

University of Pennsylvania Libraries

NOTICE WARNING CONCERNING COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS

The copyright law of the United States (title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material.

Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specific conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research." If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement.

This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law.

This notice is posted in compliance with Title 37 C.F.R., Chapter II, Part 201.14

Request #: **293367**



Call #: **BS1180 .C66 1997 v.2 - VPL JANES - 4th East**  
(rm.401)

Notes: I DON'T WANT THE BOOK, JUST A SCAN OF THE  
CHAPTER

'Seals and Seal Impressions,' in VOLUME 2, PP. 197-204. --  
THANKS

Journal Title: Context of Scripture / editor, William W. Hallo  
; associate editor, K.L. Younger, Jr. ; consultants, Harry A.  
Hoffner, Jr., Robert K. Ritner.

Volume: 2

Issue: CHAPTER

Month/Year: 1997-

Pages: **197-204**

Article Title: **Seals and Seal Impressions**

Article Author: [\*\*\* none supplied \*\*\*]

**Jeffrey Tigay**

Deliver to: 847 Williams Hall

Department: SAS - Near Eastern Languages and Culture

Date Printed: 2/9/2010 09:15:48 AM

## 1. SEALS AND SEAL IMPRESSIONS\*

*Jeffrey H. Tigay<sup>1</sup> and Alan R. Millard*

Seals were used for stamping the names of their owners on clay bullae to seal letters and documents (1 Kgs 21:8; Isa 8:16; 29:11; Jer 32:9-14; Job 38:14; Esth 8:8; cf. Gen 38:18, 25; 41:42; Jer 22:24; Song 8:6; Esth 3:10), on pottery vessels to indicate ownership or some other type of relationship, and for other purposes. Hundreds of seals and seal impressions, containing inscriptions in Hebrew, Phoenician, Ammonite, Moabite, Edomite, Philistine, and Aramaic script are known, mostly from the eighth through sixth centuries BCE. The inscriptions, spread over one to four lines, usually contain the name of the seal's owner, often that of the owner's father and occasionally his grandfather, and sometimes the owner's title or some other phrase. They are a valuable source of information about history, religion, culture, government, and economy because of the onomastic information they contain, the fact that some of the owners are government or religious officials, that a few are individuals known from the Bible, and because of the objects to which they are affixed and the iconography on some of them. Seals that were found in controlled archaeological excavations are the most reliable sources of information; some of these come from occupation debris, as at Lachish (Diringer 1941), some from tombs (e.g. Barkay 1986:34), which are the most likely provenience for the majority. Bullae, often with imprints of papyrus on the back, were recovered in excavations at Lachish (Aharoni 1968:164-168) and Jerusalem (Shiloh 1986). Seals and bullae acquired on the antiquities market, notably the hoard of bullae published by Avigad (1986), are less reliable because their provenience is unknown, their date uncertain, and some may be modern forgeries.<sup>2</sup>

The seals may bear a design of imaginary, human or animal figures, floral or geometric motifs, with the inscription engraved above or below or in the field, sometimes clearly as an addition, usually in a space deliberately created. In this respect, Hebrew seals differ little from other West Semitic seals (see Bordreuil 1992; Sass and Uehlinger 1993). However, the majority of Hebrew seals carry only the owner's name and patronym or title, normally written in two lines divided by a ruling or simple design and enclosed in a border. The seals are usually under one inch in diameter, so the lettering is tiny, sometimes finely engraved, sometimes roughly cut and occasionally with errors.

### HEBREW (2.70)

2.70A. Two bullae of Berechياهو son of Nerياهو the scribe, made by the same seal (Hebrew; provenience unknown).<sup>3</sup> These identical inscriptions are written in the Hebrew script of the seventh century BCE. This Berechياهو is probably Jeremiah's secretary "Baruch son of Nerياهو the scribe" (Jer 36:32). Baruch is the hypocoristic, or nickname, for Berechياهو. The shorter form of Baruch's patronym, Nerياهو, that appears in some biblical passages (such as Jer 36:4), reflects the form of the theophoric element that was common in the Second Temple period when earlier biblical manuscripts were recopied. Although the names Berechياهو and Nerياهو were common, the identification of this Berechياهو as Jeremiah's scribe is quite likely, for it is rare to find two individuals in the Bible and/or in Hebrew inscriptions who have both the same first name and patronym, especially among the relatively limited segment of the population that is likely to have owned seals (another case is the seal of Baruch's brother Serياهو son of Nerياهو [Avigad and Sass 1997 #390; Avigad 1978b:86-87; 1978a:56]; see also [C], below). The title "scribe" virtually clinches the identification.

(Belonging) to Berechياهو  
son of Nerياهو<sup>4</sup>  
the scribe

\* [Millard furnished items 2.70 I-V and portions of the introduction, Tigay the rest. Ed.]

<sup>1</sup> Tigay notes: "I owe several helpful observations to Nili S. Fox."

<sup>2</sup> See Sass 1993:245-46; Naveh 1997:12; and the broader discussion of the problem of unprovenienced material by Fox 1997 chapter II, section C, 1.

<sup>3</sup> Avigad and Sass 1997 #417; Davies 1991 100.509; Avigad 1978a:52-56; 1978b:86-87; Deutsch and Heltzer 1994:37-38.

<sup>4</sup> The name Berechياهو means "YHWH has blessed (the family with this child)," while Nerياهو means "YHWH is my lamp." Like the vast majority of Israelite theophoric personal names of the Biblical period, both of these names contain the theophoric element *-yahu*, a short form

2.70B. The bulla of Jerahmeel, the king's son (Hebrew; provenience unknown).<sup>5</sup> This inscription is also in seventh-century script. This bulla, reportedly found in the same group as that of Berechياهو ben Neriyahu ([A], above), probably belonged to "Jerahmeel the king's son" who was sent by King Jehoiakim to arrest Baruch and Jeremiah (Jer 36:26). [For an actual seal with the same inscription, but of a different size see now Heltzer 1999.]

