Overturning Certainties in Near Eastern Archaeology

A Festschrift in Honor of K. Aslıhan Yener

Edited by

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Allan S. Gilbert



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CHAPTER 11

Unpublished Hittite Seals in the Collections of the Amasya Museum

Meltem Doğan-Alparslan[1] *and Metin Alparslan*[2]

Abstract

The seven seals in this paper are kept in the Amasya Museum's collection of Anatolian hieroglyphic seals and were acquired through purchase. Although their provenances are Amasya and its environs, Merzifon and Hatay, the information about their exact find-spots comes only from the reports given by the people who brought them to the museum. Only one seal includes a woman's name, the others include male names, and the typology and dates of the seals vary. Some names on the seals are known from Hittite cuneiform texts.

•••

We dedicate this paper to Prof. Dr. Aslıhan Yener
with our deepest respects

⁘

Anatolian hieroglyphic seals from the Amasya Museum[3] that are presented here come from the vicinity of Amasya, Merzifon, Adıyaman, and Hatay

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3 We are grateful to Celal Özdemir, director of the Amasya Museum, who kindly allowed us to study the seals, and to the museum staff, who assisted us during our research. We also thank to our friend Asst. Prof. Dr. Çiğdem Maner for her efforts and kind invitation, and editors Dr. Mara T. Horowitz, Dr. Allan S. Gilbert and Jenna Shaw for their meticulous work.

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through acquisition. Information about their provenance is based on the reports of the people who delivered the finds to the museum.

In Hittite culture, like in all the cultures that employed them, seals had three basic functions: (a) warrant of security, (b) approval/ratification, and (c) token of ownership. The first function is related to the security of the contents of a vessel, pack, or a place, rather than a written document. For this very reason, seals were in existence even before the invention of writing. The second function is close to that of a signature; documents were approved by the people who dictated them or by the witnesses using their seals. The last function is related to its impression on a clay vessel or a clay lump. The latter was then attached to a basket, a pack or any other object. It indicated the owner of the object, whether a person or an institution (Dinçol and Dinçol 2002: 82).

1 Inventory Nr: A-96-13-5. (Fig. 11.1)

Measurements: thickness, 0.9 cm; diameter, 2.1 cm
Origin: Amasya-Merzifon
Description: Discoid seal made of red stone (hematite) with two impression areas and string-hole (Fig. 11.1g). Though broken, both sides bear inscriptions that probably denote personal names. Seals with two names are common.[4]

The geometric decoration framing the seal surface impressions is a ladder pattern. This decoration was first used in the transitional period from the 15th to 14th-century BC, but this motif alone is not reliable enough for dating since it remained in use until the 13th century BC (Dinçol and Dinçol 2008: 15–16).
Reading and Commentary: Side A (Figs. 11.1a,c,e): Although the seal is broken, it is possible to read all of the signs on this side. From top to bottom the signs L.175 (*la*)—L.334 (*pa*) + L.383 (*ra/i*) are legible. Thus, the name of the person can be read as *Lapara* or *Lapari*. This name has not yet been documented, though other names starting with *Lapar*—are known (*Labarna, Labarsa*) (Laroche 1966: no. 685 and 686).

Side B (Figs. 11.1b,d,f): Here, three hieroglyphic signs are preserved and one or two more seem to have been located on the broken part. The legible signs at the center of the seal are as follows: at the right is L.370 (log. BONUS$_2$, syll. *su*), to its left (log. ASINUS, syll. *ta*) and at the bottom L.283,[5] i.e. *tuzzi*—in Hittite

4 For seals with double names from the Boğazköy corpus, see Dinçol and Dinçol 2008: 40 ff., Taf. 15/156, 161, 163, 165.

5 A similar sign is documented in Herbordt 2005: Kat. 182, but L.283 is interpreted here as a title (see Hawkins 2005: 292 and 312). For the reading of L.283 as Hittite *tuzzi*—see Dinçol 2001: 93f.

