The study of several unpublished bullae from the 1920s–1930s excavation at Yorgan Tepe, ancient Nuzi, stored in the Harvard Semitic Museum, sheds light onto the administrative practices of the local elite in the last phases of the city’s existence. Through comparisons with the cuneiform record, I propose to identify a specific member of the royal family as the user/owner of the cylinder seal presented here. Iconographic and stylistic contextualization lead me to appraise the history, administrative connections and possibly even political ambitions of this likely member of the Nuzi ruling house. By looking at motifs and traditions or themes, I offer a contribution to the present discourse on Hurrian culture, identity and power as evidenced by glyptic art.
KEYWORDS
Nuzi, glyptic, eastern Iraq, Late Bronze Age, Mitanni, Harvard Semitic Museum

How to cite this chapter:
STORIES TOLD AROUND THE FOUNTAIN

Papers Offered to Piotr Bieliński on the Occasion of His 70th Birthday
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The long life of a royal seal and the Nuzi bullae in the Harvard Semitic Museum

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Keywords
Nuzi, glyptic, eastern Iraq, Late Bronze Age, Mitanni, Harvard Semitic Museum

Abstract
The study of several unpublished bullae from the 1920s–1930s excavation at Yorgan Tepe, ancient Nuzi, stored in the Harvard Semitic Museum, sheds light onto the administrative practices of the local elite in the last phases of the city's existence. Through comparisons with the cuneiform record, I propose to identify a specific member of the royal family as the user/owner of the cylinder seal presented here. Iconographic and stylistic contextualization lead me to appraise the history, administrative connections and possibly even political ambitions of this likely member of the Nuzi ruling house. By looking at motifs and traditions of themes, I offer a contribution to the present discourse on Hurrian culture, identity and power as evidenced by glyptic art.

Professor Bieliński’s charm, kindness and hospitality always matched the multifold and multiform range of his study. I am confident he will be pleased to spend some time reading about seals and sealings in Nuzi.

For this jubilee volume, I would like to share with Piotr some results of my work on the remarkable structures and finds of the ancient town of Nuzi, a site that aroused my interest even before starting fieldwork in Northern Iraq.
Marta Luciani

(Van Ess and Luciani 2012; 2014; Luciani and van Ess 2015; Luciani, van Ess, and Saber 2015). This specific research began with an investigation of the burial patterns attested in the Mitanni town. With this goal in mind, since September 2013, I decided to become a regular visitor of the Harvard Semitic Museum checking records and material retrieved by the old Harvard-Baghdad Expedition (for details of the excavation, see Starr 1939; Stein 1998–2001) and now part of the Museum’s holds. Besides and beyond my initial examination of burials, because of a very peculiar association with sealings attested in that funerary context (for further examples, see Akkermans and Smits 2008; Duistermaat 2012), I was drawn to analyse the four drawers containing all bullae recovered during the 1927–1931 excavations at Yorgan Tepe, ancient Nuzi. I have since become captivated by this material and am working on a comprehensive, systematic study of the entire corpus.

The Nuzi bullae collection (single item’s designation NBN+number) is composed of those clay supports with seal impression, which in the 1970s were taken out of the NTF, the Nuzi Tablet Fragments, boxes. Created by Carney E.S. Gavin (see Gavin 1981), the collection was to be analysed within the frame of the glyptic project, a research designed to study the entire iconography attested in Nuzi. Gavin had photos and drawings made of the bulk of the sealings. Unfortunately, the project was never brought to conclusion. Apparently no record has been kept of the actual NTF boxes that the bullae were taken from. The NTF boxes display different letters (M, MM, N, P and Q) that do not seem, however, to correspond to specific find contexts according to the excavation records or other retrieval units (Fincke 1999: 19). Therefore, with singular exceptions (e.g., NBN 440A+440B and NBN 682, mentioned in Luciani 2014a), the Nuzi bullae must be considered as being without proper find context.

1 My investigations on this theme are ongoing. They have been developed in a series of lectures: Luciani 2012; 2014b; 2014c. A special focus on sealing practices was in Luciani 2014a.
2 There are exceptions: some are non-impressed clay lumps, one is a clay seal, but see below. Because of this heterogeneous nature of the NBN collection, at this early stage of the evaluation of the corpus, I will keep with the definition of these artifacts as ‘bullae’, as in the name of the collection, even knowing that ‘bulla’ in other contexts has a different, specific meaning. Here it will be used as synonym for ‘clay support with seal impression’ or ‘cretula’ used by the Italian research group (Fiandra and Frangipane 2007).
3 This collection contained unpublished tablet fragments: 1498 specimens (Fincke 1999). In particular, “these sealed fragments were subdivided into two groups: those without inscriptions (Nos 1–750) and those with inscriptions (Nos 751–1498)” (Stein 2010: 356). However, even this basic differentiation is not entirely coherent, as some of the NBN “bullae” with a number smaller than 750 are either envelopes or small fragments of tablets.
With a total of over 740 single bullae, the study and publication of the NBN will require a conspicuous amount of time. In the meanwhile, however, to honor Piotr Bieliński, I would like to discuss one specific exemplar, that is, bulla NBN 483.

While several other single bullae would be worthy of a detailed study, and one such analysis has already yielded brilliant results (Stein 2010), I have chosen this specific one because: (1) its shape is rare and points to a distinctive function; (2) the seal impression is unique in terms of composition, style and motif; (3) four extant parallels enable a reconstruction of the impressed motif in its entirety; and (4) divergent details on the different sealings point to a longer life, including some modifications of this important seal.

With its strong originality, thoroughly blending in several well-recognisable iconographic traits belonging to previous epochs, the seal on this bulla perfectly embodies both the creative spirit of high officials in the trans-Tigridian region towards the end phase of the life of Nuzi and at the same time helps shine a spotlight onto the pitfalls we face in our discourse on identities (e.g., Stein 1989–1990).

Moreover, the apparent mastery and high degree of accuracy in the execution of the seal suggest a specific relationship in style, craftsmanship and most of all in motif content with royal and even dynastic glyptic, such as e.g., the seal of the king of Arraphē, Išt-Teššup (Stein 1993/II: 498–500 AdŠ 659 with earlier references).

The Nuzi bulla NBN 483

The clay artifact, NBN 483, is a large fragment of a sealing (5.94 cm x 3.88 cm; H. 2.01 cm) in the shape of a squat, elliptical cylinder [see Fig. 1]. The oval-shaped, slightly convex upper face is impressed, along its entire top length, with a single band of the same sealing also used on one vertical side of the bulla. On its upper surface, the seal has been rolled enough to

---

4 I have registered in my database 741 (NBN and NTF) bullae stored in four drawers in the Harvard Semitic Museum. The specimens are in the process of being formally accessioned in the Museum inventory. While Fincke (1999: 19) mentions over 750 bullae, her estimation “was based solely on the numbers written on the fragments” (J. Fincke, personal communication, 23/01/2018). Some bullae are at times on loan or on display, and it is possible that upon my examination, the drawers were not entirely complete. All calculations are based on the quantity I have seen and documented personally.
Fig. 1. Bulla NBN 483: recto, section and verso (Line drawings C. Kainert; photo M. Luciani/courtesy of the Harvard Semitic Museum)
impress the motif twice, while on the sealed, vertical side, it was repeated three times.⁵

The bottom surface, or sealing verso, bears clear traces of a rope knotted upon a pleated textile covering a flat, horizontal surface (such as a lid). This rope is bundled up together and pulled vertically at a 90° angle from the bottom surface. The vertical, unsealed side of the bulla clearly shows traces of having been pasted onto these ropes and another vertical rounded object (e.g., a wooden peg knotted with the ropes), that is, to be ‘lining’ a vertical object, such as a wooden pommel mounted upright on a lid. The upright shape of the bulla, with sealings both on the upper and the lateral surface, could correspond to a cloth-and-rope fastening of the circular pommel of a wooden box (similar, but not identical, to the one shown in Fig. 2),⁶ secured with clay and sealed with cylinder seal NBN 483.