(Belonging) to Jerahmeel<sup>6</sup>  
The king's son<sup>7</sup>

2.70C. The seal impression of Hananyahu son of Azaryahu (Hebrew; provenience unknown).<sup>8</sup> The inscription is written in the Hebrew script of the seventh century BCE. In view of the considerations discussed in (A) above, the owner of this seal may have been Hananyah son of Azur, denounced by Jeremiah as a false prophet (Jer 28; Azur is a hypocoristicon of Azaryahu).

(Belonging) to Hananyahu  
son of Azaryahu<sup>9</sup>

2.70D. The bulla of Gedalyahu, over(seer of) the (royal) house (Hebrew).<sup>10</sup> This bulla, found on the surface at Lachish, is inscribed in the Hebrew script of the seventh century BCE. Some scholars believe that the owner of this seal was Gedaliah son of Ahikam son of Shaphan, whom the Babylonians placed in charge of the Jews remaining in Judah after the destruction of Jerusalem; he was assassinated shortly afterwards (2 Kgs 25:22-25; Jer 40:5-41:2). Gedaliah was from a family that held several high offices at the court of Judah, and since the Babylonians appointed him, it is plausible that he had already held a high office such as overseer of the palace. The back of the bulla contains imprints of the papyrus document to which it was affixed. Perhaps the document was a letter sent by Gedaliah from the palace to the defenders of Lachish before it fell to the Babylonians.

(Belonging) to Gedalyahu<sup>11</sup>  
"Over(seer of) the (royal) house" (i.e. the palace steward)<sup>12</sup>

2.70E. The seal of Zecharyaw, Priest of Dor (Hebrew; provenience unknown).<sup>13</sup> The other side of the seal bears the inscription "(Belonging) to Zadok son of Micha<sup>3</sup>," possibly the name of Zecharyaw's father. Both inscriptions are written in Hebrew script of the eighth century BCE.

[(Belonging) to Ze]charyaw<sup>14</sup>  
Priest of Dor<sup>15</sup>

2.70F. The seal of Uzza son of Baalhanan (Hebrew; provenience unknown).<sup>16</sup> The script on the seal has been classified as Hebrew of the eighth century BCE.<sup>17</sup>

of YHWH (Yahweh). This form is usually anglicized as *-iah* at the end of a name, *Jeho-* at the beginning. The fact that this element is used so extensively, while no other deity's name is used in more than one or two percent of Israelite names, probably indicates, when combined with other evidence, that the vast majority of Israelites, particularly in the eighth-sixth centuries BCE, was exclusively Yahwistic. See Tigay 1986; Pike 1990.

<sup>5</sup> Avigad and Sass 1997 #415; Davies 1991 100.508; Avigad 1978a:52-56.

<sup>6</sup> The name Jerahmeel (Heb. Yerahme'el) means "May God have mercy."

<sup>7</sup> Several individuals mentioned in the Bible and on West Semitic seals are designated as "the king's son" (see 1 Kgs 22:26 = 2 Chr 18:25; 2 Kgs 15:5; Jer 36:26; 38:6; 2 Chr 28:7; for other seal inscriptions containing the title see Barkay 1993:109-114; cf. 2.70G, below). It is debated whether the phrase means simply "offspring of the king" (either of the current king or his predecessor) or is the title of some office not necessarily connected with royal descent; the former view is more likely. See the discussion by Brin 1969:433-465; Yeivin 1954:160; de Vaux 1961:119-120; Rainey 1969; 1975; Fox 1997 chap. III, section A, 1 and below, n. 38.

<sup>8</sup> Avigad and Sass 1997 #165; Davies 1991 100.024; Moscati 1951 67 #24.

<sup>9</sup> The name Hananyahu means "YHWH has been gracious," while Azaryahu means "YHWH has helped."

<sup>10</sup> Avigad and Sass 1997 #405; Davies 1991 100.149; Tufnell et al. 1953:347-348.

<sup>11</sup> The name Gedalyahu means "YHWH was (i.e., has shown himself) great."

<sup>12</sup> The title *asher 'al habayit* ([<sup>3</sup>]šr 'l hby[ʔ]), known from the Bible and from inscriptions, cannot be defined precisely. It refers literally to the major domo of the royal palace, which was probably the original role of those who bore this title (see below, 2.70T). Eventually individuals bearing this title took on major state responsibilities and we find them active in political and diplomatic affairs as well (see particularly 2 Kgs 15:5; 18:17-18; 19:2-7; see also Gen 43:16, 19; 44:1, 4; 1 Kgs 4:6; 16:9; 18:3; 2 Kgs 10:5; 15:5; 18:18, 37; 19:2; Isa 22:15; 36:3; 37:2). See also Avigad 1953:137-152; 1979b:119-126 no. 1; de Vaux 1961:125, 129-131; Katzenstein 1960; Yeivin 1971; Layton 1990; Fox 1997 chap. III, section B, 1; for a possible Ug. parallel, see Good 1979. See COS 2.54 and 2.70T.

<sup>13</sup> Avigad and Sass 1997 #29; Davies 1991 100.323; Avigad 1975.

<sup>14</sup> The name Zecharyaw is the equivalent of Zechariyahu (Zachariah) and means "YHWH remembered," perhaps meaning that the Lord remembered Zecharyaw's parents and gave them this child. The form of the theophoric element, *-yaw* (anglicized as *-io* [*Jo-a* + the beginning of a name]) instead of *-yahu*, is more commonly found in inscriptions of north-Israelite provenience.

<sup>15</sup> Dor was a Canaanite harbor town on the coastal plain between Caesaria and Haifa. Its king was defeated by Joshua (Josh 12:23), but it was apparently only controlled by Israel from the time of David and Solomon (1 Kgs 4:11) until it was captured by Assyria in the latter part of the eighth century. The seal implies that there was a sanctuary, perhaps of YHWH, in the city in the eighth century.