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meaning "army". If we assume that there is no other sign on the broken part of the seal, we may safely propose the name *Suta*[6] on the B side and a military title for it.

We have already mentioned that the geometric decoration is not sufficient for dating purposes. Likewise, since the discoid form of seal was in use between the 16th and 13th-centuries BC, it does not provide us with a firm dating criterion (Dinçol and Alparslan 2001: 396–397). Considering the ladder motif surrounding the seal, however, a date between the 14th and 13th-centuries BC seems plausible (see Dinçol and Dinçol 2008: Kat. 105, Kat. 113–118).

2 Inventory Nr: A-96-13-3 (Fig. 11.2)

Measurements: both sides of the triangle, 1.7 cm; base, 1.4 cm; thickness, 0.7 cm
Origin: Amasya-Merzifon
Description: Triangular seal made of dark red stone with an inscription on only one side (Fig. 11.2a,c,d). There is a groove situated precisely at the back of the inscribed area, which seems to have been used for winding around a string (Fig. 11.2b). Stamps with triangular sealing surfaces such as this are known in the Hittite glyptic canon (Mora 1987: Tav. 7; Dinçol *et al.* 1998: 186–187).
Reading and Commentary: Three hieroglyphic signs can be identified on the inscribed surface, which is surrounded by a band. From top to bottom, it reads: L.334 (*pa*) (Herbordt 2005: Fig. 560) at the top, L.370 (log. BONUS$_2$, syll. *su*), i.e., Hittite *assu*-, Luwian *wasu*—at the bottom right and L.215 (*ha*) + L.383 (*ra/i*) at the left. In light of these readings, we interpret the name as *Pasuhara* or *Pasuhari*. No similar name has yet been documented in glyptic or cuneiform sources. The seal's typology does not provide any criterion for a dating within the Hittite glyptic art.

3 Inventory Nr: A-75-13-21 (Fig. 11.3)

Measurements: thickness, 0.8 cm; diameter, 1.9 cm
Origin: Antakya-Çatbaşı village
Description: Biconvex seal made from a purple stone with a string-hole (Fig. 11.3c). The two sides bear different inscriptions, but the surfaces are worn, making it difficult to determine the reading direction of the seal. The band

6 *Suta* is a name recorded in the cuneiform inscriptions (Laroche 1966: no. 168).

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framing the impression area of the A side is not readily visible on the B side due to its bad condition.
Reading and Commentary: It is possible to identify some signs on the better-preserved A side (Fig. 11.3a,d,f). One of them is L.104 (log. GAZELLA/CAPRA, syll. *sà*) on the right side of the impression area, and the other is L.35 (*na*) on the bottom left. On the lowermost section, the L.278 (*li*) sign is perhaps likely despite the seal's poor preservation. The wear on the B side (Fig. 11.3b,e,g) makes it difficult to draw a conclusion. It may be suggested that the sign to the left of the impression area is the female ideogram L.79 (FEMINA/MATER). However, a name or title cannot be confidently proposed due to the lack of legible signs. For the B side, we may speak of a female name. The seal resembles 13th-century BC examples in terms of shape (Dinçol and Dinçol 2008: Fig. 156–181).

4 Inventory Nr: A-77-15-20 (Fig. 11.4)

Measurements: thickness, 0.6 cm; diameter, 1.1 cm
Origin: Adıyaman-Besni
Description: Stamp seal made of purple stone with a string-hole (Fig. 11.4c). Only one side has an inscription (Fig. 11.4a,d), though poor workmanship and wear render it difficult to read.
Reading and Commentary: The worn surface prevents us from reading the inscription and identifying the carvings from among the hieroglyphic sign repertoire. Although at least four signs are visible in the impression area, which is framed by a line, we may only suggest that the signs at the top center and center are L.376 (*zi/a*) and L.450 (a). Other than these signs, no name can be read on the seal. The seal's form offers no dating criterions.

