

The Neo-Elamite Cylinder Seal BLMJ 02558

by Alexander Uchitel¹

The Neo-Elamite cylinder seal BLMJ 02558 is currently on display in the Bible Lands Museum at Jerusalem. Its glyptics presents two gazelles standing on their hind legs with beautifully entwined long necks. This impression connects this seal with group of Neo-Elamite cylinder seals with similar glyptics: Kahane 1965, pl. IIIg (p. 38, No. 90), Porada 1971, No. 11, Delaporte 1923, pl. 94 (7), Gordon 1939, pl. XIII-109 (p. 32), Amiet 1973, pl. VII (No. 38), Legrain 1951, pl. 36 (No. 602) (see all of them in Amiet 1973, pl. VII, Nos. 34-39). The seal held in the Israel Museum (Kahane 1965; currently numbered IAA 1965-261) is the most instructive for the dating of this group, since it is a royal seal bearing the name of Hupan-Kitin son of Shutur-Nahunte, king of Elam. Amiet identifies this Shutur-Nahunte with Shutruk-Nahunte II who ruled in c.717-699 BCE, and thus dates this group of seals to the last decades of the Elamite kingdom before its conquest by Assurbanipal in 646 BCE (Amiet 1973). However, de Miroschedji identifies Shutur-Nahunte of the Israel Museum seal with Shutruk-Nahunte III of uncertain dates in the second half of the seventh century BCE (for the distinction between Shutruk-Nahunte II and Shutruk-Nahunte III see Lambert 1967). Consequently, he dates this group approximately between 625 and the conquest of Elam by Cyrus II in 539 BCE (de Miroschedji 1982).

The legend of the seal BLMJ 02558 is written in five lines in the Neo-Elamite cuneiform script. It reads:

¹ I wish to thank Yigal Bloch of the Bible Lands Museum for providing me photographs of a seal and its impression and for his general assistance in writing this article.

^m*un-pa-*

ḥa-ak-

ra-tu

DUMU^m[. . .]

la-me-[na]

A normalized Elamite transcription and English translation are:

Un-pahak-ratu šak [. . .]-*lame-[na]*

"Un-pahak-ratu son of [. . .]-lame"

Commentary:

un is the first person singular accusative of the personal pronoun.

pahak is the passive participle of the verb *paha-* "to protect".

ratu is the imperative of the verb *rat-* "to be near".

DUMU is the Sumerian logogram for "son," whose Elamite reading is *šak*.

-me in [. . .]-*lame* is the inanimate delocutive element usually forming abstract nouns.

[-na] is the Neo-Elamite genitive.

The personal name Un-pahak-ratu means "Let me be protected nearby". This name is otherwise unattested, but similar Elamite names are known: *Te-et-un-ba-ḥa-aš* "Lord protects me" (Zadok 1984, pp. 33, 44, 46) and *Ba-ḥa-ra-du* "Let protection

be near" (Scheil, 1908, No. 122:4; p. 72, for this reading see Hinz and Koch 1987, 1, p. 120).

Photographs:

Cylinder seal BLMJ 02558



Seal impression of BLMJ 02558



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