Fig. 2. Reconstruction of the sealing securing a wooden box (After Stein 1997b: 108, Fig. 110)

---

⁵ Both the sealed top face and side also show traces of fingerprints and/or textiles impressed before the seal was applied. These aspects, surely relevant for a precise reconstruction of the sealing procedure, will be developed in a further study with the application of archaeodactyloscopy (fingerprint identification).

⁶ The said sealing would be higher than the one represented in this drawing and sealed not only on the top, as here, but also on the side. The pommel may have, therefore, been larger than the one seen in this reconstruction. Moreover, the verso bears also traces of a cloth, fastened with a rope. The practice of wrapping wooden boxes before applying sealing wax is still in use in Egypt today (C. Reali, personal communication).
While there has not been any study or documentation of the rear and the sides of the bulla, a photo of the upper, sealed face of the object was published by Briggs Buchanan (1971: Pl. II7) in his article on the iconography of the Snake goddess. In fact, Buchanan erroneously identified the bulla with a new illustration of Tablet SMN8 1428, a list of furniture9 that has been edited and presented as a copy and photo10 but not in translation. This is a fully understandable and even very interesting mistake. If the picture of bulla NBN 483 may not be put in for that of

---

7 Buchanan writes: “New photo supplied through the kindness of Dr. E. Lacheman” (page 17).
8 “Semitic Museum: Nuzi”. For the meaning and use of the different designations of the Nuzi finds, in particular published and unpublished tablets in the Harvard Semitic Museum see Fincke 1999: especially 18 and fn. 16.
9 I owe this reading to Anne Löhnhert, whom I thank for sending me her unpublished notes.
10 SMN 1428: Lacheman 1939: 114 (listing), 147 (cuneiform copy, including drawings of both Seals A and B); Lacheman 1950: xiii and Pl. 111 No. 270 (photo of Seal A).
the sealing on a cuneiform text, at first sight it seems that Seal A on tablet SMN 1428 [Fig. 3] was produced with the same cylinder as the one used on our bulla NBN 483. As we shall show below, even this first impression needs to be revised in part upon re-examination of the artifacts.

Sealing practices in Nuzi

Beyond the two mentioned attestations (NBN 483, SMN 1428), the drawers of the Harvard Semitic Museum yielded three additional artifacts that were observed to be sealed with the same cylinder sealing: NBN 764, NBN 838 and NBN 862, attesting the complete or partial use of this cylinder in five instances. While both NBN 764 and NBN 862 are small and feature not-very-well-preserved surfaces, bulla NBN 838 provides several extraordinarily well readable impressions.

In my first analysis of the Nuzi bullae corpus, I was able to establish that there must have been at least 585 different seal designs and that in a small number of cases (6% of the attested), the cylinder seals used were impressed on more than one clay sealing (up to 13 times, in some cases, see below, Table 1), often of different shape/function.

Moreover, in eight cases, it was possible, at this preliminary stage, to identify the officials the seals were designed for or who actually used them.\footnote{Not counting the initial attempt at impressing the seal on tablet SMN 1428, visible in this photo (white arrow in Fig. 3 bottom) that was eventually covered up by the new, straightened up impression of Seal A. Tablet SMN1428 was sealed with Seal B upside-down at the right end of the verso and for the first time on the left hand side of the tablet with Seal A. For some reason this sealing operation was afterwards flattened and the cylinder was impressed a second time on the smoothed surface. A wedge was deepened to its right end to create a clear cut separation with Seal B. Cuneiform writing covered the lower part of Seal A as the seals were impressed before the text was added (Stein 1993/I: 34).}

\footnote{This bulla is pentagonal in shape with a discoid section. Two partly overlapping, horizontal stripes of the seal were impressed on the recto. Remains of a third and fourth impression are visible on either one of the five sides of the bulla. The verso bears traces of one rope and part of concentric vegetal elements, as if the bulla had sealed a basket.}

\footnote{Upon preliminary investigation, the HSM bulla collection contains 741 items, numbered from NBN 1 to NBN 942. Some 44 of these are actually either fragments of cuneiform tablets or envelopes, including an anepigraphic tablet. The attribution of a further 22 to the category tablet/envelope is still not certain and is not added to this count. This leaves the number of sealings/bullae at 697. For the use and role of envelopes in Nuzi, see Stein 1993/I: 36 and Postgate 2013: 367–369.}

\footnote{For reuse and/or lending/borrowing of seals, see Stein 1993/I.}
Table 1. Cylinder seal designs

<table>
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<th>Nuzi bulla</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 NBN 107a</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 NBN 193</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Urha-tarme [AdŠ* 450]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 NBN 194b</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 NBN 201b</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 NBN 204</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 NBN 206</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 NBN 214a</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Tišam-mušni**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 NBN 231a</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 NBN 262a</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 NBN 266</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 NBN 284a</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Šilwa-teššup [AdŠ 258]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 NBN 295</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 NBN 296</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Wirristani [AdŠ 248]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 NBN 302</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 NBN 369</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
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<td>18 NBN 474</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>19 NBN 483</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>xx-tip-Teššup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 NBN 494</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 NBN 526</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 NBN 554</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hasip-apu [AdŠ 12]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 NBN 567</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* AdŠ (Archiv des Šilwa-teššup) followed by a number indicates the seals identified and published by Diana L. Stein (1993/I and 1993/II) within the archive of the Šilwa-teššup publication.

** This seal corresponds to the one used by Tišam-mušni (D. Stein, personal communication, 08/12/2014). His seal is attested on a dozen bullae in Nuzi and at least on text SMN 605 (= HSS XIV 232), Lachman 1950; Pl. 94 No. 232 and for Seal B, Pl. 112 No. 274. For Tišam-mušni, see Mayer 1978: Text No. 16 (SMN 17), from the palace. Seals: “Ezira; “Paitilla; “Tišammušni, “Bürgermeister [von URU T]jurša”, see Mayer 1978: 15 and now Luciani 2019.

*** Erwe-šarri was a high official of Nuzi, the šakin biti ša āl Nuzi, that is, the major domo of the palace, Stein 1988: 182, 208–209, Fig. 40; Mayer 1978: 133; Postgate 2013: 361 (or “governor of the land”).

Stories told around the fountain
The long life of a royal seal and the Nuzi bullae in the Harvard Semitic Museum

Table 1. Continued

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<td>26 NBN 646a</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 NBN 652</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>28 NBN 670</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>29 NBN 672a</td>
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<td>Erwe-šarri***</td>
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<td>Aršali [AdŠ 406]</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

This is a mere 1.3% of the occurrences, but the percentage is bound to increase as the study continues. This initial data is reported here to highlight both the potential and the importance of the research on bullae for reconstructing sealing procedures and administrative practices in Nuzi.