5 Inventory Nr: A-79-21-16 (Fig. 11.5)

Measurements: height, 1.6 cm; diameter, 2.0 cm
Origin: Unknown
Description: A round stamp seal with knobs made from a white stone (Fig. 11.5b). The material is possibly limestone judging from its lightness and color. A decoration comprising two rows of short lines is visible on the knob. Knobs with string-holes were a popular form in Anatolia long before the Hittite period (Boehmer and Güterbock 1987).
Reading and Commentary: The impression area has three or four hieroglyphic signs (Fig. 11.5a,c,d). The first one is L.105 (log. BOS, syll. (*m*)*u*(*wa*)). At the

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bottom right, the sign L.66 (*pi*) is clearly visible. It is not easy, however, to discern the sign at the left due to bad preservation, though it might be L.175 (*la*) or L.450 (*a*). In this case, the name would be (*M*)*u*(*wa*)*pi* or (*M*)*u*(*wa*)*lapi*.[7] While there are numerous names with *Muwa*—in both hieroglyphic and cuneiform documents, the aforementioned name does not appear among them.

If we want to read the name as *Uualapi*, we have to look for the names with the *uwa*—component, which are considerable in number. Among these, ^{m}*Uu̯abi*,[8] a name that might be related to our name, and ^{m}*Ulippi*,[9] a priest's name, draw attention. The form recalls the earlier stamp seals with handle, though the fact that the whole seal area is covered with inscriptions rather points to the 14th through 13th-centuries BC.

6 Inventory Nr: A-75-13-23 (Fig. 11.6)

Measurements: the width of the impression area, 1.5 cm; the height of the impression area, 2.1 cm; the height of the knob, 2.3 cm
Origin: Antakya-Çatbaşı village
Description: A conical stamp seal made of purple stone with single impression area and a string-hole. The tip of the knob is crenellated like a city wall (Fig. 11.6e). Seals with rectangular impression areas are known both from Boğazköy and Southern Anatolia, where the provenance of this seal, Çatbaşı village south of Antakya, is located (Herbordt 2005: Kat. 608, 653; Dinçol and Dinçol 2008: Kat. 288, 290, 291; Dinçol *et al.* 1998).
Reading and Commentary: The hieroglyphic signs on the base of the seal are framed with a band (Fig. 11.6a,b,c). According to our readings, at the top left corner of the impression area is the sign L.90 (*ti*) and immediately below it, L.105 (log. BOS, syll. (*m*)*u*(*wa*)) can be read. We may tentatively suggest that the signs at the center are L.445 (*la/i/u*), and L.411 (*ni*) immediately below it. Even the intelligible signs on the seals seem to have lost their original characteristics. Similar seals are observed within a collection from the Adana Museum (Dinçol *et al.* 1998). Neither the form nor the hieroglyphic provide criteria for dating.

7 It is remarkable that the male name *Muwala*, which is recorded in the Hittite cuneiform documents, bears a close resemblance to this one (KBo 18.198 Rs. 9' ^{m}*Mu-u-u̯a-la-a-aš*).

8 KUB 16.63 Rs. 5'.

9 "Offering ritual" KUB 24.4+KBo 24.86.

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7 Inventory Nr: A-71-2-1 (Fig. 11.7)[10]

Measurements: thickness, 0.9 cm; diameter, 1.6 cm
Origin: Amasya
Description: A spool-shaped seal with string-hole (Fig. 11.7d). Both surfaces bear depictions but no inscriptions. On the A side is a god wearing pointed headgear and a short skirt (Fig. 11.7a,c). The B side has a lion, a plant, and an astral motif (Fig. 11.7b,c). Under the lion's foot lies what we interpret as stylized mountains. The scenes on both faces are framed with a ladder pattern.