<sup>16</sup> Avigad and Sass 1997 #297; Davies 1991 100.036; Diring 1934:195 #36.

<sup>17</sup> Avigad 1987:197.

(Belonging) to Uzza,<sup>18</sup> son  
of Baalhanan<sup>19</sup>

2.70G. The seal of Maadanah the king's daughter (Hebrew; provenience unknown).<sup>20</sup> The inscription, written in the Hebrew script of the seventh century BCE, is one of about a dozen known seal inscriptions of Israelite women. Most are on seals, but at least one is in a seal impression stamped on a jar handle, showing that it was used functionally and not merely as jewelry. This raises the possibility that Israelite women enjoyed at least some of the rights enjoyed by men who owned seals, such as holding office and perhaps signing contracts and other documents (Avigad 1987:205-206; 1988:8). But, as in the case of "the king's son," it is not clear whether "the king's daughter" means simply "princess" or implies that Maadanah held public office.

(Belonging) to Maadanah<sup>21</sup>  
the king's daughter

2.70H. The seal of Pelayahu son of Mattiyahu, Overseer of the Corvée (Hebrew; provenience unknown).<sup>22</sup> The inscriptions, on the front and back of the seal, are written in Hebrew script of the seventh century BCE. Pelayahu probably used side A of his seal for private purposes and side B for official ones.

Side A:  
(Belonging) to Pelayah-  
u<sup>23</sup> (son of)<sup>24</sup> Mattiyahu<sup>25</sup>

Side B:  
(Belonging) to Pelayahu  
Over(seer of)  
the Corvée<sup>26</sup>

2.70I. The seal of Nehemyahu son of Micayahu.<sup>27</sup> Both of these names are attested in the Bible (Neh 1:1 etc.; Judg 17:1 etc.).

(Belonging) to Nehemyahu son of Micayahu

2.70J. The seal of Yehoezer son of Yigdalyahu.<sup>28</sup> The patronymic recurs in Jer 35:4. For the owner's name cf. Yoezer in 1 Chr 12:7.

(Belonging) to Yehoezer son of Yigdalyahu

<sup>18</sup> The name Uzza, a hypocoristic meaning "(the deity so-and-so) is strong," is known from the Bible and other Northwest Semitic inscriptions.

<sup>19</sup> The name Baalhanan, "Baal has been gracious," is also known from the Bible (a king of Edom, Gen 36:38-39; an official of David, 1 Chr 27:28); it is virtually synonymous with the Phoen./Carthaginian name Hannibal. The element *baal* is known in some names appearing in the Bible, the Samaria ostraca, and one or two other Heb. inscriptions; see, for example, Jerubbaal, Eshbaal, Meri(b)-baal, and Beeliada (Judg 6:32; 1 Chr 8:33, 34; 9:39, 40; 14:7); the Samaria ostraca clearly contain the names <sup>3</sup>*bb<sup>c</sup>l* (SO #2:4), *b<sup>c</sup>l<sup>p</sup>* (SO #1:7); *b<sup>c</sup>lzm<sup>r</sup>* (SO #12:2-3), *b<sup>c</sup>l<sup>z</sup>kr* (SO #37:3), and *mrb<sup>c</sup>l* (SO #2:7); for other possibly baalistic names in the Bible and inscriptions, see Tigay 1986:7-8, 65-66. It means "lord," and some think it has the same meaning in the Hebrew names. In Canaanite names and texts it refers to the Canaanite storm-god Hadad (see below, n. 49). Some think it has the same meaning in the Hebrew names. If that is the case, these names reflect the worship of Baal by some Israelites or foreigners living in Israel, but they do not show widespread worship of him because they constitute a minuscule percentage of all Israelite theophoric names (Tigay 1986; Pike 1990). Others believe that it does not refer to the Canaanite deity but functions as an epithet of YHWH, synonymous with <sup>3</sup>*adon*, "Lord." The Hebrew names *Yehoba<sup>c</sup>al* (Avigad 1988:8) and *ba-li-ya-a-ma* (in the Murashu archives of the fifth century BCE Babylonia; see Coogan 1976:15, 69), both meaning "YHWH is Lord," indicate that *ba<sup>c</sup>al* was sometimes used as an epithet of YHWH (cf. also *Be<sup>c</sup>alyah*, borne by a contemporary of David in 1 Chr 12:6; the masoretic vocalization of *be<sup>c</sup>al-* indicates a perfect-tense verb, and the name must mean "YH(WH) rules"). Hos 2:18 (possibly from the approximate time and place of the Samaria ostraca) states this almost explicitly: "On that day ... you will call 'My Husband' (<sup>3</sup>*is<sup>h</sup>*), and no more will you call Me 'My ba<sup>c</sup>al.'"

<sup>20</sup> Avigad and Sass 1997 #30; Davies 1991 100.781; its authenticity has been doubted, Naveh 1997:12; Avigad 1978c.

<sup>21</sup> The previously unknown name Maadanah, derived from the same root as "Eden," means something like "luxury," "lubricity" (Greenfield 1984). See above COS 2.34, note 4.

<sup>22</sup> Avigad and Sass 1997 #20; Davies 1991 100.782; Avigad 1980.

<sup>23</sup> The name Pelayahu, "YHWH is wondrous" or "YHWH has acted wondrously," appears in its short form *Pelaiah* in Neh 8:7; 10:11.

<sup>24</sup> On side A the word *ben*, "son of," is omitted before the patronym, a common practice in Heb. seal inscriptions.

<sup>25</sup> The name Mattiyahu (rendered as *Mattathias* in Greek and *Matthew* in English) means "Gift of YHWH." It appears in 1 Chr 15:18, 21; 25:3, 21, and in the short form *Mattithiah* in 1 Chr 9:31; 16:5; Ezra 10:43; Neh 8:4.

