

Summary

Some Observation About The Seals of The Neolithic and Early Chalcolithic Periods In The Burdur - Antalya Regions

A process that began in the Burdur-Antalya region 22 years ago with the 1957-60 excavations at Hacılar has continued to the present day with the excavations at Kuruçay, Höyücek and Bademağacı (Fig. 1-Map). The stamp-seals, which are the subject of this study, are from the following settlements; in chronological order, Bademağacı EN 3, EN 1 (Early Neolithic Period), Höyücek, The Shrine Phase, The Sanctuaries Phase and Hacılar IIB (Fig. 6-Chronology Table).

The seals of the Neolithic and early Chalcolithic Periods were made of stone and clay. It is apparent that non-valuable stones that were not too dense and suitable for engraving were used in seal production. It is thought that the seal, consisting of a handle and a stamp surface underneath, was initially roughly formed then carefully retouched and engraved. The cutting of the seal's stamp surface in these periods was probably done with fine point or a chisel. The instruments of a seal cutter are thought to have been made of bone antler, flint or obsidian; those made of stone would have been used with a handle of wood or bone.

The production of clay seals was probably comparatively easier. After forming the shape of the seal, the stamp surface would have been engraved with a point, perhaps made of bone, with not too sharp a tip, and then fired in an oven.

It is not possible to obtain detailed accurate information about the use of stamp-seals in the pre-literary periods. Most of the views of researchers are no more than theories, as the available archaeological evidence is not adequate to support such suggestions. There are no examples of stamp impressions on pottery or other items to supplement the stamp-other perishable or edible items. No trace of paint or dye was found on the seals; we suggest that they were not used for stamping flat surfaces with a particular design, as the engraved negative design (intaglio) of our examples, with the exception of Type 2a (pintadera), is not suitable for this kind of usage. Several suggestions could be made on this subject e.g. it is possible that in the periods in question the village or neighborhood bread or pastries were made communally and that each family stamped the ones belonging to them. Another suggestion is that, in the communal storage rooms of the settlements, families may have stamped their own grain produce after placing it in a section of the storage room and covering it with a cover of woven straw or layer of clay; unbaked clay, or clay not hardened by accidental fire, would not have endured. Seals of not too large a size, with a pierced handle, may have been carried as amulets. The seals may have had different functions according to their shape, the style of their handle and the engraving on the stamp surface.