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(Warsaw)

An Old Babylonian Cylinder Seal

The Mesopotamian cylinder seal described here belongs to a collection of seals and cuneiform tablets assembled by Rev. Georg Shalub. The collection was offered by the owner to the Pontificia Università Salesiana in Rome¹. Many of the pieces were purchased singly or in small groups from dealers, therefore the provenance of our seal is unknown. I wish to express here my sincere thanks to Rev. Dr. Andrzej Strus for the privilege of publishing this seal cylinder.

The cylinder seal is engraved in hematite; its dimensions are 33 × 10,8 mm. The seal is perforated lengthwise so that a cord might be passed through, or a metal mounting attached. The cylinder seal is in a good state of preservation except for a small erasure above the standing goddess figure.

The seal includes a scene of introduction typical of the time of the Third Dynasty of Ur and of the Old Babylonian Period.

The worshipper is led by a minor goddess to an enthroned person. Moreover, there is a two line cuneiform inscription.

The seated person who, in my opinion is a king², is wearing a round cap and a mantle decorated with fringes. The king is holding a small cup in his right outstretched hand. He is seated on a stool. The seat is built like a gate-way with a very small back. A minor deity wearing a horned crown and *kaunakes* with her left hand lifted, introduces her protégé. The worshipper wears a long robe similar to that of the seated figure, and has his right hand lifted. He wears a round cap and seems

¹ Cf. M. Stolarczyk, *Deux tablettes inédites de l'époque de la Troisième Dynastie d'Ur*, see below, pp. 119-124.

² The representation of the king as a god seems to be rendered according to the custom of Akkadian, Ur III and certain other periods when the king was endowed with some of the attributes of divinity.

to be bearded. He is lead by the goddess who holds his left wrist. Between the king and the goddess there is a crescent on the sky above. Behind the seated figure there are two lines of cuneiform inscription:

^aŠamaš

^aAja

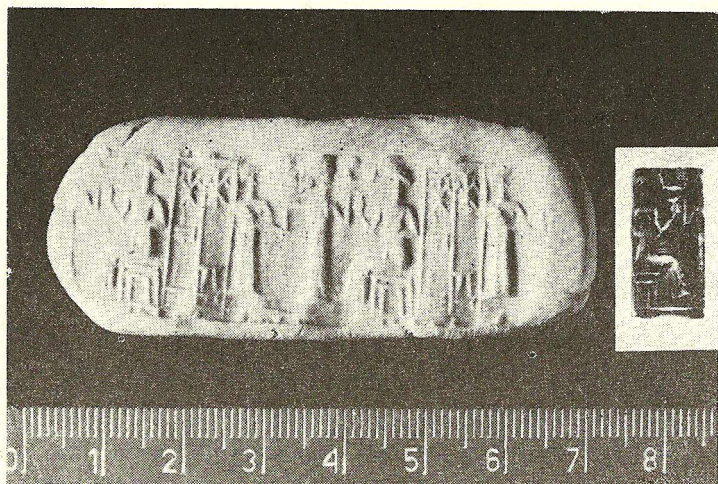


Fig. 1. Phot. M. Piwowska

The popular scene of introduction and its typical elements, the shape of cuneiform signs engraved in the Old Babylonian manner, the names of Šamaš and Aja — all these found in many parallels³ — indicate the dating of this cylinder seal for the time of the Old Babylonian Period, scil. the Larsa Period.

³ Parallels: H. Frankfort, *Stratified Cylinder Seals from the Diyala Region*, Chicago 1955 (OIP 77), Nos. 764, 771. G. A. Eissen, *Ancient Oriental Cylinder and other Seals with a Description of the Collection of Mrs. William H. Moore*, Chicago 1940 (OIP 47), Nos. 51–54. L. Legrain, *Ur Excavations Vol. X — Seal Cylinders*, London 1955, Nos. 380, 385. J. B. Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East in Pictures*, Princeton 1954, No. 701.