

Scenes of Men in the Seal Impressions of Tell Abu Sha'af from the Iraqi Museum

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Abstract

The research presents and describes the scenes of men on the seal impressions of Tell Abu Sha'af from the Iraqi Museum, which came from the excavations of the Iraqi mission at the Tell Abu Sha'af site in 1978, which lasted for five months, and revealed 800 clay blocks (Bulla) of different shapes, sizes and colors, and the number of impressions found in a building known as the fortified palace. Some of the impressions are damaged, some are broken, and others are clear, bearing different scenes, based on which they were divided into several groups. The results of the excavations were published in the Sumer magazine in a special issue on the excavations of the Hamrin Dam Basin, and the impressions remained preserved in the stores of the Iraqi Museum, and since then they have not received a study that would reveal their nature and importance. Among the 800 clay blocks discovered at the site of Tell Abu Sha'af, (81) pieces of seal impressions (unpublished) were selected and studied in detail. They were dated by comparison to the period of the Sassanid occupation in Mesopotamia. In this study, we relied on the practical, descriptive and analytical method. Accordingly, these impressions were divided into four main groups (the group of scenes of men, the group of decorations and inscriptions, the group of animal scenes, and the group of mythical creatures). Our research is limited to the first group, which includes scenes of men only, and we chose only twelve models from it. In this study, we relied on the practical, descriptive and analytical method as well as comparison.

Keywords: seal impressions, Museum.

1. Introduction

1. Tell Abu Sha'af Seal Impressions

During the excavations of the Iraqi mission at the Tell Abu Sha'af site in 1978, which lasted for five months in a building known as the fortified palace, 800 clay blocks (Bulla) of different shapes, sizes, colors, and number of impressions and scenes were found. They are spherical or

oval clay pieces or blocks perforated lengthwise from the back for the purpose of hanging. They were called Bulla or Bulla, plural Bullae, because their shape resembles a ball or balls, which is an English name and this name became common in Arabic sources as well. A single clay block bears one or more seal impressions, reaching more than 26 impressions. The results of the excavations were published in Sumer magazine in a special issue on the excavations of the Hamrin Dam Basin, and the impressions remained preserved in the Iraqi Museum's stores. Since then, no study has been conducted to reveal their nature and importance. Among the 800 clay blocks discovered at the site of Tell Abu Shaaf, (81) pieces of seal impressions (unpublished) were selected and studied in detail. They were dated by comparison to the period of the Sassanian occupation in Mesopotamia. In this study, we relied on the practical, descriptive and analytical method, and accordingly these impressions were divided into main groups (see diagram No. 1).

1. The first group (men's scenes), which numbered (24) pieces depicting the upper halves of men depicted in profile, perhaps kings, princes, nobles or priests, with precise details in terms of clothing, hairstyle and jewelry. Some of them bear a collar of inscriptions with some symbols (star, crescent, animal), and others depict frontal scenes of the upper halves of men, perhaps kings, princes or nobles. Some of them are distinguished by the presence of a collar of inscriptions, in addition to a group containing pictures of men in a standing position, perhaps representing gods.

2. The second group, decorative scenes and inscriptions, numbered (25) pieces. This group contains different types of geometric and plant decorations representing symbols or badges, in addition to the symbol of the palm of the hand.

3. The third group, animal scenes, numbered (30) pieces, depicting scenes of a group of different domesticated and wild animals, including types of birds, rams, deer, gazelles, scorpions, etc.

4. The fourth group, mythological scenes, numbered (two) only, and depicted composite animals.

All the prints have two or sometimes three or four openings, some of them contain traces of ropes or a groove in the back side (nape), and fingerprints can be observed on some of them, especially on the sides, and the clay blocks appear from the back (nape) mostly flat and in some they are concave or slightly convex. This study was preceded by the researcher (Frye) who presented a study of ten pieces of clay blocks (bulla) that bear many seal impressions preserved in the Iraqi Museum and which date back to the Sassanid period, some from unknown sources and others from known sites, and in this study he showed the color of the clay and the size of the bulla and its impressions in addition to the description and the effect of the place of hanging on the back and finally the inscriptions for each impression. By studying these impressions on the clay, it was possible to re-understand the geographical and administrative divisions of the Sassanid state. Thus, it gave us a clear picture of the geography and history of the region.

The large number of sealed clay-prints and their repetition allowed us to take into account many factors that can be collected and compared, thus giving us a reliable and strong starting point for studying administrative control methods. The scenes executed on them also reflected an aspect of religious beliefs and religious and worldly practices. It is necessary to study the back part (the nape) of the clay seal print, which usually bears a longitudinal depression or slit, and holes for passing a thread or rope. These holes show that the bulla was used to close a document that was

rolled up and tied with a thread, then the clay block was placed on the document and then sealed, or the things that were hung and sealed on them, which are usually containers of goods that were placed in storage rooms, such as baskets, bags, and jars of different sizes whose mouths were covered with straw, bamboo, cloth, or leather. Thus, clay seal prints were considered a link between economic thought and also an essential element of social and political organization and what follows from that in record keeping and administrative thought, which is essential in accounting..