<sup>26</sup> The title "Over(seer of) the Corvée" is known from the Bible, where it is borne by Adoram/Adoniram son of Abda, Overseer of the Corvée in the days of David, Solomon, and Rehoboam (2 Sam 20:24; 1 Kgs 4:6; 5:28). Opposition to the corvée was the principal reason why northern Israel seceded from Judah, and Adoram/Adoniram was stoned to death by north Israelites at the time of the secession (1 Kgs 12:1-18). The continuation of the corvée into late seventh century Judah seems implied by Jeremiah's critique of Jehoiakim for forcing fellow Israelites to build his palace with no pay (Jer 22:13), but this seal is the only explicit evidence of the practice in that period.

<sup>27</sup> Avigad and Sass 1997 #265; Davies 1991 100.030.

<sup>28</sup> Avigad and Sass 1997 #1073; Davies 1991 100.421.

2.70K. The seal of Zephanyah (son of) Mattanyah.<sup>29</sup> Here the divine name is reduced to *yh* (usually anglicized as *-iah*), its least common abbreviation in pre-exilic documents, becoming usual later.

(Belonging to Zephanyah (son of) Mattanyah)

2.70L. The seal of Yeho<sup>c</sup>adan daughter of Uriyahu.<sup>30</sup> That women could own seals in their own right — although only a few out of the total — is noted above, see 2.70G.

(Belonging) to Yeho<sup>c</sup>adan daughter of Uriyahu

2.70M. The seal of Abigail wife of Asayahu.<sup>31</sup> Another seal belonging to a woman.

(Belonging) to Abigail wife of Asayahu

2.70N. The seal of Hanan son of Hilqiyahu, the priest.<sup>32</sup> As a Hilqiah was High Priest in the time of Josiah (2 Kgs 22:4 etc.), this seal could have belonged to his son.

(Belonging) to Hanan son of Hilqiyahu, the priest

2.70O. The bulla of X son of Zakkur.<sup>33</sup> The bulla is incomplete, so the owner's name is unknown.

(Belonging) to [ X ] son of Zakkur, the physician<sup>34</sup>

2.70P. The bullae of Elyaqim squire of Yawkin.<sup>35</sup> When first found, imprints of this seal on jars were thought to belong to a servant of Jehoiachin, king of Judah, taken to Babylon by Nebuchadrezzar in 597 BCE (2 Kgs 24). But excavations at Lachish demonstrated that this type of jar belonged to the level destroyed by Sennacherib in 701 BCE, implying that the master lived earlier. The word 'squire' (*na<sup>c</sup>ar*) applies to anyone who is not an independent citizen, yet not a slave, from a child (1 Sam 1:22) to a responsible man (2 Sam 9:9) as here.

(Belonging) to Elyaqim squire<sup>36</sup> of Yawkin

2.70Q. Seals of "servants" (ministers) of unnamed kings. At least eleven seals or impressions have been found with this title, denoting a certain position or rank, rather than simply 'slave' of the king.<sup>37</sup> Other seals belonged to sons of unnamed kings.<sup>38</sup>

(Belonging) to Obadyahu, "servant" (i.e. minister) of the king<sup>39</sup>

2.70R. Seals of "servants" (ministers) of named kings. The names of the masters can all be identified with eighth century kings of Israel and Judah; no other personal names occur after <sup>c</sup>*bd*. For the last, note the existence of Eliakim, son of Hilqiah, in Hezekiah's court (2 Kgs 18:18 etc.), perhaps this seal owner's brother.<sup>40</sup>

(Belonging) to Shema, servant of Jeroboam

(Belonging) to Abiyaw servant of Uzziyahu

(Belonging) to Shebanyahu servant of Uzziyahu

(Belonging) to Ushna servant of Ahaz

(Belonging) to Yehozarah son of Hilqiyahu servant of Hizqiyahu

2.70S. The seal of Miqneyahu servant of Yahweh.<sup>41</sup> The unique title (<sup>c</sup>*bd yhw*) may indicate a high official in the temple, Cross 1983:62-63, argued for a singer, cf. Ps 135:1 etc.

(Belonging) to Miqneyahu servant of Yahweh

2.70T. The bulla of Adoniyahu, palace steward (<sup>c</sup>*šr l hbyt*).<sup>42</sup> The title, literally 'who is over the house' is explained as 'in charge of the palace' by comparing 2 Kgs 15:5 with 2 Chr 26:21. Cf. note 12 above.

(Belonging) to Adoniyahu, "over(seer of) the (royal) house" (i.e. palace steward)<sup>43</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Avigad and Sass 1997 #340; Davies 1991 100.716.

<sup>30</sup> Avigad and Sass 1997 #38; Davies 1991 100.855.

<sup>31</sup> Avigad and Sass 1997 #31; Davies 1991 100.062.

<sup>32</sup> Avigad and Sass 1997 #28; Davies 1991 100.734.

<sup>33</sup> Avigad and Sass 1997 #420; Davies 1991 100.804.

<sup>34</sup> Gen 50:2; 2 Chr 16:12.

<sup>35</sup> Avigad and Sass 1997 #663; Davies 1991 100.108, 277, 486. See Ussishkin 1976.

<sup>36</sup> Gen 22:3; Exod 24:5; Judg 9:54; Jer 1:6.

<sup>37</sup> Avigad and Sass 1997 #9; Davies 1991 100.070.

<sup>38</sup> See Davies 1991 100.072, 110, 209, 252, 506, 507, 508, 719, 760, 784, and one daughter, 781; Avigad and Sass 1997:467; and #30.

<sup>39</sup> 1 Kgs 18:3 etc.

<sup>40</sup> Avigad and Sass 1997 ##2, 4, 3, 5, 407; Davies 1991 100.068, 065, 067, 141, 321.

<sup>41</sup> Avigad and Sass 1997 #27; Davies 1991 100.272.

<sup>42</sup> Avigad and Sass 1997 #404; Davies 1991 100.501, 502. See also COS 2.54.