As far as we know, several high ranking officials, from judge Aršali (or any of the other four functionaries using his seal\textsuperscript{15}) to the son of king Šilwa-teššup, were involved in sealing not only cuneiform documents but also bullae securing containers and/or storage facilities. These administrative practices may be inspected through the investigation of the HSM bullae collection and should be compared to the glyptic data evinced from the analyses of the tablet corpora (Porada 1947; Stein 1987; 1993; 2001; 2016; Lion and Stein 2001). A preliminary investigation of the bullae reverses indicates that they had sealed objects ranging from doors (warehouses), to different containers (jars, bags, boxes, baskets). Moreover, there are languettes, dockets/labels, anepigraphic tablets, mushroom-shaped bullae, jar stoppers and unsealed clay lumps (Luciani 2014a: this list tabulates the percentages of attestations in decreasing order), all indicating diverse bureaucratic procedures. Even if information on the provenance spot\textsuperscript{16} of the single bullae is mostly lacking,\textsuperscript{17} I, nonetheless, believe their detailed study to carry

\textsuperscript{15} Over the course of at least two generations, Stein 1993/II: 350–353 No. 406.

\textsuperscript{16} Single evidence of find-spot are preserved, through pencil writing on the bullae themselves, e.g. NBN 440A+440B and NBN 682 was discussed in Luciani 2014a.

\textsuperscript{17} For the process of through which while creating the glyptic project the bullae were separated from their boxes, see Gavin 1981 and Fincke 1999.
a great explanatory potential of administrative activities beyond what is attested by texts. It will allow to pinpoint which administrators (see the ones already identified in Table 1) were active at local as opposed to out-of-Nuzi warehouses or which supervisors were responsible for containers of incoming goods, such as bags and boxes, as opposed to, for example, the large storage buildings, and compare them with patterns attested in texts. A recent, comprehensive analysis of Late Bronze Age bureaucracy of the cities that used both writing and sealing for their administrative procedures has revealed significant differences in the various strategies used. Therefore, this sort of investigation is key to a better understanding of the level of hierarchical control, literacy and social integration in each society (Postgate 2013; Stein 1997b).

Nuzi and the Land of Arraphe have been described as a kingdom where “there was a fairly dense and uniform scribal culture” (Postgate 2013: 372). However, surely not every single person knew how to read and write. Seals and sealing practices continued to exercise the utmost importance in different transactions, and “seal ownership was general throughout all echelons of society, reinforcing the perception of Arraphan society as rather well integrated” (Postgate 2013: 370). But, of course, seals came in very different material, iconography, style and quality of engraving.

The seal impression: description

Reconstructed size: 28.2 x 19.1 mm. (including caps). D. 0.89 mm. The motif impressed on bulla NBN 483 depicts a perfectly symmetrical confrontation of a pair of demon-looking gods underneath a winged crescent-disk and juxtaposed to a deity standing on a double guilloche. The rendering of the figures is rather naturalistic and the cutting of details so accurate and ornate that its style is to be defined as elaborate. As detailed above, the observation of different supports (SMN 1428, NBN 483 and

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18 The remarkably small dimensions of this seal just further underscore the very high quality of craftsmanship of the engraved design.
19 “In descriptions of Mesopotamian art, creatures which seem to belong to the animal world because they walk on all fours, are called monsters, whereas those which walk on two legs with a human gait are called demons” (Porada 1987: 1).
20 As indicated by the presence of the horned crown they wear, see below.
21 For the potential and limits of Porada’s definitions: “Mitanni elaborate style” and “Mitanni common style”, see Stein 1997a: especially 74–77; Matthews 1990: 8.
NBN 838) allows the reconstruction\textsuperscript{22} of a complete seal motif that may be described as follows ([Fig. 4]: two antithetical, identical, bent-over, winged figures are heraldically doubled to symmetrically mirror each other. They feature a well-sculpted, naturalistically rendered, naked upper body, with muscular wide chest and arms. Human arms and hands are wide open in a ‘W’-position. Human faces and heads are in profile and topped by a triple-horned pointed crown with a descending plume. They have long human beards and bull’s ears. A long curl of hair flashes from under the crown on the nape of the neck. The waistline is well defined, with a simple, thin belt. Two thick tassels (?) are visible peeking from the back. Below the hips, the kilt is represented by three superimposed inverted-V-shaped segments, the top and bottom ones ending in spiral coils. The tail is a scorpion’s stinger decorated with spiral coils. The feet are those of rapacious birds with claws that are also represented as spiral coils.

\textsuperscript{22} A significant overlap of size and design is the precondition for reading the different seal impressions as stemming from one and the same seal. However, as anyone who has analyzed ancient sealings knows, depending on the energy with which the seal has been rolled upon a variety of clays, no two impressions are entirely identical (see below footnote 35). A reconstruction of the original seal design, therefore, makes a synthesis of all the features observed. With draftsperson, Christine Kainert, we agreed not to “normalize” the drawing to what we thought may have been the seal but to adhere as much as possible to what was actually impressed and visible on the clay.
Fig. 5. Detailed photos of (from top): seal A on tablet SMN 1428; bulla NBN 483; bulla NBN 838 (Courtesy of the Harvard Semitic Museum/photos M. Luciani)
Centred above the point where the two bent-over figures converge is an ornate 13-pinion feathers, star-in-rosette in a winged disk with moon crescent. Two sets of triple rays (or rain/thunderbolt?) descend from the disk.

Next to the bent-over figures stands a goddess, with a criss-crossed garment over the breasts and a long robe, folded on the front. The lower part of the open skirt is drawn and leaves the left leg visible. One thick tassel hangs behind and one in front of the legs. This figure is wearing a flat top, double-horned crown with flying plumes. A chignon juts out above the nape. A dagger with a round handle is tucked into the belt at the waistline. The figure, with arms reaching up in a “W”-position, holds a small double axe in the right and a flail in the left. From her elbows hang a rectangular pail/sprinkler on the right and a ring-shaped object from the left side. The figure is standing on the five volutes of a double guilloche.

The systematic presence of two horizontal depressions that frame the impression indicates the seal was finished with undecorated metal caps.

**Transformations: the long(?) life of a seal**

Close scrutiny of the three impressions used for reconstructing the motif indicates that there are two clearly documentable differences between the seal used to impress SMN 1428 on the one hand, and the one used on the two bullae NBN 483 and NBN 838 on the other [Fig. 5].

All other features remaining identical, tablet SMN 1428 has the winged disk represented with a clearly readable six-pointed star and rosette, more correctly: a star-and-rosette-in-winged crescent-disk. While this is a perfectly recognisable feature on the impression on the tablet, the impression on bulla NBN 483 barely reveals any traces of oblique rays: the rosette points are all but invisible and the major part of the star is strongly weathered at best. And while this may be due to the conservation measures undertaken on this specific sealing, this same pattern is even more marked on the wholly untreated bulla NBN 838. It is as if the star and rosette decoration in the disk had worn down or had been damaged and provided only a slight relief on the clay.

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23 Dr. Joe Greene has graciously checked the bulla once more and disproved any significant modern alterations. However, it does feature an uncommon shine and there are traces of a green matter, possibly the one used to make a copy of the sealing.
NBN 838 it was also barely visible.\(^{24}\) I do not have a good explanation for how this obliteration of just the star and rosette happened. With a weathering only in a selected area of the seal an unintended erasure cannot be excluded.