The stamp was adopted as a means of giving legitimacy to commercial and legal transactions, as contracts or transactions not sealed with stamps of the contracting parties and witnesses, such as sales and purchase contracts, loans, leases, adoption, etc., were not recognized, and the validity of the contract or transaction is officially based on the stamp of the document that records the transaction or its envelope, as the stamp was considered as the personal signature of the owner or bearer of the stamp.

It was also printed on traded goods and commodities as an endorsement from the issuing, receiving, or storing party. The stamps have security importance, as they were used to protect stored materials, goods, and materials from theft, tampering, or replacement by printing clay plugs for the mouths of jars and pots to secure the goods.

In addition to sealing boxes and bags, and sealing the doors of some important buildings and rooms such as warehouses and archives to protect them from being opened without the knowledge of their owners and the theft of their contents.

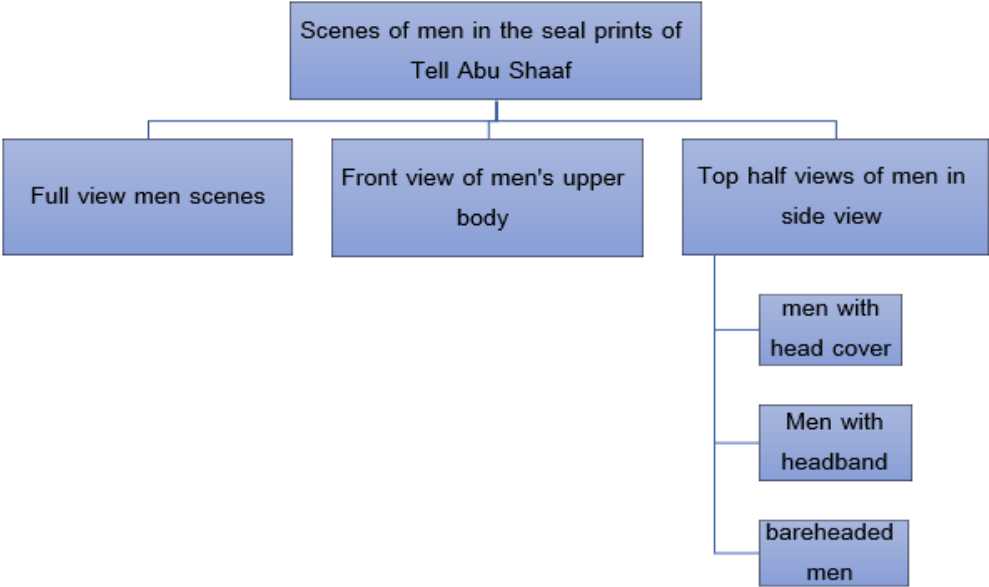
2. Men Scenes in the Seal Impressions of Tell Abu Sha'af

In the Sassanian period, it was common to carve male scenes, especially the half-length ones that depict the head and chest, most of them in a side view and some of them in a frontal view. They were usually dedicated to kings, nobles, clerics and senior state officials and were often influenced by Greek and Roman sculpture, which became a common tradition in the manufacture of seals during this period. It seems that Mesopotamia played an important role as a mediator in transferring art from Rome and Greece to Iran. This issue can be observed on a group of Sassanian seals that followed the Roman style that was obtained through trade or war or most likely brought to the Sassanian state by captive artists and Roman merchants. In addition to a group of seal scenes that were carved with half-length male scenes that bear the characteristic of Sassanian art, as the half-length man is depicted with a full face and is very similar to the style of half-length male scenes executed on Sassanian coins. They were depicted wearing a headdress (kola), necklaces and earrings, and sometimes they were depicted without a headdress and with curly hair. The empty spaces were filled with plant or animal elements, or celestial elements such as the star and crescent, or an inscription relating to the seal owner, and sometimes they bore inscriptions indicating the seal owner's job. Scenes depicting figures in a frontal half-view are more common for divine or royal figures than for nobles, as well as scenes of men executed in full view.

The scenes of men are among the most important scenes executed on the seal impressions of Tell Abu Sha'af, and their number was (24) pieces depicting the upper halves of men depicted in profile, and their number was (eighteen), perhaps kings, princes, nobles or priests, with precise

details in terms of clothing, hairstyle and jewelry. Some of them bear a ring of inscriptions with some symbols (star, crescent, animal), and others depict frontal scenes of the upper halves of men, and their number was (only two), perhaps kings, princes or nobles. Some of them are distinguished by the presence of a ring of inscriptions, in addition to a group containing pictures of men in full view in a standing position, and their number was only four. In this research, we will show only twelve prints out of the twenty-four. We relied in our study on the descriptive, practical and analytical method and provided a detailed study in terms of shape, size and color, in addition to measuring the prints. They were also drawn and enlarged to clarify the image as much as possible, in addition to a comparison.