<sup>43</sup> 2 Kgs 18:18; 19:2; Isa 22:15.

2.70U. Two bullae of the governor of the city (*šr h<sup>c</sup>yr*).<sup>44</sup> This title appears beneath figures cut in imitation of Assyrian style.

Governor of the city<sup>45</sup>

2.70V. The bulla of Eltolad.<sup>46</sup> This bulla indicates a fiscal process otherwise unrecorded. If the year is a regnal year, then it can only be that of Josiah of Judah, in the south of whose realm the town of Eltolad (Josh 15:30; 19:4) or Tolad (1 Chr 4:29) lay, i.e. 613 BCE.

In year 26, Eltolad, belonging to the king

#### AMMONITE (2.71)

Many seals inscribed with the first letters of the alphabet — from four to eight — are regarded as Ammonite; they are probably practice pieces; see Avigad and Sass 1997:366-371; Hestrin and Dayagi-Mendels 1979 ## 127, 129.

The seal impression of Milkom-or, minister of Baalyasha (Ammonite).<sup>47</sup> This seal was discovered in excavations at Tell el-<sup>c</sup>Umeiri in Jordan.

(Belonging) to Milkom-or<sup>48</sup>  
“servan-  
t” (minister) of Baalyasha<sup>49</sup>

#### MOABITE (2.72)

The seal of Kemosham son of Kemoshel the scribe (Moabite; provenience unknown).<sup>50</sup> This seal is in the Moabite script of the eighth-seventh centuries BCE.<sup>51</sup>

(Belonging) to Kemosham<sup>52</sup>  
(son of) Kemoshel<sup>53</sup>  
the scribe

#### EDOMITE (2.73)

The bulla of Qawsgabar, king of Edom (Edomite).<sup>54</sup> This is one of the few known Edomite seal inscriptions (see Herr 1978:161-169). It was found at Umm el-Biyara in Jordan, near Petra.

(Belonging) to Qawsg[abar]<sup>55</sup>  
King of E[dom]

<sup>44</sup> Avigad and Sass 1997 #402; Bordreuil 1992:192; Davies 1991 100.402, 510.

<sup>45</sup> Judg 9:30; 1 Kgs 22:26; 2 Kgs 23:8; 2 Chr 34:8.

<sup>46</sup> See Avigad and Sass 1997 #421; Bordreuil 1992:193.

<sup>47</sup> Avigad and Sass 1997 #860; Herr 1985.

<sup>48</sup> The name Milkom-or means “Milkom is light.” According to the Bible, Milkom was the national god of the Ammonites (1 Kgs 11:5, 33; 2 Kgs 23:13). His name is mentioned in one or two Ammonite inscriptions (Jackson 1983:10, 13, 74) but, oddly, rarely in Ammonite personal names. There are Milkomit (if the name is complete) in an Ammonite inscription from Tell el-Mazar, Jordan (Yassine and Teixidor 1986:48-49), and the seal inscription of one Tamak-<sup>c</sup>el, where the patronym reads either “(son of) Bodmilkom (*bdmlkm*)” or, less likely, “son of Milkom (*br mlkm*)” (CIS 2:94); see Avigad 1965:225 n. 12; 1985:5 n. 25; cf. Cross 1973:128 n. 6. Most often, <sup>c</sup>el, “god,” serves as the theophoric element, which may suggest that El was the chief god of the Ammonites and that Milkom was his title, meaning something like “the King.”

<sup>49</sup> The name Baalyasha (the name could also be read as Baalisha, comparable to Hebrew Elisha) means “the Lord (*baal*) has saved (*yasha<sup>c</sup>*)” or “the Lord is salvation (*yeshac<sup>c</sup>*),” referring either to the Canaanite storm god or some other deity. Since the title “minister” (*bd*, lit. “servant”) commonly refers to the minister of a king in seal inscriptions, it is likely that Baalyasha/Baalisha was a king. Some think him identical with Baalis, king of the Ammonites ca. 586 BCE according to Jer 40:14 (the script is also compatible with the early sixth century). This seems possible, since the theophoric element *baal* is rare in Ammonite names and Baalis is the only other definite example. In this view Baalis, a name admittedly hard to explain, is an error for Baalyasha or Baalisha (the final <sup>c</sup>ayin may be reflected in the Septuagint of Jer 40:14, which renders Baalis as *Bel(e)isa*; see Herr 1985:172). However the Ug. names *b<sup>c</sup>ls* and Baalasi indicate that Baalis is probably a name in its own right (Ahituv 1992:241; see Gröndahl 1967:102, 115, 116).

<sup>50</sup> Avigad and Sass 1997 #1010; Hestrin and Dayagi-Mendels 1979 #2.

<sup>51</sup> Avigad 1970:289; Herr 1978:156-157.

<sup>52</sup> Kemosham means “Kemosh is a kinsman.” Kemosh was the Moabite national deity, known from the Bible and Moabite inscriptions. See Num 21:29; Judg 11:24; 1 Kgs 11:7, 33; 2 Kgs 23:13; Jer 48:7, 13, 46. And also *COS* 2.23; Reed and Winnet 1963; Avigad and Sass 1997:373, 380-382.

<sup>53</sup> The name means “Kemosh is god.”

<sup>54</sup> Avigad and Sass 1997 #1048; Bennett 1966:399-401.

<sup>55</sup> The name is restored on the basis of inscriptions of the Assyrian kings Esarhaddon (680-669 BCE) and Ashurbanipal (668-627 BCE) that mention Qawsgabri King of Edom (*ANET* 291, 294), almost certainly the same individual. The name means something like “Qaws is mighty” or “Qaws has prevailed” (on *gabri* see Noth 1928:190). Qaws was the Edomite deity, known from the postexilic name Barqos (Ezra 2:53 = Neh 7:55) and extrabiblical sources; see Vriezen 1965; Herr 1978:162, 164-165; Naveh 1975 #1, 10, 20-21, 32-33, 43.