Conclusion

All the seals in this paper bear the signatures of their owners. The names deciphered on the seals with or without titles are evaluated in the confines of glyptic art. It is also possible, however, to study them as part of the Boğazköy seal corpus, or to locate them in the Hittite cuneiform texts on occasion. Six of the seals are introduced to scholarly circles for the first time here. We have dated two seals to 14th through 13th-centuries BC and one to the 13th-century BC according to the names they contain, their typology, and a comparison with similar examples.

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10 The seal in question was published by Tahsin Özgüç in 1978 (Özgüç 1978: 117 and 125, Pl. 52 2a-c). Also see Dinçol and Dinçol 2008: 36.

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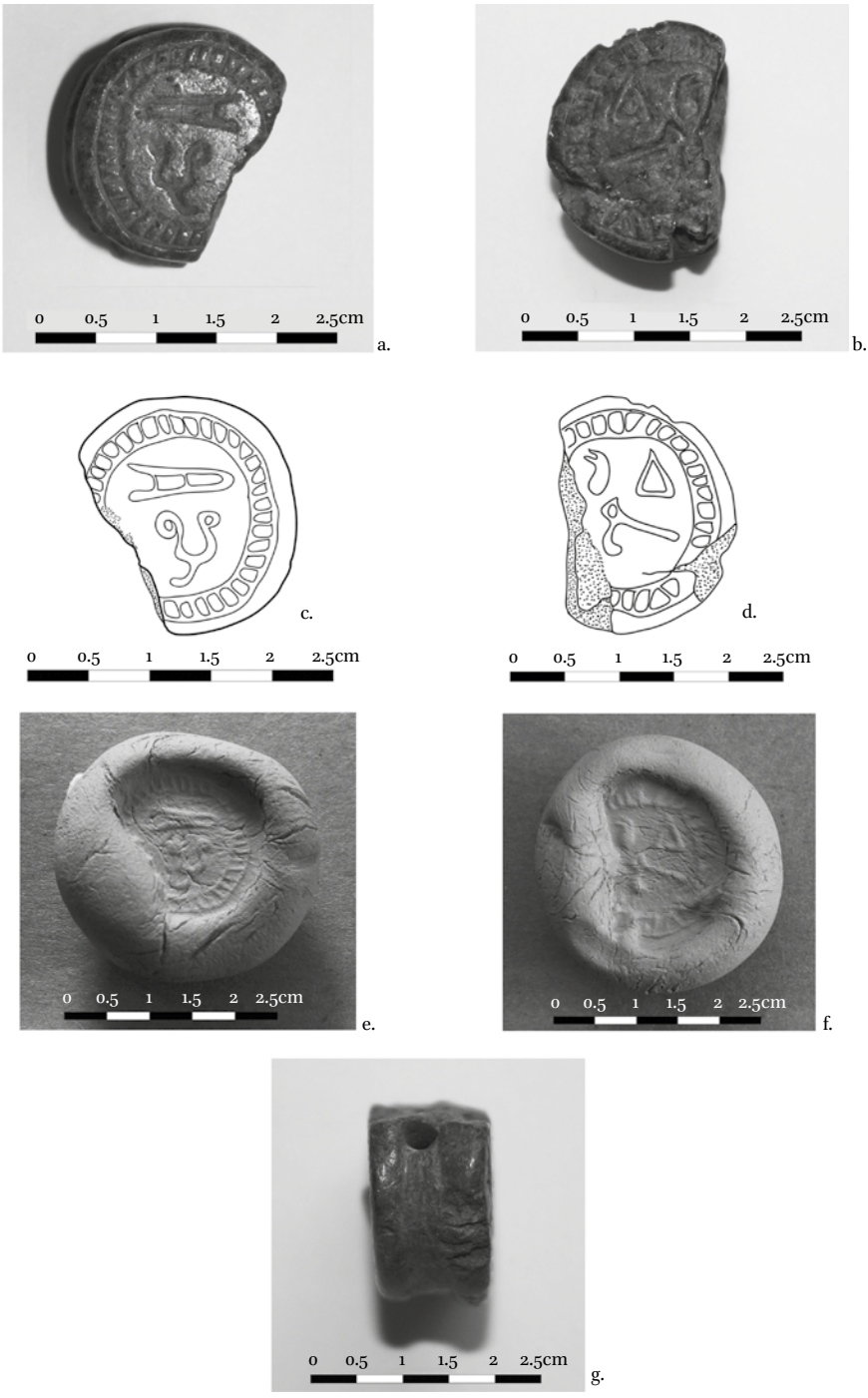


