



## ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

# Impressive impressions: Seals and their impressions in museums and what to do with them

DURGUN P. <sup>1</sup>\*

<sup>1</sup> The Morgan Library and Museum New York, New York, United States

\*Corresponding author

## Abstract

Almost every museum with ancient western Asian collections include stamp or cylinder seals. Every collection with seals has impressions of them, whether they were made in antiquity, historically, or by the current curators. These impressions can be made using various materials such as clay, plaster, wax, and even tin foil. Despite this long history of creating impressions in seal studies within the larger discipline of ancient western Asian studies, there is little discussion on the future of such practices, particularly in the age of digitization. In this paper, I present examples of seal impressions and copies in various museum collections and question how they have been handled, organized, and utilized in different contexts and what these impressions tell us about the history of collections. I present the Morgan Library and Museum as a case study, tracing the history of seal impressions from Edith Porada to today. By questioning the value and use of these objects, I suggest creative ways to utilize them for education, outreach, research, and preservation in the future.

## Keywords

seals, copies, impressions, legacy collectionns, museum

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