## PHOENICIAN (2.74)

The seal of Yahzibaal (probably Phoenician; provenience unknown).<sup>56</sup> The script fits the ninth-eighth century.

(Belonging to) Yahzibaal<sup>57</sup>

## PHILISTINE (2.75)

The seal of Abd-Ilib son of Shabeath, minister of Mittit son of Zidqa (Philistine; provenience unknown).<sup>58</sup> Mittit and his father Zidqa must be Mitinti II and Zidqa, the kings of Ashkelon mentioned in Assyrian inscriptions. Zidqa and his family were exiled to Assyria when Sennacherib conquered Ashkelon in 701 BCE, and Mitinti II paid tribute to Esarhaddon in 677 and to Ashurbanipal in 667.<sup>59</sup>

(Belonging) to Abd-Ilib<sup>60</sup>  
son of Shabeath<sup>61</sup>  
"servant" (i.e. minister) of Mittit<sup>62</sup> son of  
Zidqa<sup>63</sup>

## EARLY ARAMAIC (2.76)

The seal of Hadadezer (Aramaic).<sup>64</sup> This seal, found at Saqqarah, Egypt, is inscribed in the Old Aramaic script and orthography of ca. the eighth century BCE.

(Belonging) to Hadadezer<sup>65</sup>

## ROYAL JUDAEAN SEAL IMPRESSIONS (2.77)

Over 1700 royal seal impressions, stamped on jar handles from at least 65 sites, are known.<sup>66</sup> With few exceptions, each impression contains the word *lamelekh* (*lmlk*), "(Belonging, or pertaining) to the king," on the top line, a four-winged scarab or a two-winged symbol (possibly the sun-disc) in the middle, and on the bottom line one of four place names: Hebron and Ziph in Judah, Sochoh in the Shephelah, and an otherwise unknown place whose name is spelled *mmšr*.<sup>67</sup> Such impressions have been found at most of the excavated sites in Judah, particularly Lachish, Jerusalem, and Ramat Rahel, as well as at Tell en-Naşbeh, Gibeon, Gezer, Beth Shemesh, Timnah, and elsewhere, including border sites in northern Israel and Philistia (apart from Arad, they have been found only rarely in the Negev). These impressions, mostly found in public buildings, are from the reign of Hezekiah at the end of the eighth century BCE.<sup>68</sup> Almost all of the "*lamelekh*" jars were probably manufactured and stamped at a single central location: neutron activation analysis of typical jars showed that all were made of the same clay, from the Shephelah, possibly

<sup>56</sup> Avigad and Sass 1997 #1143; Hestrin and Dayagi-Mendels 1979 #118; Avigad 1968:49.

<sup>57</sup> The name Yahzibaal, "May Baal see," meaning "May Baal look favorably upon" the bearer of the name, is similar to the Biblical names Yahziel and Yahzeyah, "May God/YH(WH) see" (Ezra 8:5; 10:15; 1 Chr 12:4; 16:6; 23:19; 24:23; 2 Chr 20:14). The theophoric element *ba<sup>c</sup>al*, "Lord, Master," referring particularly to the storm-god, is very common in Phoenician and other Canaanite names. See Benz 1972:288-290; Gröndahl 1967:114-117.

<sup>58</sup> Avigad and Sass 1997 #1066; Ahituv 1992:212. Main discussion by Bergman 1936:224-226; Naveh 1985:9, 18.

<sup>59</sup> ANET 287a, 291bc, 294b.

<sup>60</sup> The name Abd-Ilib is comparable to Biblical Abdiel, Obadiah, etc., and must mean "Servant of the deity Ilib (*ʔlʔb*)." The word *ʔlʔb* is known from Ug. and Akk. texts, where it means "god of the father," apparently something like an ancestral spirit. See UT Aqht i.27, 45; ii.16 (COS 1.103 and n. 6); UT 17:14; 44:3, 5; 72:1; 2004:5; Nougayrol et al. 1968:44 (no. 18 line 1), 45-46; Roberts 1972:secs. 27-28; Lambert 1981; cf. Old Akk. Ilaba, mentioned in UET 1, 275 ii.28 (cited in CAD G 25c); Albright 1968:141-142.

<sup>61</sup> Shabeath seems to be a variant of the name Sheba, known from the Bible and inscriptions (2 Sam 20:1, etc.; 1 Chr 5:13; SO #2:6; Aharoni 1975 #38:4; Avigad and Sass 1997 #356; cf. Shib<sup>c</sup>ah[?] in Cowley AP #82:2; Bathsheba in 2 Sam 11:3, etc.; Yehosheba in 2 Kgs 11:2 = Yehoshabeath in 2 Chr 22:11; and Elisheba in Exod 6:23 etc., rendered Elisabeth [= Elishabeath] in the Septuagint). The underlying root *š-b-* resembles the Heb. root(s) meaning "seven" and "swear," but the meaning of the names containing this element is uncertain.

<sup>62</sup> Mittit, "gift" (cf. Heb. *mattat*, 1 Kgs 13:7; Prov 25:14) is a hypocoristic of a name meaning "gift of the deity so-and-so," comparable to Heb. Mattiyahu (above, 2.70H). Cf. Hebrew Mattatah (Ezra 10:33) and Mattan (2 Kgs 11:8, etc.). The vocalization Mittit is not certain; it is based on the forms found in Assyrian inscriptions. See Benz 1972:356.

<sup>63</sup> Zidqa (*šidqa*) is a hypocoristic of a name meaning "The deity so-and-so is my vindicator," comparable to Heb. Zedekiah (*šidqiyahuf*), "YHWH is my vindicator" (2 Kgs 24:17, etc.; cf. Jer 23:6; Ps 4:2).

<sup>64</sup> Avigad and Sass 1997 #785; CIS 2:124; Galling 1941 no. 103; Herr 1978 Aram. #1.