The scenes of men in the Tell Abu Sha'af seal impressions have been divided into three sections to facilitate study (see diagram 1).



A. Upper half of men in profile: It depicts the upper half of men, the chest in frontal view and the face in profile facing to the right and is divided into:

*** Men with Head Coverings (1-4)**

The main and distinctive elements in the men's scenes of the Tell Abu Sha'af seal impressions are the head coverings, ribbon and wreath. Some of the impressions show men wearing a high head covering with an oval convex end devoid of engravings and decorations Figure (2), or in a semicircular shape Figure (1, 4) or in a semicircular shape decorated with stones or pearls, perhaps surrounded by a ribbon Figure (3).



Figure No. (1) IM-86534 SH-3

A piece of clay (Bulla), 3.2×3.3×1.9 cm, irregularly spherical, compressed at one end with a flat circular seal impression with two secondary impressions on the sides of the Bulla, one circular and the other oval.

The main print is in the middle of the Bulla, and represents a side view of the upper half of a man facing right, with a crescent moon in front of him and a six-pointed star behind him. The man's image is surrounded by illegible Helvetic inscriptions. He wears a semicircular head covering which is covering his forehead, and his hair appears to be hanging down his neck and shoulder in the form of lumps. His facial features are clear, his eyes are large almond-shaped, his nose is prominent, he has a beard and a moustache, his ears are decorated with a dangling earring in the shape of three circles or balls. He wears a robe with a circular opening, and his chest area is decorated with horizontal curved folds or pleats. The hem of the robe appears decorated with stars or flowers, and on his chest is a necklace in the shape of four circles or balls.

The two secondary impressions, the first and largest, is almost circular in shape and is damaged on the left side. It depicts a bird in frontal view with its head towards the left. The head is circular in shape and the eye is circular. The beak is clear and the bird's body and wings are depicted in the shape of a heart. The bird appears to be resting on a horizontal base that ends in folds that curve outwards. The horizontal base rests on an irregularly shaped base and the bird is surrounded by inscriptions.

The second secondary impression is oval in shape and small. It depicts a humped bull lying down facing the right, its front legs folded under its body and its back legs forward. The bulla of the nape has four holes, two at each end, and they are open to each other. There is a notch between the two holes. There are fingerprint traces at one end.

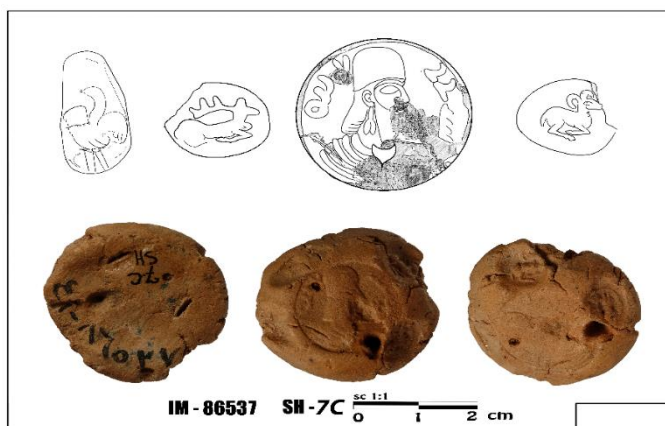


Figure No. (2) IM-86537 SH-7C

A piece of clay (Bulla), 2.9×3×1 cm, almost spherical in shape, slightly broken on the right side and has many cracks and holes, on it is a main flat seal impression in the middle and around it is three secondary impressions, two circular and one oval.

The main impression is large, circular in shape and exposed to damage, representing a side image of the upper half of a man facing right, and in front and behind him are inscriptions (Fahlawi) in the shape of an arch, wearing a headdress with an oval peak covering the forehead and devoid of inscriptions and decorations, and the hair appears hanging down on the neck to shoulder level, the eye is large almond-shaped and the rest of the face is not clearly defined and has been severely damaged in the place of the nose, mouth and chin, the ear is not clear but the long earring appears hanging in the form of two oval rings, as for the dress, nothing is visible from it except the circular neck opening in the middle of which is a semi-oval necklace with a pointed end. A hole is noted from the front to the back, penetrating the seal impression, perhaps a rope was passed through it for hanging.

As for the three secondary impressions, the first is circular in shape, slightly broken on the right side, depicting a ram lying in a side position facing right, the head is clear and the horns are thick and curved outwards, the front legs appear under the body while the back ones are bent forward, the tail is clear and small.