FIGURE 11.1A-G *Inventory Nr: A-96-13-5, discoid seal made of red stone (hematite).* COURTESY: MELTEM DOĞAN-ALPARSLAN AND METIN ALPARSLAN.

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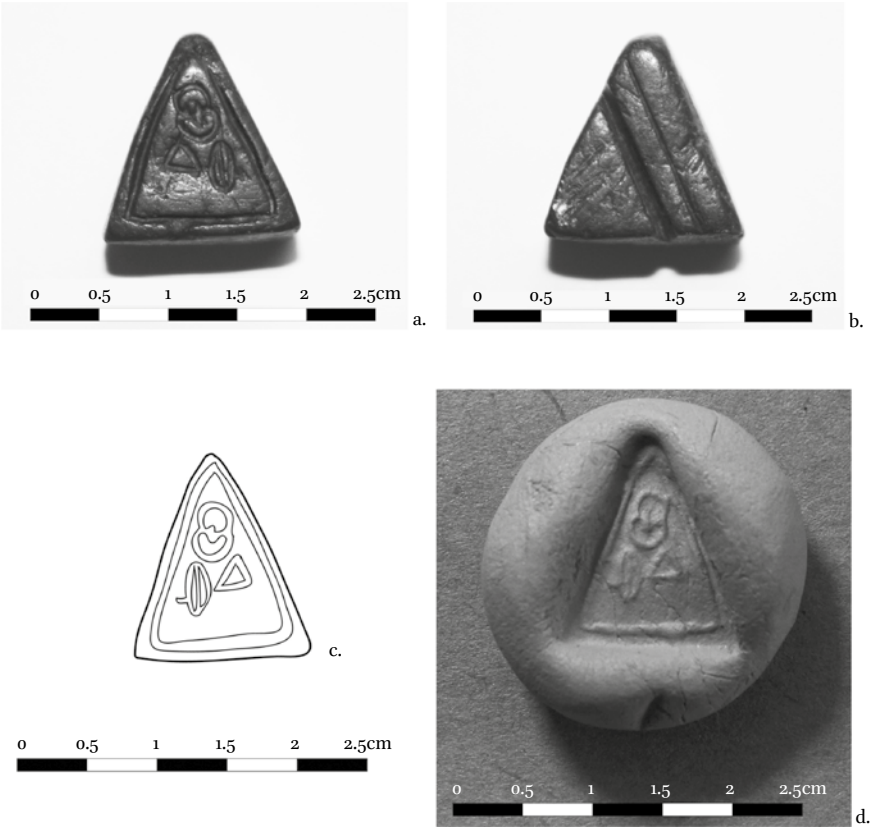


FIGURE 11.2A-D *Inventory Nr: A-96-13-3, triangular seal made of dark red stone.* COURTESY: MELTEM DOĞAN-ALPARSLAN AND METIN ALPARSLAN.