<sup>65</sup> Hadadezer, "Hadad is (my) help," is a typical Aram. name. Essentially same name appears on an Aram. seal in the form *hd<sup>c</sup>dr* (CIS 2:77; Herr 1978 Aram. #73). Hadad, the storm god, was head of the Aramean pantheon. See Greenfield 1994:54-61. The same name was held by Hadadezer son of Rehob, King of Aram Zobah, defeated by David (2 Sam 8:3, 5; 10:16 [= 1 Chr 18:3, 5; 19:16], and by the king of Damascus in the days of Ahab (873-852 BCE) and Shalmaneser III (858-824 BCE). The name of the latter Hadadezer is represented in cuneiform as Adad-idri. See COS 2.113A, note 23.

<sup>66</sup> Vaughan 1996:219, 231-251; Fox 1997 chap. IV, section A, 2.

<sup>67</sup> Samples in Hestrin et al. 1973:95-99; Ahituv 1992:139-140.

<sup>68</sup> Ussishkin 1976, 1977, 1979.



in the same workshop;<sup>69</sup> all the impressions were made from about twenty seals;<sup>70</sup> and some jars may have been stamped with a second seal carrying certain personal names, identical impressions of which appear on jars from several sites.<sup>71</sup>

The exact significance of the iconography and inscriptions on these impressions is uncertain. The winged figures may be royal symbols, perhaps symbolizing Judean independence and indicating the type or grade of the contents of the jars to which they were affixed. *lamelekh* probably means that the jars and their contents belong to the king. There are various theories about the significance of the place names. They may have been agricultural regions in which the royal estates were located (the additional seal impressions with personal names, stamped on some of the jars, may have belonged to government officials who had been given grants of crown land in those regions). Other possibilities are that they were district centers where products of royal estates, such as wine and oil, were gathered for marketing; that they refer to storage cities where food was kept in royal warehouses or where taxes in kind were collected; or that they were military garrisons or administrative centers to which, or from which, supplies were sent for royal bureaucrats and the Judean army, especially while Hezekiah was preparing to rebel against Assyria. The latter use may be reflected in the fact that most of these jars were found in destruction levels caused by the retaliatory Assyrian invasion of 701 BCE.<sup>72</sup>

### PERSIAN PERIOD (2.78)

#### 2.78A. Seals and seal impressions of the Persian province of Yehud (Aramaic)<sup>73</sup>

The one-word inscription *Yehud*, the name of the Persian province of Judah (Ezra 5:8), is inscribed on a seal and stamped on several hundred jar handles from various Persian-period sites in Judah and on several bullae from an unknown site (there are also coins similarly inscribed). The bullae gave official sanction to the documents to which they were affixed, and the stamped jar handles indicated that the contents of the jar belonged to the government, perhaps as taxes in kind.

#### 2.78B. The bulla of Elnathan the Governor (Aramaic; provenience unknown).<sup>74</sup> For the seal of Elnathan's "maidservant," see below, 2.78C.

(Belonging) to Elnathan<sup>75</sup>  
the Governor<sup>76</sup>

#### 2.78C. The seal of Shelomit, "maidservant" of Elnathan the Governor (Hebrew in Aramaic script; provenience unknown).<sup>77</sup>

(Belonging) to Shelomit,<sup>78</sup>  
Maid-servant<sup>79</sup> of El <na> -  
than the Gove[rnor]

<sup>69</sup> Mommsen, Perlman, and Yellin 1984.

<sup>70</sup> Mazar 1990:455.

<sup>71</sup> Avigad 1979a:37.

<sup>72</sup> See Avigad 1979a:37; Mazar 1990:455-458; Rainey 1982; Na'aman 1979; 1986; Fox 1997 chap. IV, section A, 2.

<sup>73</sup> Avigad 1976:3-4, 21-23. In these inscriptions, *Yehud* is spelled both fully (*yhwđ*) and defectively (*yhd*).

<sup>74</sup> Davies 1991 106.017; Avigad 1976:5-7.

<sup>75</sup> The name Elnathan ("God has given [this child to his parents]") is known from the Bible; in the Persian period it was borne by two or three of Ezra's associates (Ezra 8:16).

<sup>76</sup> Aram. *phw*<sup>2</sup>, apparently a variant of *phr*<sup>2</sup>, equivalent to Heb. *hphh*; see Avigad 1976:6; cf. Avigad and Sass 1997:33 n. 45 (contrast the view of Greenfield and Naveh cited there). This was the title of provincial governors in the western part of the Persian empire, including Sheshbazzar, Zerubbabel, and Nehemiah who were governors of Judah (Hag 1:1; Ezra 5:14; Neh 5:14; 12:26), Sanballat, Governor of Samaria (below, COS 2.78D), and Bagohi, Governor of *Yehud*, mentioned in an Aram. papyrus from Elephantine (Cowley AP 30:1; ANET 492). See also the seals of an unnamed governor of *Yehud* and two other named governors (Avigad 1976:22-23).

<sup>77</sup> Davies 1991 106.018; Avigad 1976:11-13.

<sup>78</sup> The name Shelomit is related to *šalom*, "peace," "wellbeing," and *šalem*, "well," "unimpaired," and expresses a wish that its bearer will enjoy these blessings. It is known from the Bible and elsewhere as a name of both men and women (Lev 24:11; 1 Chr 23:18; etc.), including the daughter of Zerubbabel, Governor of Judah toward the end of the sixth century BCE (1 Chr 3:19); the owner of this seal could be the same Shelomit (Meyers and Meyers 1987:12-13).