The second detail that changed pertains to the circular-shaped attribute hanging from the standing goddess’s left elbow. On SMN 1428, this is clearly an empty circle or, better, ring-shaped, while on NBN 483 and most surely on NBN 838, the ring has been turned into a pointed star/rosette, i.e., the same motif that was not well-visible anymore on the winged disk. This modification can only have come about intentionally. Therefore, the seal must have been modified with time, first being used in the SMN 1428-version and subsequently turned into the one attested on the bullae. The relief areas of the seal would only allow the details to be re-cut in the sequence here proposed (i.e., SMN 1428 first, then NBN 483 and NBN 838) and not vice-versa. The fact that the star and rosette is less visible on NBN 838 than on NBN 483 might actually suggest a progressive weathering with time. The pointed star/rosette symbol was sufficiently important (see Stein 1988) for it to need to be “transferred”, after it was no longer well-visible, from the central sun disk to the small disk hanging from the deity’s elbow [Fig. 6].

\(^{24}\) On a very partially preserved impression of the same seal on the side of bulla NBN 883 some faint traces of the star could possibly be made out. No traces of the rosette are visible.
The phenomenon of re-cutting and re-carving of cylinder seals is well attested and not surprising per se. Even seal duplicates in Nuzi have been identified and discussed recently (Stein 2016: 246 and 285). The intentional modification of the seal used on tablet SMN 1428 before its subsequent use on the bullae underlines the relevance of the pointed star as a motif that needed to continue being part of the representation but, more importantly, it seems to suggest that the same seal was so valuable as to be kept and (re-)cut and re-used for some time. A reuse even over two generations was the case not only for the ornate seals of high officials of the city of Nuzi (Stein 1993/II: 350–353, AdŠ 406), but, in particular, for royal seals of the Mitanni kings (Stein 1989). In itself the re-cutting does not render the seal automatically ‘royal’, but it definitely underlines the long-lasting character and significance of its function as a means of control of administrative operations in the kingdom. How long this period of use may have lasted is difficult to gauge. If our hypothesis below is right, not longer than the span of time of the final historical phase before the fall of Nuzi, i.e., the so-called scribal generations SG 4–5 (Stein 1998–2001).

The seal impression: discussion

While the beards displayed by the flexing figures are standard (for similarly bearded men, see, e.g., Stein 1993/II: 512, AdŠ 683) and a great number of demons feature bull’s ears (Buchanan 1971: 11), the bent-over position is extremely rare (see below). The two tassels(?), visible peeking from behind the back, are as thick as feathers but, because of their position, do not seem to belong to the wings. Rather than plumage, they make more sense as tassels to a belt, similar to those visible in naked ‘heroes’ from the Akkadian down to the

25 Collon 1990: 25 No. 11 and 30 No. 17 on proven examples of recutting, Porada and Buchanan 1948: 158 on ancient and modern recutting (for forgeries). For a very recent study on the Old Assyrian period, see Lassen 2017.


27 The discussion of the motif is based mainly on the first reconstructed seal, that is, the one from tablet SMN 1428 [see Fig. 4].

28 For comparable horned-crowned heads with bull’s ears but without beards, see the judges’ seals in Stein 1993/II: 348 – Akia’s, AdŠ 404, 355 – Ikki’aš, AdŠ 410, 356 – Zuj’aš, AdŠ 411, 361 – Tehip-apu’s, AdŠ 415, 383 and 447 – Urha-Tarmi’s, AdŠ 450 and AdŠ 568, respectively. That is how the very schematic drawing in Lacheman 1939: 147 seems to understand them [see here, Fig. 3 top].
Old Babylonian period. The fact that the figures wear a three-horns crown should indicate unequivocally their godly nature and an even more elevated status than the standing deity (see below) wearing a two-horns crown.

The three segmented, inverted-V-shaped, short-skirt that the bent-over demon-gods feature below the hips in lieu of a kilt, because of its position, quilted structure and being wrapped up with the same spiral coils visible on the scorpion’s stinger and the rapacious bird’s claws, presents, likely intentionally, a double association. On one hand the segments recall a scorpion’s lower abdomen, i.e., sternites and attached (coiling) legs as represented on several seals already in the Old Babylonian period (e.g., Collon 1975: 54 No. 97; Weber 1920: No. 267), where large scale scorpion(s) could be placed vertically fitting the full height of a seal. A second possible association is well attested already during the first half of the 2nd millennium BC in the representation of the ‘hero’/Gilgamesh?/Humbaba’/labmu (Wiggermann 1981–1982; Matthews 1990: 101; Nunn 1997: especially 229–233; and now also Bonatz 2015) with a naked upper body and wearing a kilt made of horizontal stripes. The secondary scene on one Mature Classic Syrian seal with a winged disk motif from the Dr. Elie Borowski collection (Muscarella 1981: 245–246 No. 215) seems to display a similar, though not identical quilted skirt. This labmu’s posture as slightly bending over—though due to the ‘slaying of Humbaba’ motif—features a “W”-shape of the arms strongly recalling the one of our demon-gods. Another similar impression is found in the collection of Baron Guillaume Poche (Schmidt 1930: No. 80; Weber 1920: Pls XVII/XVIII No. 268; Lambert 1987: 48 Pl. X No. 20), seemingly confirming that this short skirt did, indeed, end in feathers. In all these cases, however, the quilted segments are strictly horizontal and not shaped as an inverted V, as in the discussed specimens.

In the Nuzi repertory, there are several impressions with a ‘hero’/labmu who exhibits a kilt ending in curls: they come from the palace archives (SMN 2564; Lacheman 1950: Pl. 13 [=HSS XIV, 24] and Pl. 117 for seal No. 300) [Fig. 7], from the Šilwa-Teššup archive (Stein 1993/II: 287, AdŠ 296, also 466, AdŠ 606 and AdŠ 716) and from the Teḫip-Tilla one (Porada 1947: 60 and seal Pl. XXXVII, No. 728; Kantor 1962: 114–115 and Fig. 19A; Lambert 1987: 498–500, AdŠ 659 that so resembles, both in attire and posture, the two demons (see below).
Pl. VIII No. 11) [Fig. 8]. However, both the inverted V shape and the presence of spiral coils only on the upper and lower segments seem to differ from the usual representation of feathers: they resemble more the winged deity, similar to wind demons, attested on the seal of the sukallu Tehip-Apu [see Fig. 7] than the lahmu on the tablet of Ziwir-kintar JEN 378 [see Fig. 8].

Also the Skorpionmensch on the Middle Assyrian seal impressed on texts from Assur features a muscular, naked upper body, and the legs and claws of a bird-of-prey. The fact that the lower part of the body of the Middle Assyrian

33 Possibly the texture of the lower body (see photo in Fig. 8) is meant to convey plumage.
demon, though not wearing a kilt, is clearly feathered as that of a bird (for the fully reconstructed motif, see Feller 2005: 81–82 Siegel 1 and Pl. 3), and the other Nuzi examples mentioned above, as well, leave room for a possible interpretation of the lower part of the *Mischwesen* on bulla NBN 483 both as a bird and as a scorpion. As will be shown below, these were very peculiar beings, indeed, perfectly original and unique, but clearly referring to illustrious precedents and outstanding contemporary seals.

Matthews 1990: 17 claims that the seal discussed in this article, among others, “must have some relation to Assyrian glyptic”.

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Fig. 8. Seal on tablet JEN 378 (Line drawing after Kantor 1962: Fig. 19A; Lambert 1987: Pl. VIII No. 11; photo after Porada 1947: PL. XXXVII, No. 728)
The feathers/sternites depicted as spiral coils decorating the kilt and the scorpion’s stinger are echoed in the representation of the talons of the rapacious birds also in the shape of spiral coils (for a later example, see the Pazuzu in de Clercq 1903: 213–228, Pl. 36). An identical shape of the claws of birds-of-prey is the one chosen for depicting the feet of the “winged deity with a human head and torso, tufted legs and bird talons” seen on the Mitanni prince Šilwa-teššup’s seal, possibly an intentional citation of the royal canon. These coils were surely meant to underscore the iteration of a definitive mark, a rhyme more than an alliteration of a specific decorative signature on different parts of the bodies of those creatures.