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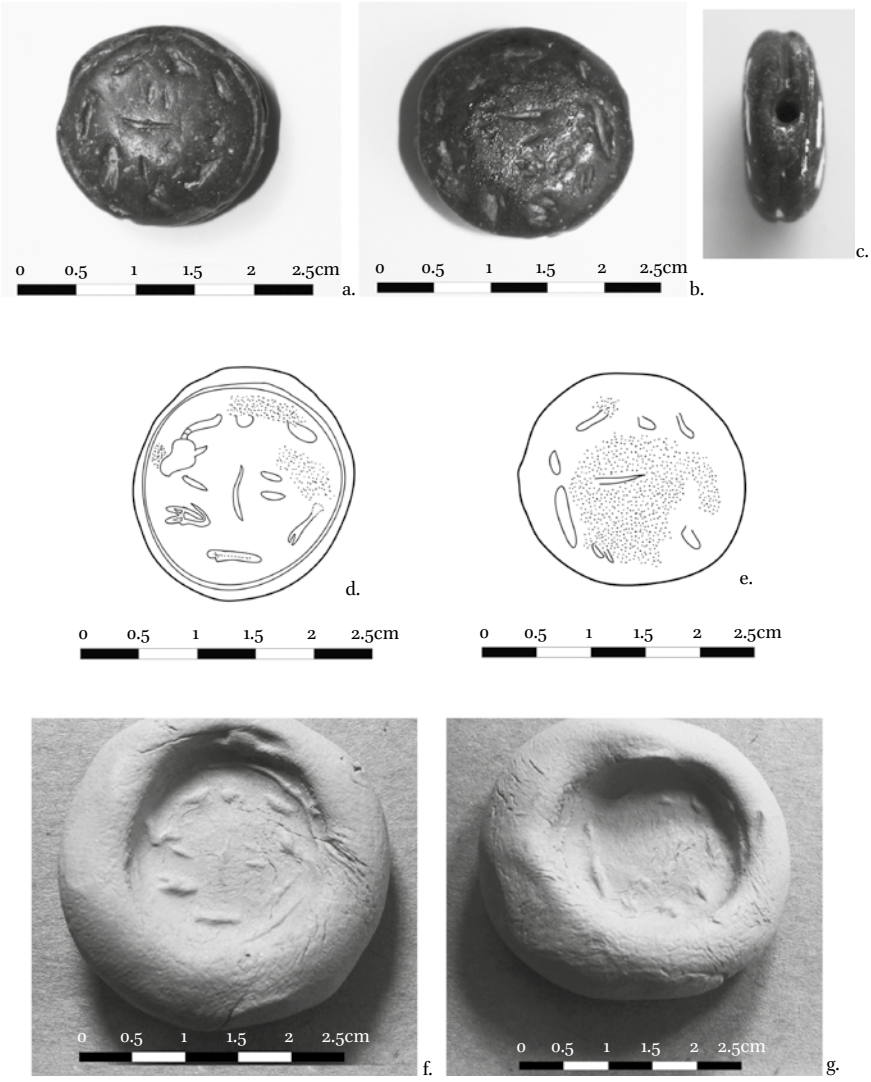


FIGURE 11.3A-G *Inventory Nr: A-75-13-21, biconvex seal made of a purple stone with a string-hole.*
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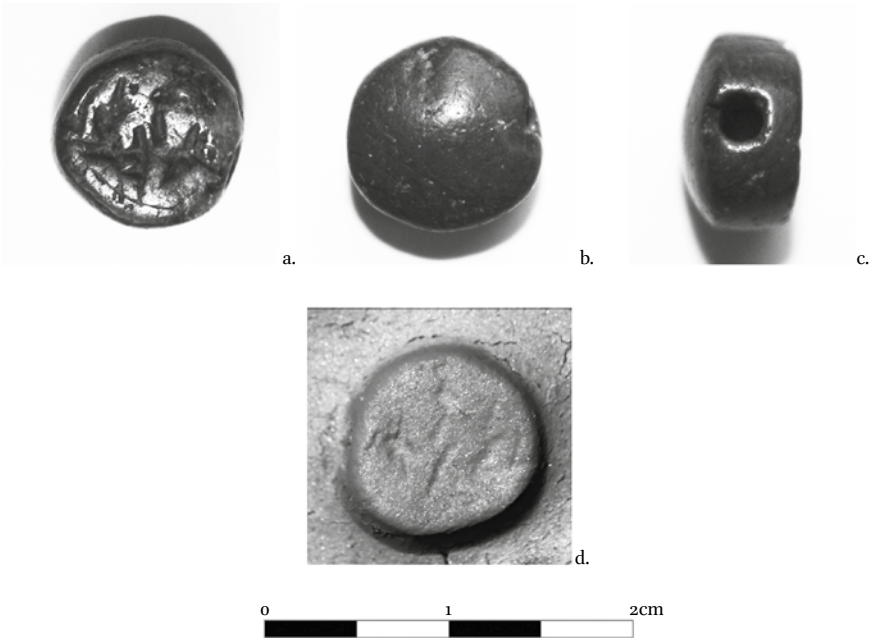


