TWO SEALS AND ONE BULLA FROM DASKYLEION

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Introduction

In this study, two seals and one bulla from the Achaemenid Period, which were uncovered in the satrapy of Daskyleion, have been examined. The first is a cylinder seal, the second a pyramidal stamp seal, and the third is a bulla impressed with a stamp seal. The third sample, now preserved in the Ekrem Akurgal collection of Ankara University’s Faculty of Letters, was probably found at Daskyleion. The new glyptic art samples studied here are quite important as they demonstrate the presence of a cosmopolitan structure in Daskyleion, which was the satrapy center in the western part of Anatolia.

1. The Pyramidal Stamp Seal

The pyramidal stamp seal1 became known during the excavations directed by Tomris Bakr. It was found with Hellenistic Pottery sherds at the mixed deposit of Trench F7 in the Acropolis (Fig. 1). Now it is protected with inventory number 617 at Bandırma Archaeological Museum. The pyramidal stamp seal is a large seal made of blue chalcedony with a rounded top and a pyramidal body shape with an octagonal impress surface. The Daskyleion stamp seal was depicted worshiping before divine symbols, which was a popular theme during the Late Babylonian Period2. A person, probably a priest, wearing a long dress was engraved together with a worshipper with one hand up in the air. In front of the worshipper, the spade of Marduk on a brick altar and the lamb of Nusku were engraved. A crescent, the symbol of the God of Sin, was engraved on the upper part. The dimensions of the pyramidal seal are as follows; the height is 3.7 cm, the width is 2.4 cm and the thickness is 1.7 cm.

Many quartz deposits could be found around Daskyleion and include locations in Balikesir, Bursa, Çanakkale and Istanbul. The closest deposit of blue chalcedony is in Eskisehir Sarıçakaya. According to the Mohs scale, quartz is in the class of hard

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2 Leon Legrain, The Culture of the Babylonians from Their Seals in the Collections of the Museum, The University Museum, Philadelphia 1925, p. 47.
processing stones, its 'hardness' measures 7. Chalcedony was a luxury material used in seals of the royal families or elites in the First Millennium BC.

The Aramaic inscription on a grave stele found near Daskyleion displays the statement: "I adjure thee by Bêl and Nabû! Who (ever) passes by this way let no one do harm (to my tomb)". The presence of the bel of Marduk and Nabû's name on the grave stele show that they were amongst the important deities and indicate the presence of the Babylonians in the city. A bulla with a pyramidal seal impression dated back to the Late Babylonia period was found in Daskyleion. The bulla is contained emblems of Marduk and Nabu with a standing worshipper figure. This bulla is significant because it is the closest example to the Daskyleion stamp seal in terms of theme and form. The Daskyleion seal is a typical example of drill style from the Late Babylonian Period.

An example very similar to the Daskyleion seal is currently preserved in the Fitzwilliam Museum collection. It is a chalcedony stamp seal displaying a scene of worship to the gods Marduk and Nusku. An impression of a stamp seal on a cuneiform tablet dated back to the period of the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar II (605-562 BC) has been preserved at the British Museum. It was engraved with a scene of worshiping the Gods under a crescent. A similar scene of worship was depicted on a stamp steal, uncovered in the city of Sippar in Mesopotamia, dating back to the Nabonidus Period, approximately 556-539 BC. The same theme continues to appear on the stamp seals dating back to 524-508 BC and to Cambyses (530-522 BC) and Darius I (522-486 BC). This schema continues to appear on the stamp seals of

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9 Ibid, p. 126, no. 327.
11 Ibid, p. 141, no. 399.
the Artaxerxes I Period (464-424 BC)\textsuperscript{12}. A conical stamp seal kept in the collection of the Anatolian Civilizations Museum at Ankara displays the scene of worshipping under the crescent in front of the symbols of the gods Marduk and Nabu on the mušḫuššu, similar to Daskyleion seal\textsuperscript{13}. Similar seals have been uncovered in Samsat (Adıyaman), Doliche/Dülük Baba (Gaziantep), and Gordion (Ankara) in Anatolia\textsuperscript{14}. The symbol of the god Nabu was a stylus and it was observed on a cylinder seal found Girnavaz (Mardin) dating back to the Late Assyrian Period\textsuperscript{15}. Apart from Southeast Anatolia, pyramidal seals of the Late Babylonian were uncovered in Sardis (Manisa) and Uylupınar in Western Anatolia\textsuperscript{16}.