Centered above the two symmetrical bent-over figures dominates a winged crescent-and-sun-disk. Because of this, Donald Matthews (1990: 108–110) interprets the seal as being a forerunner and conceptually similar to the so-called “Atlantid scene” of the Middle Assyrian period. Equally fitting is, however, a classification of this seal within Stein’s (1993/I) “Group 3: The (Winged) Disk (Standard) and Varia between Monsters, Demons and Animals” that underscores the importance and central role of the winged disk in the iconography of Nuzi (Stein 1997a; 2009), especially the one preferred by the urban elites in the ultimate phase of the functioning of the town.

As for the wings of the sun disk, it must be underlined that the specimen on this sealing is a multipartite winged disk with feather rows divided longitudinally, a type more rarely attested in the Nuzi glyptic. Interestingly,

35 Stein 1993/II: 258, AdŚ 258; 2010: bulla NBN 655. While in the first publication of the seal, whose impression was incomplete, the bird talons were represented as spiralling, in the drawing made from bulla NBN 655, the claws have been corrected to look less like coils. However, the two documents were impressed with the same seal. While I have not seen the impression on tablets SMN 386 (=HSS XIII, 386) and SMN 1072 (=HSS XIX, 17) where this seal was used, judging from the autopsy of bulla NBN 655, I believe the first line drawing (Stein 1993/II: 258) to be the more accurate one.

36 While the presence of different permutations render a precise identification difficult, the basic idea is the presence of two figures—men, demons, bull-men, etc. very often with bull-man’s ears—supporting the winged disk, Matthews 1990: 108–110. For the term, see already Porada 1947: 67. For Classical Syrian examples, see Otto 2000: Nos 293, 294, 308, 353, 354, and 413.

37 Also a typical representation of the main god of the Nuzi pantheon Teššup is accompanied by an antithetic pair (the twins Šerri and Ḫurri/Tilla) standing underneath a winged sun disk (Stein 1988: 178).

only this more elaborate type is paralleled in Assur, while the more common Mitanni ones are not (Stein 1993/I: 92; Parayre 1984: 219–220, Pl. VII B.2.a). Whether the winged disk reveals, as by the Hittites and Middle Assyrians, “an explicit association … with kingship” cannot be elaborated upon in detail in the frame of this study, but is surely a valid suggestion. The triple rays/rain/thunderbolt descending from the disk are also an uncommon feature (for another example in Nuzi, see Stein 1988: No. 32; 1993/II: 305, AdŠ 326), but one attested in connection with the weather god/goddess surely from the Akkadian, Ur III [Fig. 9] and Old Babylonian periods.

The single figure standing behind the bent-over figures should represent, both in syntax and posture, a weather goddess. Her arms stretched up in a “W”-shape seem to indicate this but a number of features are unique: one would expect her to stand on or next to an animal, but in this case her base is a double guilloche. The weapons, a small double axe and a flail, are attested in earlier examples, but not often as here, i.e., one in each hand. Also the

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39 Matthews 1990: 109. Dalley (1986) sees in the winged disk a representation of the god Šalmu (Aramaic ŠLM), but see recently Hausleiter 2012. Stein (2009: 578) interprets the winged disk as a manifestation of the objective of trance states (Stein 2006: 34); the ultimate encounter with divinity, be it a deity or, by association, the king himself (Stein 2010: 360). However, as this motif is clearly appropriated by the state, at some point in time (e.g., late in attestations of Nuzi glyptic), it definitely becomes part of the royal court imagery and as such relates to kingship. Middle Assyrian kings (Stein 2010: 600, Note 63) seem to adopt this representation from the Kirkuk tradition. Pizzimenti (2017: 11–12) interprets it simply as an astral symbol.

40 As apparently implied by the impression in Lacheman 1950: No. 272 (=HSS XIV 272 found on various tablets: SMN 1499b, SMN 950 and SMN 781) and its drawing by Stein in Matthews 1990: No. 623. It features an elaborate winged disk, two ornate guilloches and a likely representation of the king with a scimitar.

41 Buchanan 1971: Pl. Id; Porada 1979: Fig. 9; Wiggermann 2007: 140–141, No. 6. For the relations of the “Atlantid motif” with the theme of circulation of water and the cycle of nature, see Matthews 1990: 109–110. Porada (1979: 4) underlines the Akkadian heritage “demonstrated not only by the weather god but also by the presence of a rain goddess holding streams of water which flow down from above”.

42 This posture is typical of the female weather goddess (already since the Akkadian period, see Boehmer 1965: Nos 372 and 373) or else of the goddess raising her veil, Volk 1979: No. 57 (Akkadian) and Otto 2000: No. 93 or 147, 157–159, 204, 214, 225–229, 258, 276, 291 passim (for Old Babylonian specimens), but is otherwise rare “where it is not subduing enemies” (Matthews 1990: 22).

43 For Wiggermann (2007: 149) this is a lightning fork, as it should be, if an attribute to Ištar-Sawuška (Stein 2001: 156, Note 21).

44 Collon 1975: 26 No. 33 and Otto 2000: Pl. 28 No. 358 for the weather god holding both these attributes and a leash, both in his left hand, Weber 1920: Nos 454 and 456.
presence of a pail/sprinkler and ring\textsuperscript{45} hanging from each elbow\textsuperscript{46} is an addition that almost gives the marked impression that the features of two goddesses have been intentionally combined in this depiction\textsuperscript{47} in order to obtain a single, conflated and thus unique image. The guilloche, even if in this case it does not frame the entire scene,\textsuperscript{48} seems utilised to evoke a monumental style.\textsuperscript{49}

Although she is not standing, as expected, on an animal, her reading as the weather god’s companion, Šawuška\textsuperscript{50} may be proposed. While it is not entirely clear whether she is holding a lightning bolt in her hands, as in the Akkadian-

\textbf{Fig. 9. Cylinder seal impression on envelope NBC 5613 (After Buchanan 1971: Pl. Id and Porada 1979: Fig. 9)}