<sup>79</sup> The significance of the description of Shelomit as "maidservant" is uncertain. Seals of two Ammonite "maidservants" are also known (Hestrin and Dayagi-Mendels 1979 #28, 29). These women were hardly menials, since they would then have had no need to own seals. At the very least, they must have been secondary wives of prominent men, like the maidservant of the overseer of the palace, whose burial alongside the overseer is noted in the latter's tomb inscription from Siloam village (Avigad 1953; Hestrin et al. 1973 #24; COS 2.54). Conceivably, "maid-servant" is the feminine equivalent of *ēbed*, the "minister" of a king, and is used in some of these cases for female ministers of high officials. In any case, Shelomit did hold an important office in the Governor's administration. This is shown by the official character of the collection in which it was found: the collection included an official *Yehud* provincial seal and several *Yehud* bullae (2.78A), a bulla of the governor (2.78B), bullae containing the name of the province and other officials, and ten bullae of a scribe, as well as forty-four bullae of six other individuals; the only personal seal in the collection was that of Shelomit, suggesting that she was in charge of the collection and used both the provincial seal and

2.78D. The bulla of the son of Sanballat, Governor of Samaria (Hebrew).<sup>80</sup> This bulla was attached to an Aramaic deed of sale for a vineyard, written on papyrus, found at Wadi Daliyeh, north of Jericho. It probably dates from the reign of Artaxerxes III (358-338 BCE).

(Belonging) to [...]iah son of [San-]  
ballat,<sup>81</sup> Governor of Samar[ia]

---

her own for official purposes. It is unclear whether her title "maidservant" refers to her official position or simply to her marital status, and whether she owed her position to that status (Avigad 1976:11-13, 30-32; see also Avigad and Sass 1997:33 n. 45).

<sup>80</sup> Davies 1991 100.408; Hestrin et al. 1973 #148; Ahituv 1992:207-208; Cross 1971:47 and figs. 34-35; Naveh, 1982:115.

<sup>81</sup> Sanballat, spelled *sn<sup>3</sup>blt* in extrabiblical documents (Cross 1971:47 n. 4; Cowley *AP* 30:29), is a Babylonian name, originally *Sin-uballit*, meaning "Sin (the moon god) gave life." "Sanballat" is the vocalization found in the Bible. The biblical Sanballat was the governor of Samaria who was Nehemiah's contemporary and opponent (Neh 2:10, 19; 3:33; 4:1; 6:1-14); he is also mentioned in the Elephantine papyri (Cowley *AP* 30:29). The document accompanying this bulla bears a date that is too late for this to be the Biblical Sanballat; he is probably his descendant (see Cross 1966:201-206). The Babylonian name does not necessarily imply that either Sanballat was a foreigner. Such names were common among Jews in the Persian period, and both of these men gave their sons Yahwistic names: those of Nehemiah's contemporary were named Delaiah and Shelemiah (Cowley *AP* 30:29), and the son of Sanballat named on this seal also had a Yahwistic name. For further discussion see Cross 1966; Williamson 1992.

#### REFERENCES

Texts and Translations: Avigad and Sass 1997; Davies 1991; Ahituv 1992; Avigad 1979b; 1986; Barkay 1986; 1993; Bordreuil 1992; Cross 1971; 1973; 1983; Deutsch and Heltzer 1994; Herr 1978; 1985; Hestrin, R. et al. 1973; Hestrin and Dayagi-Mendels 1979; Sass 1993; Sass and Uehlinger 1993; Shiloh 1986; Ussishkin 1976; 1977; Yassine and Teixidor 1986.

---

#### THE SEAL OF <sup>c</sup>AŠAYĀHŪ (2.79)

*Michael Heltzer*

The Hebrew seal is dated paleographically to the second half of the 7th century BCE.<sup>1</sup>

(Belonging) to <sup>c</sup>Ašayāhū  
"servant" (minister) of the king

It is most probable that this <sup>c</sup>Ašayāhū of the seal is identical with "Ašayā, servant of the king," mentioned in 2 Kings 22:12, 14 and 2 Chronicles 34:20. He appears as one of the team, sent by king Josiah (*Yošiyāhū*) in the year 622 to the temple in connection with the finding of the book, which is by most scholars identified with Deuteronomy. Among the other persons of the team involved in this event was a Ḥilqiyāhū, the High Priest. There is a seal that reads: <sup>(1)</sup>*lhnn b<sup>(2)</sup>n hlqyhw* <sup>(3)</sup>*hkhn* "Belonging to Ḥanan son of Ḥilqiyāhū, the priest."<sup>2</sup> There is also a seal impression dated ca. 600 BCE which reads: <sup>(1)</sup>*c zryhw* <sup>(2)</sup>*bn hlqyhw* "<sup>c</sup>Azaryāhū, son of Ḥilqiyāhū."<sup>3</sup> Moreover there are additional persons who are mentioned in the 2 Kings 22 and 2 Chronicles 34 whose seals or whose fathers' seals are known.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Deutsch and Heltzer 1994:49-51.

<sup>2</sup> Elayi 1987:54-56; 1992:680-685; above, *COS* 2.70N.

<sup>3</sup> Shiloh 1986: No. 27.

<sup>4</sup> Schneider 1991:26-33.

#### REFERENCES

Deutsch and Heltzer 1994; Elayi 1987; 1992; Shiloh 1986; Schneider 1991.

---

## 2. STAMPS

### STAMPS (2.80)

*Michael Heltzer*

There are more than one hundred stamps on identical handles, and as proved by the examinations of D. Ussishkin in Lachish, they appear on one or two of the four handles where the others had the *lmlk* stamps (*COS* 2.77). These stamps belonged to more than 30 persons, who were the officials responsible for the standard measures of the jars.<sup>1</sup> The following are a few examples.

*Yhwhyl Šhr*  
*lNhm Hšlyhw*  
*Šbnyhw c zryhw*

Yehoḥayil (son of) Šaḥar  
(Belonging) to Naḥum (son of) Hiššilyāhū  
Šebanyāhū (son of) c Azaryāhū

No seal which was used for stamping the handles before firing the jar was ever found.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Garfinkel 1985:105-118.

<sup>2</sup> There is now known a stamped seal impression on a jar-handle clearly showing that the seal was cut from timber.

#### REFERENCES

Ussishkin 1977; Garfinkel 1985.