As for the second impression, circular in shape, slightly damaged on the left side, depicts a gazelle in a side position running towards the right, the gazelle's graceful movement and prominent muscles are noted, and the front legs appear extended while the back ones extend backward. As for the third and final impression, it is oval in shape and thin, depicting a bird (perhaps an eagle) standing in a side view, raising its head slightly upwards and facing left, its wings slightly spread and the feet long. The back of the bulla is flat and has three small holes, and there are two holes on the sides of the bulla.

For comparison, see



Figure No. (3) SH-12. B.

A piece of clay (bulla), 5 x 3.5 x 2 cm, hemispherical, broken on the right side, with two main circular flat seal impressions and a secondary circular impression, also small in size.

The main print represents a side view of the upper half of a man facing right with a crescent moon and inscriptions behind him, wearing a head covering that covers the forehead, convex at the top, with a row of circular beads or pearls, and the ribbon appears behind the cover, and the hair is hanging behind the neck in the form of vertical strands covering the neck, the facial features are clear, the eye is large and the nose is prominent, and he has a long and thick beard with an almost pointed end, hanging from his ear are earrings in the form of two balls or circles, one on top of the other, wearing a dress with a circular opening, its design and decorative details are unclear.

As for the second main print, it is smaller than the first and represents inscriptions (unclear) and surrounded by a frame of inscriptions, part of which is broken. As for the secondary print, it is located to the left of the two main prints and depicts a rose. The Bulla has two holes, one close to the other, and a wide hole appears on the broken side with three holes inside it.



Figure No. (4) IM-86539 SH-9A

A piece of clay (Bulla), 4.1×4×1.4 cm, spherical in shape with a main circular flat seal impression with four secondary impressions, three of which are circular and one is oval in shape.

The main impression represents a side image of the upper half of a man facing right, in front of his face is a crescent, wearing a semicircular head covering which is covering the forehead, and the hair appears from behind on the neck, thick and gathered in the form of upward-raised masses, the face has sharp features tending to elongation and the man has a mustache and a thick beard with a pointed end, a circular or spherical earring adorns the ear, he wears a garment with a circular opening of unclear design, devoid of engravings and decorations, and the image of the man is surrounded by a decorative frame consisting of curved lines intertwined with each other.

The four secondary impressions are not clearly defined except for the upper one, which depicts a standing bird in profile facing to the right, perhaps a sparrow or a dove, with a spindle-shaped body, a clear beak, a wing aligned with the body, a downward-facing tail, and clear feet. The nape is flat and contains four small, non-penetrating holes, and traces of a rope are visible pressed into it.

* Men with a headband (Figures 5-6)

The men are depicted wearing a headband or ribbon at the forehead area, ending in a fringed band at the back, Figure (5), or they are depicted wearing a ring-shaped wreath on the head as in (6).



Figure No. (5) IM-86538 SH-8B

A piece of clay (Bulla), 3.3×3.2×1.6 cm, spherical in shape, with a flat circular seal impression in the middle, and a secondary circular impression on the side.

The main print depicts the upper half of a man, head turned to the right while the chest is in a facing view, surrounded at the top by a ring of writing, in front of him is the crescent and below the crescent is the symbol of the ball and behind him is the star. The man has thick, curly hair that is relatively long and covers the neck and falls over the shoulder. The head is tied with a ribbon on the forehead area or perhaps a ring-shaped wreath and appears from behind in the form of a tasseled tie. The face is lateral and tends to be elongated. The features are clear, the eyes are large and the nose is prominent. He has a mustache and a thick beard that reaches the top of the chest. The ears are decorated with a hanging earring in the form of two balls or circles. He wears clothes that appear in the form of oblique lines with folds at the shoulder. On the chest is a hem decorated with flowers or stars, four of which are clearly visible. He is adorned with a necklace that ends in a large ball.

The secondary print is small and circular in shape, depicting a duck in profile walking to the right, with the left foot ahead of the right. The duck's body is oval and the tail is clear. The head is straight, the eyes are prominent almond-shaped and the beak is prominent and bears a ring, perhaps symbolizing the ring and ribbon. The nape is flat and has three holes, one on one side and two adjacent on the other side. Traces of rope appear in the form of pressed grooves in the clay.

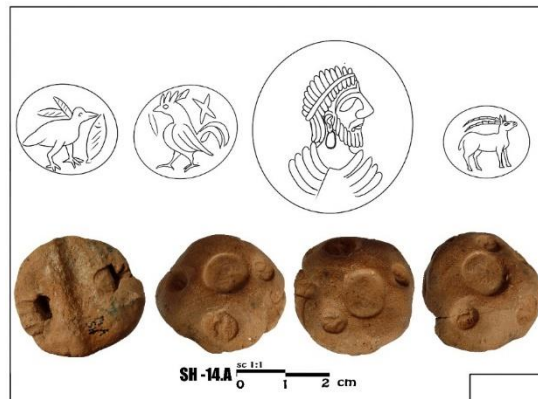


Figure No. (6) SH- 14-A

A piece of clay (Bulla), 3.9×4×1.5 cm, spherical in shape, with a flat circular seal impression in the middle and surrounded by three secondary circular impressions.