\textsuperscript{45} Otto 2000: 204: tambourine or mirror, as in No. 430 from Tell Bī’a and No. 431 from Mari. For the latter see already Collon 1990: 25 No. 11.
\textsuperscript{46} Ring and pail seem to be attributes of deities/priests in Old Babylonian glyptic, see Porada 1948: Nos 383, 392.
\textsuperscript{47} For an example of the criss-cross folded-over bodice of a nude woman, whose features this goddess shares, see Weber 1920: No. 448 (here she stands in front of a weather god).
\textsuperscript{48} For a similar use of the guilloche, see Porada 1947: Pl. XVI, Nos 284, 297, Pl. XVII, No. 316.
\textsuperscript{49} The same use can be seen in the seal of Erwe-šarri (Stein 1988: 182 and above Table 1, Item 29, Note *** and Luciani 2019: Fig. 4) but also in the Middle Assyrian seal VAT 8777 (Beran 1957: 195 Fig. 95; Moortgat 1988: 62, Pl. D No. 2 and also No. 3). Both use as a basic motif the face/head, which mixed Humbaba and Hathor and was a favoured subject in the Late Bronze Age both in Nuzi and in Middle Assyrian glyptic. For an example from the wall paintings in Nuzi, see Starr 1939: 143–145, 491–492, Pls 128G and 129D. For different ornamental uses of the guilloche, see Stein 1993/II: 134, AdŠ 55, 194, AdŠ 163, 275, AdŠ 277 and especially 294, AdŠ 307.
\textsuperscript{50} This is what Porada (1977: 14) seems to suggest cursorily in Note 40. For Šawuška’s role in Nuzi’s iconography, see Stein 1988.
period representations, the position of her hands, both raised to form the “W”-shape is unequalled in other figures. Of course, this is not the exact copy of a 3rd millennium BC representation and the presence of the ring/tambourine/mirror hanging from her left elbow reveals a clear reference to Syrian (e.g., Tell Bi‘a and Mari) seal impressions and seals of the Old Babylonian period. The allusion to that goddess seems to be carried not only by the presence of the mirror, but also by the specific representation of the lower part of the gown as a thick garment behind her, leaving her left leg exposed, as the goddess is in the process of unveiling herself. This deity has been seen as the weather god’s companion. The impression of a “classic Syrian seal of the 18th century BC” of “an ordinary witness with a Babylonian name” (Teissier 1998: 120) on a tablet from Sippar features a similar nude warrior-goddess (Collon 1987: 161 No. 730). Her raised right arm holds a fenestrated axe. The wooden handle of this weapon and the position of the arm and body resemble closely the one held by the goddess on NBN 483.

Nonetheless, the most original elements of this seal are the antithetic bent-over winged demon-gods already discussed above. Bull-men may be an Old Babylonian motif (Stein 1993/I: 93; Nunn 1997) and the antithetic arrangement an even more ancient feature, but winged monsters and composite demons of this guise are new (Stein 1993/I: 93) and a novelty specific to Nuzi. Buchanan (1971: 2) read the figures on bulla NBN 483 as winged acrobats, influenced by the images of the Old Babylonian Snake goddess, a possible further attestation of the latter being on tablet SMN 626 from Nuzi (Lacheman 1950: No. 301) [Fig. 10]. However, F.A.M. Wiggermann shows convincingly that these “two heraldically doubled West winds” must ultimately depend on

52 Otto 2000: 204. For the first-time attestation of the weather god (already winged!) and his consort, see Boehmer 1965: 62 and No. 363 and 64 Nos 372 and 373 (“die nackte Blitzgöttin…schwingt in jeder Hand ein dreifaches Blitzbündel”).
53 Compare Porada 1977: 10–11 Fig. 2 (Harvard Semitic Museum cylinder seal 29-2-12, see also p. 14 Note 35) and see also Stein 1988: 176 and Notes 25 and 26.
54 See Mellink 1964 and Stein 1998–2001: 644 for the ivory figurine of the goddess from Nuzi clutching weapons in both hands (though held close to the body) and exposing the lower part of the body. Also Otto 2000: Nos 348, 357 and 410.
55 For a comparison with a goddess holding weapons and with two objects (a spiral and a disk, but larger than our ring/tambourine/mirror) hanging from her elbows, see Porada 1981–1982: 41 No. 23. This goddess is standing on an animal (lion). See also Matthews 1990: No. 495.
56 “Buchanan [suggested that] in the Mitannian age [the Snake goddess is] to be regarded as an intermediary between the heavens and the netherworld” (Porada 1979: 6).
57 This seal impression, too, has an ornamental guilloche as part of the design. The goddess is stretching both her hands up in the air, as in the seal here examined, and holding a mirror/tambourine in one hand.
the representation of the four winds known to us from Old Babylonian seals and impressions on tablets. Particularly similar is the West wind featured on the Warad-Sin of Larsa tablet, and even closer is the one on the Old Babylonian cylinder seal now in the British Museum, said to have been acquired by Ernst Herzfeld near Borsippa (Collon 1986: 175–176, Pl. XXXII, No. 451 [134773], and now also Collon 2017) [Fig. 11]. The latter seal apparently represents the four winds and according to Dominique Collon, while its style betrays an origin from the Sippar workshop as defined by Lamia al-Gailani Werr (Al-Gailani Werr and Al-Jadir 1981), “the winged demons and figures seem more northern in inspiration” (Collon 1986: 176). Wiggermann, by showing that “the wind spirits are a Babylonian invention” (Wiggermann 2007: 141) denies a northern trait to this specific motif. However, there are definitely examples of motifs that are cherished for a longer time “abroad” or resurface when they have gone out of fashion “at home”: for example, the representation of the weather god (in Nuzi, Teššup) with its adjunct, the lion-griffin, while going back to the Akkad period, is preserved longer in northern Mesopotamia as opposed to the changes introduced in the South (Porada 1979: 3; see also Stein 2001: 162). “The ancient concept of the Storm god must have survived on the northeastern periphery” (Stein 1993/I: 85–86).58

![Seal 301 on tablet SMN 626 (= HSS XIV, 220) (After Lacheman 1950: Pl. 118)](image)

58 For a competent survey of which motifs are preserved in which glyptic contexts (private as opposed to court style) though in different chronological phases, see in particular Stein 2001.

Stories told around the fountain
The most striking comparison for the bent-over winged demon-gods, however, remains the image in the lower left corner of the sealing of the king of Arraphe, Íthi-Teššup [Fig. 12], the “Vogelmensch” (Stein 1988: 178) with bird claws and feathered tail above which the image of the standing king is placed. As mentioned before, in Stein’s typology the seal should be understood as belonging to Group 3.F. “The Winged Disk Flanked by Bulls, Bull-Demons and Bull-Monsters”, even if our demon-gods with bird-like lower body and a scorpion stinger⁵⁹ are not entirely identical to any other attested in Nuzi or elsewhere. Stein’s Group 3, the most often attested subject group in the Šilwa-

Fig. 11. Seal BM 134773 (Line drawing after Porada 1979: Fig. 8; courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum)

⁵⁹ See, e.g., the seal of judge Urḫa-Tarmi (Stein 1993/II: 383, AdŠ 450).
Teššup archive (Stein 1993/I: 89), is the one where “rank related iconographic distinctions are most evident” (Stein 1993/I: 123)\textsuperscript{60} with superhumans and demons rather connected to the upper half of the social scale.

## Conclusions

With its elaborate winged disk, guilloche, conflated female deity and West wind iconography this seal from the beginning throughout its life strongly underscores its echoes of the Old Syrian and Old Babylonian\textsuperscript{61} “‘urban’ court style” (Stein 2001: 169). Even its very naturalistic style with “muscular corporeality […] adding] tension and depth to the scenes”\textsuperscript{62} is a clear reference to past high quality imagery, “ancient Mesopotamian traditions that survived

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{fig12.png}
\caption{Composite seal of Ithi-Teššup (After Stein 1988: Fig. 10; 1993/II: 498, No. 659)}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{60} However, this should not be taken as an absolute assertion, since Stein also said: “the adoption of once exclusive motifs by the common workshops suggests a breakdown of social barriers” (Stein 1993/I: 123).

\textsuperscript{61} “The third source of Mitannian glyptic, the Babylonian, we find that its influence was almost entirely restricted to the sealings of the Elaborate Style” (Porada 1947: 104).

