



## ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

# Counter-sealing in Ancient Western Asia: Wishful Thinking or Essential Administrative Practice?

DIETZ A.<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Institut für Vorderasiatische Archäologie, LMU München, Munich, Germany

\*Corresponding author

## Abstract

Since the first appearance of stamp seals in the 7th millennium BCE, sealing goods and doors were essential practices to the ever more evolving administration of small villages. By the time the cylinder seal was introduced, the administration continued growing and the sealing processes became more important, more diverse, and more official. By the end of the 4th millennium BCE, specific institutions were established in the administrative life of the cities. The storage and (re)distribution of goods were managed thoroughly. During the processes of sealing goods or rooms, rarely over-stamping, imprinting a (stamp) seal over another (cylinder) seal, was recorded. Could this be a sign of counter-signing in the administration of Mesopotamia? When did it appear, where and when was it used? Can this process and its meaning be reconstructed in this highly administrative world? In what instances was counter-signing necessary and by whom?

In this talk I will focus on two questions: (i) What happened to stamp seals in Mesopotamia in the 3rd millennium BCE, after the cylinder seal took the place of the former omnipresent medium? (ii) Was the act of counter-signing present in the administration and what role did stamp seals play in this?

## Keywords

Sealing Practices, Stamp Seals, Cylinder Seals, 3rd Millennium, Counter-sealing

## Session

4. The materiality of inscribed and figurative objects

## Type of paper

Oral presentation