The main impression represents a side view of the upper half of a man facing right, the hair is thick and relatively short, falling over the forehead, ear and back of the neck, wearing a collar or ribbon on his head, the facial features are clear, the eyes are wide and the nose is small and prominent, he has a mustache and a thick beard, the neck is long, he wears an oval-shaped earring, and the dress has a circular opening decorated with horizontal curved folds or pleats extending from the sides of the shoulder to the middle of the chest.

As for the secondary impressions, the first depicts a standing gazelle in a side view facing right, its head raised upwards, the ears raised and the horns long and extending over the body, the details of the impression are clear. The second print depicts a rooster facing left, the rooster's crest is very clear, the eyes are round, the beak is prominent, the chest is raised, the feathers are clear, the tail is carved in the form of two long, curved feathers, and above the tail is a star symbol. The rooster is carrying a grain of wheat in its beak, perhaps. The third and final print depicts a bird in profile, walking to the right, its left foot ahead of the right, carrying a fish in its beak, its head raised upwards while its tail is downwards. At the bird's neck, two small wings or a ribbon can be seen tying around the neck. At the nape of the Bulla, there are two wide holes in a straight line, and traces of the rope are visible on the Bulla.

* Men with bareheads, Figures (7-9)



Figure No. (7) SH-1F

A piece of clay (Bulla), 3.1×3.4×1.1 cm, spherical in shape, with traces of cracks, in the middle of which is a circular, flat main seal impression, with a fingernail impression.

The main print represents a side view of the upper half of a man facing right, surrounded by traces of unclear inscriptions, the face tends to be elongated, the hair is thick, curly and gathered back in the form of a spherical mass, the facial features are the eyes and nose prominent and the mouth is relatively large, he has a mustache and a thick beard that is circular at the bottom, he wears an earring that hangs in the form of two circles or balls, one on top of the other, he wears a dress with a circular opening and decorated with folds at the shoulders, and on the chest there is a decorative border decorated with three stars, in front of the man's face there appears to be an animal, but the traces of damage did not allow it to be distinguished and it is perhaps identical to the previous seal print. The nape has four holes, three located in a straight line and one opposite the central hole.



Figure No. (8) IM-86535 SH-5

A piece of clay (Bulla), 2.9×2.8×1 cm, spherical in shape, complete with traces of some cracks and a hole on the front right side, in the middle of which is a circular flat seal impression with a secondary oval impression.

The main impression represents a side image of the upper half of a man facing right, and in front of his face is the six-pointed star symbol and below it is the crescent, and behind him are traces of inscriptions, the man is uncovered and his hair is thick, curly and long and rests on the shoulder, the face is wide and the nose is relatively large, he has a moustache and the beard appears in the form of tufts and with a pointed end, his ear is decorated with a long, hanging earring in the form of two balls or circles, one larger than the other, the dress has a circular chest opening and below it a row of tightly packed circles that may have been part of the dress or a necklace, and at the shoulders there are horizontal folds or folds and the hem is decorated with sequential plant motifs consisting of three leaflets.

The secondary impression depicts a scene of a bird's wings, among which is the head of a gazelle with a long neck facing to the right, and outward-curving horns. The nape of the bulla is slightly convex and has three penetrating holes, one on each side and one adjacent to one of them.

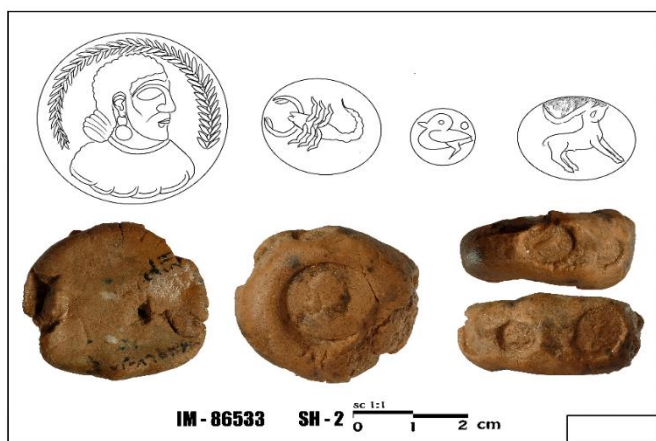


Figure No. (9) IM-86533 SH.2

A piece of clay (bulla), 3.2 x 3.3 x 1.4 cm, spherical in shape, broken at one end, with some black spots, and in the middle is a flat circular seal impression with three circular secondary impressions on the upper side of the bulla.