\textsuperscript{62} As has been said for the Akkadian seals (Volk 1979: text above No. 47).
on the periphery” (Stein 1997a: 84). However, the Nuzi seal cutters, while strongly evoking illustrious predecessors,\(^{63}\) willed to create something completely novel and original, as if the specific characteristic of their culture consisted in the re-elaboration and transmission and thus also preservation of previous iconographies. And in fact, especially in this court style of the late period, the “Eastern connection” emerged distinctly (Stein 2001). Moreover, even if parallels are not specific, both in single iconographic elements (winged demons, winged disk) and in the syntax of the seal (“Atlantid scene” + secondary motif), a great resemblance can be found with Middle Assyrian glyptic, for example with the royal seal of the early 14th century king Eriba-Adad I (Feller 2012: 70, Pl. 23 No. 60a–c with earlier references). Not only subject matters and compositions were received, adopted and adapted in Nuzi but also communicated further afield. Our example thus well illustrates how “few cultures exist in utter isolation” and that as far as defining Hurro-Mitannian culture and identity is concerned, “the problem….is the underlying premise that there is such a thing as pure ethnic tradition” (Stein 1989–1990: 279; 1998–2001: 640a).\(^{64}\)

Who might this seal have belonged to? Its craftsmanship is extremely sophisticated and the subject theme very likely points to a member of the upper class\(^ {65}\) active in the last phase of the town, during the last scribal generations SG 4–5.\(^ {66}\) The presence of plain metal caps is also an indication of status (Stein 1993/I: 134; 2016: 250). But because these bullae are not inscribed, we can only infer from indirect evidence [see below Table 2].

As mentioned above, in its early life the seal had been impressed (Seal A) next to an upturned impression (Seal B) on tablet SMN 1428 [see Fig. 3], an inventory of precious metals and furniture, mentioning also the Nuzi palace. While Lacheman had interpreted the name of the user of Seal A as Ḫutip-Tešup,\(^ {67}\)

\(^{63}\) “Iconography is heterogeneous, drawing on a long tradition of assimilation and adaptation” (Stein 1998–2001: 645).

\(^{64}\) For an articulate discussion of these themes, see also Stein 2001.

\(^{65}\) Stein 1997a: 84: “Craftsmen of finely executed seals who followed the fashionable trends in composition and iconography would have been beyond the means of the average seal owner”. On the winged disk sub-theme of the late Nuzi court style “represent[ing] a select Nuzi clique”, see Stein 2010: 360.

\(^{66}\) For terminology of chronological subdivisions and possibilities of chronological classification of seal groups in Nuzi, see Stein 1993/I; 1997a.

\(^{67}\) Lacheman 1950: xiii. In the Harvard Semitic Museum, an old card with the photo and drawing of this seal identifies it as (the king of Arrapḫe) Ḫti-Tešup! The author of this note is not known. A judge by the name Ḫutip-Tešup is attested with a late Group 3 seal (Stein 1993/II: 349–350, AdŠ 405; Porada 1947: No. 794).
both Löhner and Stein (personal communication, A. Löhner, 22/03/2016, and D. Stein, 20/01/2018) read xx-tip-Teššup. The user of Seal B is Ti-ir-[wi-in-a-atal]. The text of the tablet mentions Ḫeltip-apu and Kartip-erwi, both of whom are known and belong to the final part of the documentation in Nuzi, that is, they overlap with the above identified time frame of SG 4–5. The fact that the sealing parties are not mentioned in the inventory itself may indicate that in tablet SMN 1428 the officials, xx-tip-Teššup and Ti-ir-[wi-in-a-atal], with their seals, were, as in other cases, “either vouching for the correctness of the contents of the text or supplying proof that they have authorised a transaction it records” (Postgate 2013: 366), like in “property surveys conducted and sealed by apparently well-known officials, who are identified only by first name” (Stein 1993/I: 71). The absence of a patronymic in all cases suggests that they were notable and renowned within the palace administration (Postgate 2013: 380 and D. Stein, personal communication, 20/01/2018).

The palace context, the type of content and most of all the type of very elaborate seal used, with subject and iconographic elements that most closely, intentionally resemble king Ithi-Teššup’s seal, are all elements pointing to the owner/user of Seal A on tablet SMN 1428 and bullae NBN 483 and NBN 838, xx-tip-Teššup, as being a recognized and prominent, high ranking official of the Arrapḫan kingdom, possibly a member of the royal house, active in the final generation(s) attested in Nuzi’s written records.

A person by the name Tatip-Teššup is attested: a son of the king (mār šarrī) (SMN 2776 (=HSS XVI, 332), Lacheman 1958: No. 332:3; Mayer 1978: 98 and 118, No. 592; also Wilhelm 2006: 103) who lived during the last period before the demise of the town and who likely corresponds to a homonymous envoy

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68 D. Stein 20/01/2018: “Ḫeltip-apu may be identical with the administrator Ḫeltip-apu, who uses the seal of his father Aršalim s. Aria (= Stein 1993/II: 350–353, AdS 406). Heltip-apu features in several palace records (mainly from R 76 but also from M 79 and N 120) relating to textile deliveries and a palace inventory. On three tablets from D 3 and D 6, he is mentioned in connection with palace horses and their fodder. Heltip-apu also signs a royal decree (Stein 1993b, 528–529 AdS 711 [AASOR 51]) from A 23 according to the publication and from R 76 according to Mayer 1978: 66). Aršalim is contemporary with Ḫišmi-Teššup, so Ḫeltip-apu is roughly contemporary with his son, prince Šilwa-Teššup”.

69 D. Stein, personal communication, 20/01/2018: “Kartip-erwi also signs the royal decree (Stein 1993/II: 528–529, AdS 711 [AASOR 51]). In that case, he used seal AdS 771, which is unusually large. Both seals AdS 406 and AdS 771 have (gold?) caps, in one case with granulation, which is further indication of their wealth and rank”.

70 For the seal as “visible acknowledgment of responsibility”, see Löhner 2015: 336 Note 10 and 339 Note 22.
Table 2. Possible attestations of the name Tatip-Teššup

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text and find spot</th>
<th>Attested parties (selection)</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| SMN 1428 No provenance (Palace/Temple archives) | Seal A: xx-tip-Teššup
Seal B: Ti-ir-[wi-in-a-atal] | Lacheman 1939: 147 (=RA 36, Nuziana II)
Lacheman 1950: Pl. 111 (No. 270)
Mayer 1978: 99 No. 600
Löhnert (pers. comm., 22/03/2016)
Stein (pers. comm., 20/01/2018) |
| SMN 2093 S 113 | Tatip-Teššup writes to Šeḥra-mušni ↓ | Pfeiffer and Speiser 1935–1936: 76
Lacheman 1950: Pl. 12 (= HSS XIV, 20)
Morrison 1993
Wilhelm 1990
Wilhelm 2006
Löhnert 2015 |
| SMN 2199 S 113 | Šeḥra-mušni writes to Akip-tašenni | Lacheman 1950 (= HSS XIV, 21)
Morrison 1993
Wilhelm 1990
Wilhelm 2006
Löhnert 2015 |
| SMN 3268 D 3 | line 27: T[a-t]i-ip-teššup
line 31: A-kip-[a-še]-n-ni
line 34: Ti-ir-wi-[na-ta] | Lacheman 1950 (= HSS XIV, 48)
Jankowska 1982
Maidman 2010: 21–24 |
| ? SMN 674* R 76 | Princes Hűtit-Teššup (for Tatip-Teššup?) Urḫa-tadi | Lacheman 1958 (=HSS XVI, 331)
Jankowska 1982
Dosch 2009
https://cdli.ucla.edu/search/archival_view.php?ObjectID=P409322 |