The chalcedony pyramidal stamp seals with worshipping scenes from the Late Babylonian Empire were dated back to the Early Achaemenid Period\textsuperscript{17}. Daskyleion stamp seal probably belonged to a Persian official or a Babylonian artist assigned to Daskyleion, as previously stated by Tomris Bakır. Compared with the similar examples uncovered in Anatolia, this stamp seal dates back to the 6th century BC, in other words to the Early Achaemenid Period\textsuperscript{18}.

\textbf{2. The Cylinder Seal}

The cylinder seal became known at the acropolis of the Daskyleion, during excavations carried out in 1954-1959 by Ekrem Akurgal (Fig.2). Today, it is preserved in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum; its inventory number is T.8210. It is made from black steatite which is a talc type stone. The seal includes two eagles on both sides of the tree of life. The height of the cylinder seal is 1.6 cm, diameter of the body 0.8 cm.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{12} Ibid, p. 160, no. 489.
\item \textsuperscript{13} Remzi Yağcı, "Anadolu Medeniyetleri Müzesi Koleksiyonu’nda Bulunan Geç Assur-Yeni Babil ve Akamenid Mühürler Üzerindeki Apotropaik Figürler", Anadolu Medeniyetleri Müzesi 1989 Yılılığı, Ankara 1990, p. 120, Fig.4a-b.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Nimet Özgüç, Samsat Sümeysat, Samasota, Habbah, Hakhum, Bir Başkent ve Kalenin Uzun Yaman 6000 Yıllık Döneminden Kesişler, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara 2009, p. 54, Pl. 126, no. 271; Michael Blömer and Engelbert Winter, “2011 Yılında Gaziantep’teki Dülük Baba Tepesi’nde Kazi Çalışmaları”, 34. Kaz Sonuçları Toplantısı 3, 2013, p. 365, Fig.1; Michael Blömer and Engelbert Winter, “Dülük Baba Tepesi/Doliche (Gaziantep) 2013 Çalışmalarının Raporu”, 36. Kaz Sonuçları Toplantısı 1, 2014, Fig. 7; Elspeth R. M. Dusinberre, Gordion Seals and Sealings: Individuals and Society, University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia 2005, p. 25.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Armağan Erkanal, “ Mardin Yerleşiminden Yeni Assur Dönemi Mühürleri”, 3. Araştırma Sonuçları Toplantısı, 1985, p. 382-385, Fig.4.
\item \textsuperscript{17} Madeline Noveck, The Mark of Ancient Man, Ancient Near Eastern Stamp Seals: The Gorelick Collection, The Brooklyn Museum, New York 1975, p.42, no.46.
\item \textsuperscript{18} Bakır 2001, p.176.
\end{itemize}
The nearest talc resources to Daskyleion are in Balikesir, which also happens to be the largest reserve area in Turkey. According to the Mohs scale, talc is one of the easiest stones to engrave and its hardness measures 1 on the scale. The main theme of this cylinder seal is the depiction of the eagle on both sides of the tree of life. The Daskyleion cylinder seal was engraved in an 'Elaborate style' using linear and drill techniques. Particularly the eyes of the eagles were engraved by the drill, the wings, and the details of the tree were indicated linearly. The origin of this style is the Late Assyrian seals, in linear style, composed of two figures standing next to the tree of life. The tree on the Daskyleion seal is most likely a palm tree. Such trees are observed on cylinder seals with different themes, such as hunting, fighting scenes, and masters of animals during the Achaemenid Period. The royal seals or officer seals were observed on administrative tablets found in Persepolis, Susa, Babylon, Daskyleion and Memphis, all under the governance of Achaemenid at that time. Generally, in royal seals, symmetrical animal or composite creatures were depicted next to a palm tree. The motif of the palm tree is one of the secondary motifs on fighting, hunting or religious or mythological scenes that appear on the cylinder and stamp seals from Daskyleion. The natural style of the eagle on the other Daskyleion seals is different from the one examined in this study. Our example is more like an emblem. A link between the eagle and the tree of life was known from the myth of Etena in Mesopotamian mythology. The eagle, known as 'Anzû' in other words, was also the bird of Nabu.

There is a group of conoid stamp seals purchased and preserved by the Anatolian Civilizations Museum at Ankara. They display depictions of an eagle appearing from the front, wings open and head turned to the left. These seals are considered to be Achaemenid Free Style and are date back to the 5-4th century BC. These eagle depictions are similar to the Daskyleion stamps, in terms of the frontal body and left-turned head at the Achaemenid palace archive. Among the seals from the Persian period in Babylon, there are seals with the depictions of tree of life together with...

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20 Moorey 1994, p. 100.


