Šulgi.” Aḫa-nīšu was a fairly common name during the Ur III and later periods; the name Nūr-Šulgi. His name means “light of Šulgi” (Šulgi being the name of a deified Ur III-dynasty king [24].

6. Old Babylonian Period (2000-1600 BC.)

The fall of the third dynasty of Ur around 2000 BC. was partly due to the gradual influx of Amorite tribes from the desert who settled around the cities. These tribes eventually set up a series of dynasties, including those of the rival cities of Isin and Larsa. Eventually, however, the first dynasty of Babylon became dominant and, under the celebrated king Hammurabi (1792-1750 BC.), fig. (4-a), southern Mesopotamia was united. Ham-

murabi campaigned up the Euphrates and across the Tigris, bringing about the downfall of the kingdoms of Mari, about the downfall of the kingdoms of Mari, Northern Mesopotamia and Eshnunna. Babylon itself collapsed in 1596 BC. When it was overrun in avaid by the Hittites from central Turkey and this marked the end of what is known as Old Babylonian Period [3].

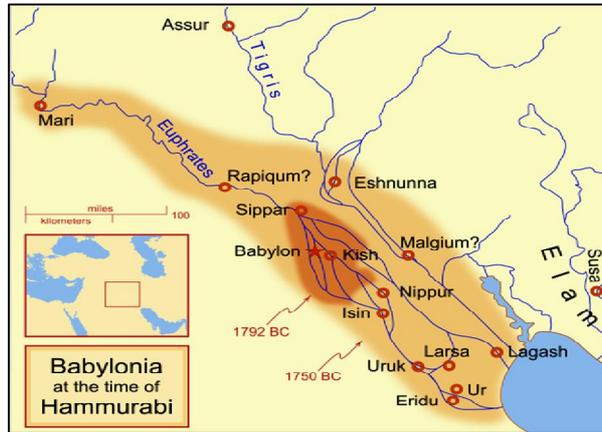


Figure (4-a) Shows old Babylonia at the time of Hammurabi. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Babylonian_Dynasty#/media/File:Hammurabi%27s_Babylonia_1.svg)

6.1. Presentation scenes

These presentation scenes are derived from those of the Neo-Sumerian period. On seal, fig. (4-b), the figures sit on temple thrones in the manner hitherto reserved for deities, even though they do not wear the traditional horned headdress of divine figures. The coarse cutting indicates that these seals came from areas

6.2. The sun god and the god with a scimitar

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

that had only local seal cutting traditions and that the omission of a horned headdress might be owing to negligence rather than to a change in ideology. This suggestion is supported by inscriptions naming a deity which seem to occur mostly on other seals of this type which clearly represent a deity [6].

with his foot resting on a small stool or, in the late old Babylonian seals of the drilled style, a mountain. Rays no longer issue from his shoulders as they did in previous periods but he still carries a small saw or Saššaru. Judicial Texts of this period record that oaths were taken in front of the Saššaru of Shamash. His name appears frequently alone or with that of his consort Aya on early seals of this period. The saw held vertically, fig. (4-c), rather than horizontally or obliquely was a feature characteristic of sealings dated to king of Sin-iddinam of Larsa (c. 1849-1843 BC.), fig. (4-d) [6].

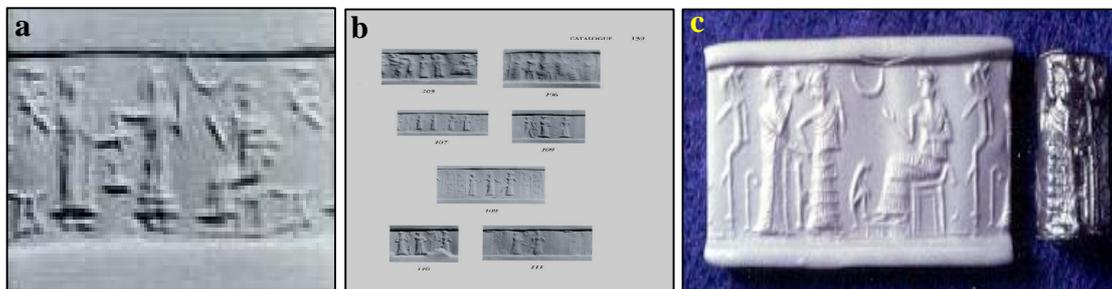


Figure (4) Shows **a**, a worshiper is led to a seated figure, Teissier, B., 1984, p. 22-136, No. 102, **b**, Presentation scene show the worshipper being led by a goddess before a standing deity or before the standing deified king, Teissier, B., 1984, no. 109, **c**, Isin-Larsa period. Presentation scene of god Shamash. (<http://www.rbmason.ca/seals.html>)