The main impression represents a side view of the upper half of a man facing to the right, and the man's head is surrounded in an arc by a band of plant decoration in the shape of a palm tree, wide in front of the face and gradually narrowing behind the head. The hair is thick and curly in the shape of a spherical bundle resting on the shoulder, the facial features are not clear, only the nose is prominent, he has a thick beard with a pointed end, and he wears a dangling earring consisting of a ring and attached to it a spherical shape. The dress has a circular opening and its details are not clear. As for the secondary prints, the first has a picture of a bird in a side view

facing right, the head slightly up, the horns are long and branched, the body details are clear, and the front legs are extended forward while the back legs are slightly bent indicating a certain movement position, perhaps climbing. As for the second print, it depicts a bird in a side view facing left, perhaps a sparrow, the head and beak are clear, the eyes are circular, the body is spindle-shaped and the wings are arranged, and above the tail is the symbol of a ball or circle. As for the last print, it depicts a scorpion raising its tail. The nape is flat, and Bulla has two holes, one on the sides and one in the middle.

B. Frontal view of men in upper half

Frontal view of men in lower half is more common for divine or royal figures than for nobles.



Figure (10) SH- 11.E

A piece of clay (Bulla), 3×3.2×1 cm, spherical in shape, complete with a crack below the impression and traces of salt on the front and back. The Bulla has a circular main flat seal impression with a secondary oval impression.

The main impression represents a frontal image of the upper half of a man with inscriptions on both sides. He has thick curly hair covering his forehead and styled in two spherical curls or two braids wrapped around the sides of his face. His facial features are unclear, and he appears to have a mustache and a thick beard with a circular end. The garment has a circular opening decorated with an indistinct ornament due to damage, perhaps a row of balls or perhaps a necklace. Inscriptions appear on the shoulders and traces of cracks appear on the impression in the chest area. The secondary impression depicts a bird in profile with its wings spread upwards in flight (perhaps a goose) facing left, with a branch or ribbon in front of it. The back of the bulla is slightly convex and has one hole and another hole on the side of the bulla.

C. Full view male scenes



Figure No. (11) SH- 16.A

A piece of clay (bulla), 2×2.5×1 cm, irregularly spherical and broken, with a flat, circular main seal impression with a circular secondary impression as well.

The main impression depicts a man, standing in profile facing right, with short hair and soft features, chest in a forward position and holding a stick or spear in his right hand while holding two torches of fire in his left, his left foot appears bent backwards while the right foot extends straight, and he is surrounded by two arcs of writing, one on the right from the bottom facing upwards and the other on the left facing downwards.

The secondary impression depicts a duck in profile, facing right in a walking position, with the left foot ahead of the right. A crescent symbol is visible above the duck's body. There are two holes for the bulla, one on the side and the other on the back.

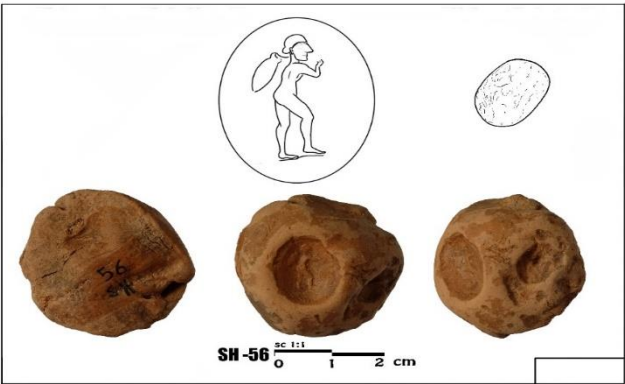


Figure No. (12) SH-56

A piece of clay (bulla), 2.7×2.6×1.2 cm, spherical in shape, irregular, with a color contrast resulting from the peeling of its surface, with a flat, oval-shaped main seal impression with an unclear oval secondary impression.

The main impression depicts a naked man standing in profile, facing right in a walking position, with the right foot ahead of the left, the hair is high and thick, the nose is prominent, and the rest of the facial details are unclear, his right hand is extended forward and raised in front of the face, and he is carrying a jar on his left shoulder. The bulla has two openings for passing a wire or rope.

3. Artistic style of men's scenes

All men's scenes were executed in a realistic style and the sculptor was interested in showing the finest details, as the seal maker succeeded in carving the seal and the accuracy of expression, so the real proportions of the men were highlighted in most of the prints and the facial features were prominent and expressive in addition to the details of the hair and beard. He was also interested in highlighting the folds of clothing, decorations and jewelry, so the print came out as if it were a real and speaking image.

The artist used the deep and reversed bas-relief style in the seals that were printed on wet paper to appear when printed in their correct form, so most of the prints came out slightly prominent, with clear details despite the fact that many of the prints were exposed to breakage, damage and distortion.