22 Ibid see no. 16 and no. 44.

23 Ibid, p. 33.

24 Kaptan 2002, Pl. 160 no. 26, Pl. 161, no. 28; Pl. 174, no. 80, Pl. 182, no. 110; Pl. 235, no. 413, Pl. 244, no. 462.


natural animals or composite creatures on both of its sides. Among them, there were various types of birds\(^{28}\). For example, one of the six stamp seal impressions on the clay tablets of the Artaxerxes I Period in Babylonia, dated to 451/450 BC, show the heraldic eagle\(^{29}\). A palm tree in a hunting scene was engraved on the cylinder seal found in Mardin-Stune in the south-eastern Anatolia, dating back to the Late Assyrian Period\(^{30}\). A cylinder seal found at the Kavu\~n Höyük (Diyarbakır) dates back to the 7-6\(^{th}\) century BC and contains a depiction of the tree of life, together with winged-horses and astral symbols on each side\(^{31}\). Also, a stamp seal dated to the First Millennium BC found at Kinet Höyük (Hatay) depicts birds on both sides of the plant motif\(^{32}\).

3. The Bulla from the Ekrem Akurgal Collection

During the Daskyleion excavation carried out by Ekrem Akurgal in 1954, approximately 300 full and partial pieces of bullae were found at the southern part of the mound, the majorities were in the Achaemenid style and some were in the Greek style. The papyrus and rope marks on the back of the bullae indicate that they were used to seal papyrus rolls and indicate the presence of an archive of papyrus scrolls belonging to the Persian Satraps\(^{33}\). The new bulla from the Ekrem Akurgal collection also contains papyrus marks and color variations due to fire (Fig.3). An archer man with Persian dress was depicted. The height of the bulla is 2.7 cm, the width is 2.1 cm and the thickness is 1.1 cm.

The archer in Persian dress on the Daskyleion bulla is in the Greco-Persian style. The figure of an archer in oriental clothing shooting arrows at wild animals or the figure of an archer standing with an arrow are the most popular themes of the Greco-Persian style\(^{34}\). It is believed that in Achaemenid glyptic art, the battle and hunting scenes show the influence of Greek Art\(^{35}\). It is even presumed that these stamps were carved by Greek seal engravers\(^{36}\). This style is called the Greco-Persian

\(^{28}\) Legrain 1925, p. 48, no. 809, 810, 845, 850.
\(^{29}\) Mitchell and Searight 2008, no. 496d.
\(^{30}\) Erkanal 1985, p. 379-380, Fig. 1.
\(^{31}\) Gülriz Koçbe, “Kavu\~n Höyük Kaz\~is”, 31. Kazi Sonu\~clari Toplant\~isi 4, Ankara 2010, p. 176-177, Fig. 1.
\(^{32}\) Marie-Henriette Gates, “2003 Season at Kinet Höyük (Yeşil-Dört yol, Hatay)”, 26. Kazi Sonu\~clari Toplant\~isi 1, Ankara 2005, p. 24, Fig.13.
\(^{33}\) Ekrem Akurgal, "Kyzikos ve Ergili Ara\~t\~uralar\~lari Ion Y\~ay\~l\~unun Tarih\~i Hakk\~inda", Anadolu/Anatolia 1, Ankara 1956, p. 50; Deniz Kaptan-Bayburtluoğlu, "A Group of Seal Impressions on the Bullae from Ergili/Daskyleion", Epigraphica Anatolica, Bonn 1990, p.16, Tafel 1, no. 1; Kaptan 2002, p.13-14.
\(^{36}\) Richter 1949, p. 292.
style and it was a new seal style used by the Persian satraps in Anatolia. The theme of archers is known from the Late Assyrian Period. It is a theme that came to Persian glyptic art from Mesopotamia and continued as a local style from the beginning of the First Millennium BC. The administrator figure holding a bow was first seen on the Hasanlu vase, and later it became a popular depiction in Medes and the Persian art. On the seal of Darius the Great, the king was depicted in his typical Persian dress and with a king’s crown, standing on a chariot shooting arrows at a lion. This hunting scene was repeated in many Achaemenid seals. Sometimes guardians or hunters in hunting scenes were seen with a bow or spear, however those figures were uncrowned. In the Persian art of Anatolia, the figure of the standing archer is a feature that emerges on the seals and coins during a later phase in the 4th-5th century BC.