7. Discussion

The banquet, like the contest, was one of the most popular subjects in the ED period, but unlike the contest scenes which remained important in Akkadian period, the banquet theme clearly lost popularity in favour of the hitherto less frequent presentation scenes. The latter scenes with a standing individual (probably the seal owner) confronting a deity, with or without the mediation of an interceding goddess, came to the fore in the Akkadian period and were carried into the Neo-Sumerian period. Another variation of the presentation scene where a seated figure deprived of divine attributes was associated with a ruler became prominent in the Ur III period. Presentation scenes were official marks of identity, vassalage and obedience to a ruler or god representing the realm of elite members of the Akkadian, Ur III and Babylonian societies. By having themselves portrayed with the ruler officials established their authority within the state. The inscription identifying owners by name, patronymic and the office held, placed them in the state hierarchy, sometimes in association with the ruler [25]. The earliest Old Babylonian presentation scenes still show the worshipper being led by a goddess before a seated deity or before the seated deified king who holds a cup, as he did on Ur III seals. In the nineteenth century (during the Isin/Larsa period) this was replaced by a composition in which the seated deified king was approached by a robed figure with hands clasped, behind whom stood a suppliant goddess in a flounced robe with both hands raised in intercession for him. Presentation scenes before standing deities also developed and gradually replaced presentation scenes before seated deities and kings. The better

quality seals had an inscription naming the owner, his title and his patron deity or ruler. Often, however, such seals were re-used and the inscription was either erased or re-cut. **The King:** appears in various aspects. He never represents a specific king, but seems to stand for the concept of kingship in various robes, for stability and for protection. He may, indeed, be a protective being with royal connotations. The king was seated on a padded stool and holding a cup, continues from Ur III times. He wears ceremonial robes, and on later seals he is shown standing before a deity, sometimes carrying an animal offering. The so-called "king with the mace", generally shown facing the suppliant goddess, is the image of the active warrior king and Wiggermann (1985-86) has suggested, that he is to be equated with the *edu*, the threshold protector and bringer of happiness. The kilted king is also shown vanquishing enemies. **Other humans:** The owner of the seal, robed, clean-shaven and sometimes shaven-headed, stands with hands clasped before the seated deified king. Priests, depicted clean-shaven wearing kilts and holding a libation vessel or frond and a bucket, occasionally appear on presentation scenes. **Deities:** Gods and goddesses are identified by their horned headdresses which can have one or more pairs of horns as shown in Akkadian, Ur III and Old Babylonian periods. The suppliant or interceding goddess seems to be the personal goddess (or *Lama*) of the owner of the seal. She wears a flounced robe and raises both hands in prayer. On presentation scenes she replaces the leading goddess found on Ur III and some early Old Babylonian presentation scenes. She appears very often before the king with a mace [3].

8. Conclusion

To conclude, the banquet scenes representations may be apperas at first in the late 4th millennium BC, and they represent in the art of ED period and continued to be exist on seals until the Akkadian period where the banquet scenes were replaced by a presentation theme, and this may be due to changes in cult rituals. While in the Ur III period the contest theme was replaced by the presentation scenes also, and it continued in the Old Babylonian period and is influenced by those of the Ur III period. Such intercession scenes represent a human

worshipper led by a goddess before a horned god. The goddess in Sumerian is known as Lama but in Akkadian as Lamassu. During the New-Sumerian (Ur III) period the intercession scenes became especially domenate because the status of kingship reached a new peak at this time. While in the Old Babylonian period this intercession scenes still show the worshipper led by a goddess before a seated god or before the seated deified king who holds a cup in his right hand. Finally, we can point out the evolution of the intercession scenes was listed in tab (1).

Table (1) matrix of the evolution of the intercession scenes was as follows:

Old Babylonian Period	Ur III Period	Post Akkadian Period	Akkadian Period	ED	Topic
Presentation scenes	Presentation scenes	Presentation scenes	Presentation and banquet	Banquet scenes	The type of scene
Humans (kings) and gods exist	Humans (kings) and gods exist	Gods and humans exist	Gods and humans exist	Humans (sometimes gods) Exist (May be represent the owner of the seal).	Standing or seated figures represented on seals
Only the crescent moon was exist.	The crescent moon is generally replaced by a combined symbol with a star, within the arc of the crescent.	Not exist	Only a crescent of flat style as an emblem on the field was exist.	Only a crescent of flat style as an emblem on the field was exist.	Symbols
Two themes exist	The first theme exists only.	The first theme exist	Two themes exist	Not exist	The followers 1- Another goddess holding up both hands in the same attitude of worship. 2- Or a servant carrying a pail of basket for an offering.
horned headdresses for gods. - The king seems to stand for the concept of kingship in various robes.	The classical headdress of the gods (horned headdresses). - The king seems to stand for the concept of kingship in various robes.	Plain Flat turban of Gudea (human-headdresses) - The king seems to stand for the concept of kingship in various robes.	horned head-dress for gods.	horned headdresses for gods.	Headdresses

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