* This text should only be added if Jankowska’s (1982: 147) assumption that the name of the prince here reported, Hűtit-Teššup, was a scribal mistake for Tatip-Teššup, can be retained. Her proposal stems from the observation that the list is almost identical with the list HSS XVI, 332 (see below, page 383) where “14 names recur” and is headed by princes Tatip-Teššup and Urḫa-tadi. But Dosch (2009: 131) maintains “Hűtit-Teššup”. CDLI describes SMN 674 as a “list of 26 immigrants to Nuzi”, while Jankowska (1982: 147) sees it as a list of hostages, 26 persons, who are led “into the palace”. Dosch (2009: 131) does not translate the expression pišanni. Both lists are sealed with the sukallu Akia’s seal, (i.e., AdŠ 404, in Stein 1993/II: 348–349). See also Mayer 1978: 81 and 119 (reads “m[Tup-ki-te-šup?”).
of the palace\textsuperscript{71} (\textit{mar šipri}\textsuperscript{72} [\textit{ša ekalli}]). A Tatip-Teššup, moreover, represents royal authority in a case of theft\textsuperscript{73} involving personnel under Šeḥal-Teššup’s supervision, persons intending to fence stolen goods in the eastern land of Nullū. In this instance, Tatip-Teššup writes to Šeḥra-muṣni who, in turn, writes to Akip-tašenni, the governor (\textit{šakin māṭi}) of the town of Azuḫinni, the “gate to māṭ Nullahhe”, which is a general indication for the Zagros Mountains and was located north of Sulaimaniyah” (Fadhil 1983: 70b), that is, east of Nuzi [\textit{Table 2}].

Interestingly, a Ti-ir-wi-[na-ta], homonymous to the second sealing party on text SMN 1428, is known from line 34 of another text from the Palace (Lacheman 1950: Pl. 23 No. 48 [SMN 3268]; Maidman 2010: 21–24, No. 2). This “account of some barley expenditures from government stores” (Maidman 2010: 21) is especially important, because in line 31 it also mentions, among a series of recipients, an A-kipt-[a-še]-n-ni and in line 27 a T[a-t]-i-ip-te-šup\textsuperscript{74} [see \textit{Table 2}]. Therefore, in the same text, clearly one mentioning high-ranking members of the palace administration in its lines down to line 34,\textsuperscript{75} we find an explicit association of Tatip-Teššup and Tirwin-atal\textsuperscript{76}—with the presence also of Akip-tašenni—allowing us to propose that the owner of Seal A, xx-tip-Teššup, may have been none other than the very Tatip-Teššup, who had direct and indirect dealings with both Tirwin-atal and Akip-tašenni.

Prince Tatip-Teššup does correspond in royal rank, hierarchy in the administration, association with the palace and chronology to what we proposed should have been the case of the owner of our seal impression on bulla NBN 483.

\textsuperscript{71} Wilhelm (1990: 308 Note 10) was initially skeptical of the possibility of proving that prince Tatip-Teššup was to be identified with the homonymous palace envoy (“dürfte kaum nachweisbar sein”). Two years later he mentions it as a possibility (Wilhelm 1992: 140), one that has more recently become affirmative in Stein 1993/I: 193 and Postgate 2013: 375.

\textsuperscript{72} Wilhelm 1990: 308 Note 10. He is attested through barley receipts/expenditures in Lacheman 1950: SMN 933 (=HSS XIV: 134: 9); Mayer 1978: 88 no. 503; SMN 946 (=HSS XIV: 150: 8ff.); SMN 1012 (=HSS XIV: 159: 9); Mayer 1978: 89 no. 510. For a recent definition of the role and function(s) of \textit{mar šipri} and the hierarchies involved in Nuzi palace administration, see Deuel 2015.

\textsuperscript{73} Pfeiffer and Speiser 1936: 49 No. 76:3 (SMN 2093); Lacheman 1950: Pl. 12 No. 20. On this matter and its interpretation, see now Löhnert 2015 with references to Wilhelm 2006 and Morrison 1993.

\textsuperscript{74} As M.P. Maidman (2010: 21) proposes: “the order of entries [in this text] appears to reflect, at least in part, a governmental hierarchy”. However, since “the pecking order is not transparent or explicit throughout” (emphasis in the original), I believe we can allow for a prince to be mentioned as late as on line 27.

\textsuperscript{75} After that listing also young male slaves (lines 35–36) and foreign females (lines 38–41) are mentioned (Maidman 2010: 21).

\textsuperscript{76} On Tirwin-atal as palace functionary, see Stein 1989: 53 Note 51.
As all attestation of this seal so far known are on movable items—either tablets (SMN 1428 and NBN 764) or sealings of containers (box:77 NBN 483 and basket/bag: NBN 838 and NBN 862)—they point to an official, residing not necessarily in Nuzi, but possibly either in the capital, Arrapḫe, or in other important administrative centers.

The seal of the Arrapḫan king Ithi-Teššup [see Fig. 12], displaying clear iconographic parallels78 to the one here discussed, has been described as a late, high quality glyptic artifact, produced with the intention of underlining this king’s dynastic claims and credentials, in the thrust to achieve the peak of his power (Stein 1989). It is interesting to note that it was twice the size of the royal seal of the old Mitanni king Sauštatar, possibly in order to further underscore its owner’s entitlement, notwithstanding—or maybe better because of—its “petty kingdom” status (see Wilhelm 1998–2001: 637a; Löhner 2015: 335–336). A similar motivation seems to underlie also the later Arrapḫan prince Šilwa-Teššup’s second, elaborate seal, even if this son of king was likely too late to access the succession to the throne before the fall of the town (Stein 2010).

We cannot exclude that the seal here analysed, with its subject matter and design, if it did belong to a prince (Tatip-Teššup?), while standard in size and closely mirroring the political tide evolving in the late life of the town of Nuzi, may have also been an expression of comparable princely ambitions.

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77 Stein’s (2010: 358) statement: “NTF 655 [box sealing with impression of prince Šilwa-Teššup’s seal, AdŠ 258] is unique, and although no systematic study has yet been made of the “clay bullae” collection, genuine bullae appear to be comparatively rare”, still seems valid after the first evaluation of the collection, if by ‘genuine bullae’ are meant large sealings accompanying boxes. Similarly to the seal discussed in this contribution, AdŠ 258 is attested once as a box sealing, twice on sealings of leather bags and once on a docket. One further functionary sealing a box like Šilwa-Teššup and xx-tip-Teššup may be Hašip-apu (Stein 1993/II: AdŠ 12).

78 Also in underlining the role of an (Ištar-)Šawuša (see above) as main deity on the seal, our NBN 483 resembles closely the mythological, religious and political choices (Stein 1988) conveyed by the Ithi-Teššup seal.
checked bulla NBN 483 for evidence of restoration for me. Anne Löhnert was quick and generous in sending me her personal notes on Tablet SMN 1428 and suggesting I look at F.A.M. Wiggermann’s work. Mariko Cantley and Vicki Sato shared my awe for the impression on the bulla and Chiara Reali looked with me at its back. Enrique Jiménez was so kind as to send me Wiggermann 2007. Jeanette Fincke promptly described to me what she had seen of the NTF and bullae collection at the HSM. Diana Stein is my guiding light in all Nuzi glyptic matters and a constant source not only of knowledge, but also of inspiration. Diana’s and Anne’s contributions to this article are acknowledged in the footnotes above. They also read the first draft of this paper. Digital drawings of the bulla and the motifs impressed on the tablet and the bullae have been prepared by Christine Kainert on the basis of my pencil drawings and instructions and several digital photos of each piece. All mistakes remain my own.

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The long life of a royal seal and the Nuzi bullae in the Harvard Semitic Museum


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