The men's scene in the Tell Abu Sha'af prints was executed in the middle and equal spaces were left on all sides, and often one scene includes only one main artistic element or a main element and elements are distributed around it from the front or back to fill the space. The scene sometimes includes writings that frame the scene or above it or from one of the sides.

4. Artistic elements in scenes of men

A. Face: The faces of men in the prints of Tell Abu Shaaf were mostly depicted in profile, all facing right, and a few of them in frontal view. We notice that most faces tend to be elongated, rough, strict, and have prominent features, except for figures (6 and 11), where we notice the Greek style with soft facial features.

B. Hairstyles and beards Hair and beards are the most prominent adornments of the Sassanids, and the prints of Tell Abu Shaaf show different and varied hair styles, but the general shape is curly and thick, and often hangs over the shoulder as in figures (5, 8) and sometimes it is depicted gathered back in the form of a bunch or a circular mass (4, 7, 9), and sometimes it is depicted hanging loosely over the shoulder as in figures (1, 2) and it is also depicted in the form of strands hanging over the shoulder (figure 3), and it is also depicted short, curly or wavy, covering the neck in the form of coils from the back and covering the forehead from the front (figure 6) or curly and very short (figure 11), and the hairstyle appears in the front view in the form of two masses of thick, curly hair on both sides of the face (figure 10). Based on matching and comparison, it becomes clear that most of these hairstyles were present in the late Sassanian era. Beards were often consistent with the hairstyle and varied in their shapes, but the most common was the thick, curly beard with a circular or triangular end, in addition to beards that were loose

in the form of tufts. While some depicted men with shaved moustaches and beards, as in Figure (11).

C. Head covering, ribbon collar (wreath)

Among the basic and distinctive elements in the scenes of men in the Tell Abu Shaaf seal prints are head coverings, ribbon and wreath. Some prints show men wearing a high head covering with an oval convex end (helmet) devoid of engravings and decorations, perhaps representing military leaders or in a semicircular shape or in a semicircular shape decorated with stones or pearls, perhaps surrounded by a ribbon or without a ribbon. Some were depicted wearing a ribbon at the forehead area and ending in the back with a tasseled band, or they were depicted wearing a circular wreath on the head.

The wreath is a special ring around the crown of the Persian kings, and it is one of the symbols of rule. The origin of the wreath can be traced back to the Parthian Empire and was also known as *dahem* or *dadem*, as the image of the winged angel on Parthian coins carries a wreath similar to the angel depicted on Sassanian coins, carrying a wavy ribbon that depicts divine light. It seems that the ribbon that wraps around the king's head refers to the origin of the wreath. The Sassanids used head coverings and wavy ribbons together as a symbol of divine mandate and called it in Persian the *dastar*, as it represents the ring of power or the ring of rule, and a symbol of victory.

D. Clothing and Ornaments

The prints show men wearing luxurious, elegant, loose clothing, most of which is characterized by folds at the shoulder and chest area. Some of them are decorated with a border of decorations in the form of stars, tree leaves, or flowers. It is noted that all the chest openings are circular in shape, and some of the clothes are decorated with stones, perhaps pearls or precious stones.

They adorned themselves with luxurious jewelry (necklaces and earrings), so they wore earrings consisting of a single stone and long earrings consisting of two or three stones, in addition to hoop earrings or dangling earrings in the form of two almonds. As for the necklaces, they were usually in the form of a single ball or a row of balls or in the form of a semi-oval with a pointed end and may have been part of the clothes or may have been fixed on top of the clothes.

E. Space-filling elements

They are small shapes such as animals, symbols and other elements surrounding the main scene, or they are various living and non-living elements used to fill the entire surface of the seal or part of it in various ways that may be by repeating the same scene or some of its elements or depicting a miniature scene or adding various elements that are not related to the main scene in one or more parts of it or distributing them randomly within the scene or any empty place in it. It is one of the arts known in the seals of Mesopotamia and researchers believed that space-filling elements have a magical (ideological) power and are related to the main scene, while others believed that space-filling elements have an artistic purpose to coordinate the artistic scene and must have been used for both ideological and artistic purposes.

Many elements added to scenes of men were found in the prints of Tell Abu Sha'af seals, including the crescent, star and ball that were added in different places in front of or behind the man, in addition to animal elements such as a bird, a lamb or a gazelle. It was engraved in a relatively smaller size compared to other engravings, which suggests that the sculptor deliberately placed it regardless of what these signs symbolize in order to fill the space and balance the scene, in addition to distinguishing the seals. They must be from the artistic influences of Mesopotamia.

4. Comparison:

By studying the scenes of men in the prints and comparing them with seals and prints from a group of museums and other sites, it was found that they date back to the Sassanian period, but determining their date is difficult for us due to the lack of precise specialization for this period in general, in addition to the difficulty of reading and analyzing the writings they contain, and they were attributed to this period based on the advantages and artistic scenes attributed to that period.