During the reign of Darius the Great, (522-486 BC) the king figure in Achaemenid dress shooting an arrow was present on stamp’s seals. In the Period of Artaxerxes I (464-224 BC), the archer-king motif continued to appear on Babylonian stamp seals. The figure of a naked kneeling archer shooting arrows at an animal was depicted on a stamp seal dating back to the 5th century BC of the Achaemenid Period at Tell el-Muqayyar (Ur). An example similar to Daskyleion bulla is preserved in Bologna is engraved in the Greco-Persian style and depicts a standing Persian archer holding a bow in his hand. The figures of an archer are known from the Daskyleion bullae. A bulla uncovered in Daskyleion depicts a Persian figure in a fighting scene. Similarities can be observed in the elaborate and very detailed depiction of his dress, the head, and the facial details of the figure. The details of the depiction of the archer on the Daskyleion bulla indicates that it was from the 4th century BC or in other words the Late Achaemenid Period.

Conclusions

Daskyleion seals and impressions constitute an important archive of a satrapy center located in the Western part of Achaemenid Empire. Both of the seals and impressions of Daskyleion were a rich and diverse collection of pictorial images that represented a wide range of cultural and historical contexts. The archers and hunting scenes were common motifs, reflecting the Persian and Median cultural influences in the region. The archer-king motif, which was first seen in the Late Assyrian Period, continued to appear in the Achaemenid Period, indicating a continuity of cultural traditions.

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39 Kaptan 2002, p. 73.
41 Ibid, p. 159, no.484c.
42 Ibid, p. 173, no.545.
43 John Boardman, “Greek and Persian Glyptic in Anatolia and Beyond”, Revue Archéologique, 1, Paris 1976, p.51-52, Fig.12.
44 Kaptan 2002, p. 120-121.
bullae examined in this study were uncovered in the acropolis of Daskyleion which indicates that the seals and most probably the bulla belonged to the ruling class. At the same time, the use of seals in a variety of styles indicates the presence of a multi-ethnic elite class.

The presence of the Babylonian officials during the Persian Period is widely accepted. A large number of bullae and seals uncovered at Daskyleion indicate the presence of a glyptic workshop. The seals examined in this study were probably produced at a local workshop; however, the owner could have been a Babylonian officer living in Daskyleion. The stamp seals of the Late Babylonian Period depicting themes of worshipping the gods were not only used in Anatolia, Mesopotamia and Syria, but also in a large area extending all the way to Palestine. It is known that after the conquest of Babylonia, various gods, especially the Marduk and Sin, were absorbed by Achaemenid art and religion. The seals with a theme of worshipping the gods were used extensively in the period of Cyrus, Cambyses and Darius I. The stamp seals had to have been used as an amulet as they included the symbols of the gods. Also, the wide borders of the Achaemenid Empire allowed for the production of cosmopolitan seals in the glyptic workshops.

The main theme of the Daskyleion cylinder seal is the depiction of the eagle on both sides of the tree of life. The scene of animals or creatures symmetrically placed on both sides of a tree is one of the most important features of Achaemenid glyptic art. Although there is not a great quantity of cylinder seals depicting scenes with ritual characters, the examples that do depict this theme are found in the Achaemenid royal seals. Therefore, the eagles on the Daskyleion seal probably reflect a religious ritual related to Achaemenid Empire. Some of the seals and bullae uncovered in Daskyleion mention the names of Xerxes and Artaxerxes from the Persian

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52 Porada 1948, p. 105, no. 840-841.
53 Mark B. Garrison and Margaret Cool Root, Persepolis Seal Studies an introduction with provisional concordances of seal numbers and associated documents on Fortification Tablets 1-2087, Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, Leiden 1996, Fig.3; Merrillees 2005, p.37.
royal family\textsuperscript{54}. Those examples show that the royal composition schema was recognized in Daskyleion. The date palm became widespread on the Daskyleion bullae after Darius I’s conquest of Egypt, similar to the Assyrian seals. This motif can be considered a symbol of Persian royalty\textsuperscript{55}. The cylinder seal probably was produced locally, but imitate the style of the royal seals.

The bulla with depiction of a figure in typical Achaemenid attire holding an arrow and depicting a hunting scene were mainly Greek influenced, however, according to the Nippur Archives; they were used during the periods of Darius I, Artaxerxes I and Darius II. The Daskyleion bulla discussed in this study was most likely produced in the aforementioned seal workshop in Western Anatolia. The theme suggests that it belonged to a Persian from the administrative class. As for the find-spots, Ekrem Akurgal and Kemal Balkan stated that bullae came from a single archive in the palace archives. Also, Deniz Kaptan remarked that all of the bullae belonged to a single archive\textsuperscript{56}. The bulla discussed here likely belonged to the same archive.

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\textsuperscript{55} Kaptan 2002, p. 64.

\textsuperscript{56} Garrison 2001, p.70.
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Fig. 1. Stamp seal.

Fig. 2. Cylinder seal.

Fig. 3. Bulla from Ekrem Akurgal Collection.