FIGURE 11.4A-E *Inventory Nr: A-77-15-20, stamp seal made of purple stone with a string-hole.* COURTESY: MELTEM DOĞAN-ALPARSLAN AND METIN ALPARSLAN.

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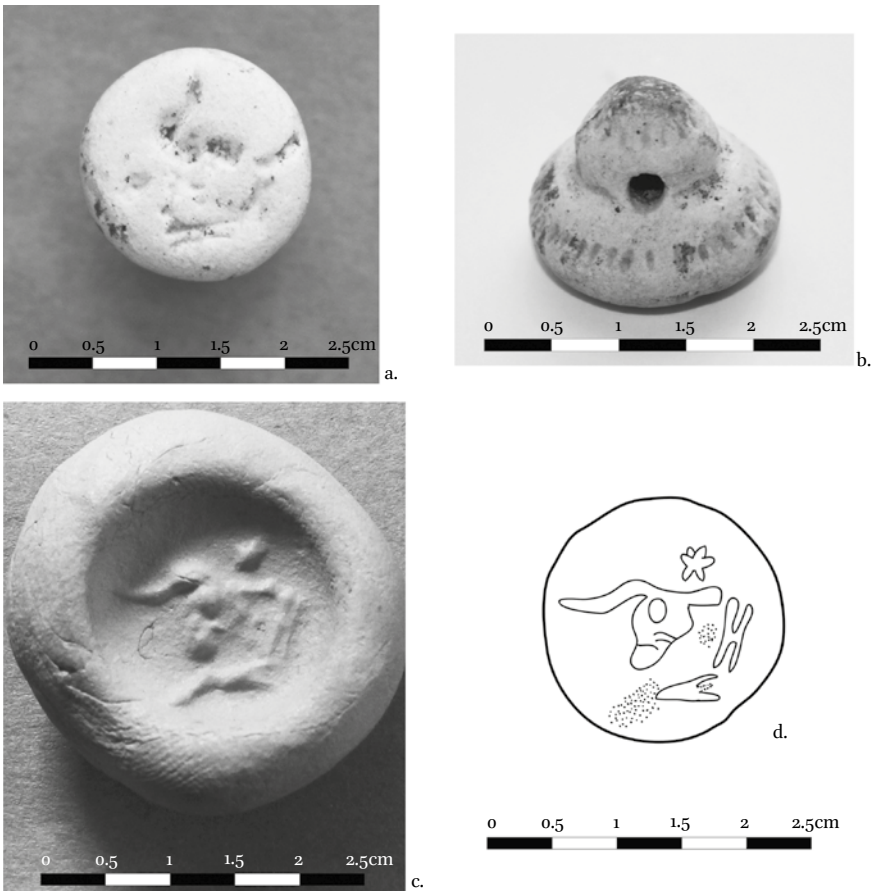


FIGURE 11.5A-D *Inventory Nr: A-79-21-16, round stamp made of a white stone seal with knobs.* COURTESY: MELTEM DOĞAN-ALPARSLAN AND METIN ALPARSLAN.

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FIGURE 11.6A-E *Inventory Nr: A-75-13-23, conical stamp seal made of purple stone with string-hole.*
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FIGURE 11.7A-D *Inventory Nr: A-71-2-1, spool-shaped seal with string-hole.*
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