Scenes of men's heads were common in scenes of Achaemenid seal prints influenced by Greek art, as in the scenes of seal prints from the city of Ur/Mukir, and scenes of men continued on the official Seleucid seal prints in both Uruk and Seleucia, and were characterized by Greek influences. In the Parthian period, no scenes of half-figured men were identified.

In the Sassanian period, scenes of men were often influenced by Greek and Roman sculpture which became a common tradition in the manufacture of seals of this period. It seems that Mesopotamia played an important role as a mediator in transferring art from Rome and Greece to Iran. Many seal prints can be seen bearing Roman half-figure scenes of men and Persian Pahlavi writing, which illustrates cultural exchanges as well as the use of Roman seals by the Sassanian people, in addition to a group of seal scenes that were carved with half-figure scenes of men that bear the characteristic of Sassanian art, as the half-figure man is depicted with a full face and is very similar to the style of the male scenes executed on Sassanian coins.

2. Conclusions

- The seal impressions of Tell Abu Sha'af were archives and records of legal commercial economic documents that were kept after being burned to document accounting or legal operations or delivery and receipt receipts or the like after they were removed from goods and merchandise and even documents. The multiplicity of seal impressions on a single clay block (bulla) is evidence that the transaction involved several parties, the official, auditors and witnesses.

- All the seal impressions of the men's scenes were primary impressions and were in the middle of the clay block (bulla), and it is likely that they were official personal seals used by people of administrative status, and they may have depicted kings, nobles, priests or senior state officials such as accountants or tax collectors and perhaps knights.

- All the seal impressions of the men's scenes were limited to the circular shape and the diameter of the impressions ranged between approximately 2.7 cm - 1.7 cm, which is larger than the rest of the secondary impressions, which confirms that they are official seals.

- We notice in the scenes of men that the chest remains in front and the head and the rest of the body in a side view. This is a continuation of most scenes of men and women in Mesopotamia and throughout the ages. It was distinguished by being executed in a realistic style, taking into account the anatomical proportions of the body. - The wreath or flying ribbon that was placed on the heads of men and the head coverings are among the decorative elements that were common in Sassanian art and were attributed to it and were found on most of their artistic productions.

Table (1) Shows Details Of The Seal Impressions Of The Men's Scenes From The Tell Abu Sha'af Site.

Figure	Bulla Shape	Clay color according to the Menzel scale	Prints Number	Museum number	Bulla Size in CM	Print Size		State
						Main	Secondary	
1	Spherical	Reddish yellow 7.5 YR 6/6	3	IM-86534 SH. 3	×3.3 ×3.2 1.9	2.7cm	a) 1.5×1 cm b) 7 mm	Good, complete, clear prints
2	Nearly spherical	Reddish yellow 7.5 YR 6/6	4	IM-86537 SH. 7C	× 3 ×2.9 1	2cm	a) 1cm×5 mm b) 7 mm c) 9 mm	Cracked, distorted
3	Hemispherical	Reddish yellow 7.5 YR 6/6	3	SH. 12.B	×3.5 × 5 2	2cm	a) 1.7 cm b) 5 mm	Good
4	Spherical	Light brown 7.5 YR 6/4	5	IM-86539 SH. 9A	×4.1 1.4×4	2cm	a) 6mm b) 9 mm c) 5 mm d) 5×4 mm	Good
5	Spherical	Light brown 7.5 YR 6/4	2	IM-86538 SH. 8B	×3.3 1.6×3.2	1.5cm	a) 5 mm	Very good
6	Spherical	Light brown 7.5 YR 6/4	4	SH. 14.A	1.×4×3.9 5	1.5cm	a) 8 mm b) 1 cm c) 8 mm	Good
7	Spherical	Strong brown 7.5 YR 5/6	1	SH. 1. F	3.4 ×3.1 1.1 ×	2cm	a) 9 mm b) 5 mm c) 1 cm	Good, somewhat clear prints
9	Spherical	Reddish yellow 7.5 YR 6/6	4	IM-86533 SH.2	3.3×3.2 1.4×	1.7cm	a) 7mm×5 mm	Slightly broken

8	Spherical	Light brown 7.5 YR 6/4	2	IM-86535 SH. 5	×2.8 ×2.9 1	1.5cm	a) 1cm×5 mm	Good
10	Spherical	Brown 7.5 YR 5/4	2	SH. 11. E	1 ×3.2 ×3	1.6cm	a) 7mm	Good
11	Irregular	Brown 7.5 YR 5/4	2	SH. 16. A	× 2.5 ×2 1	1.2سم	a) 6×5 mm	Broken
12	Spherical	Reddish yellow and strong brown 7.5 YR 7/6 5/6	2	SH.56	×2.6 ×2.7 1.2	1.5×1 سم م	a) 1.5×1 cm b) 7 mm	Good

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