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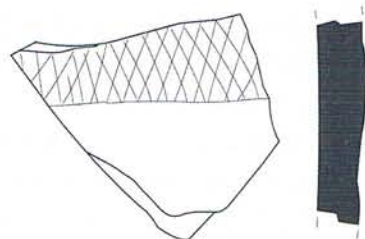
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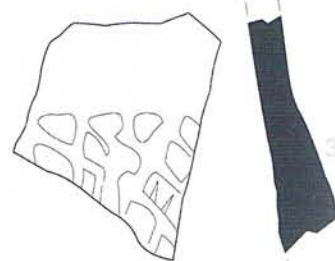
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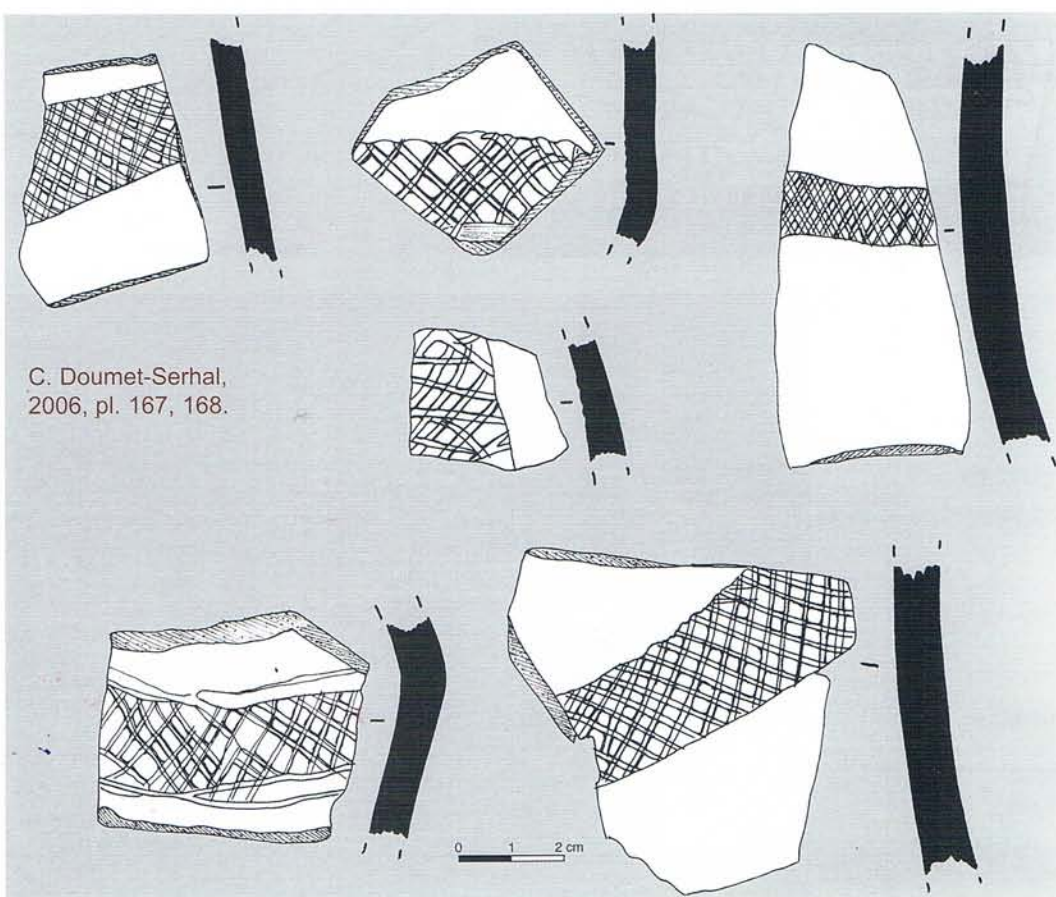
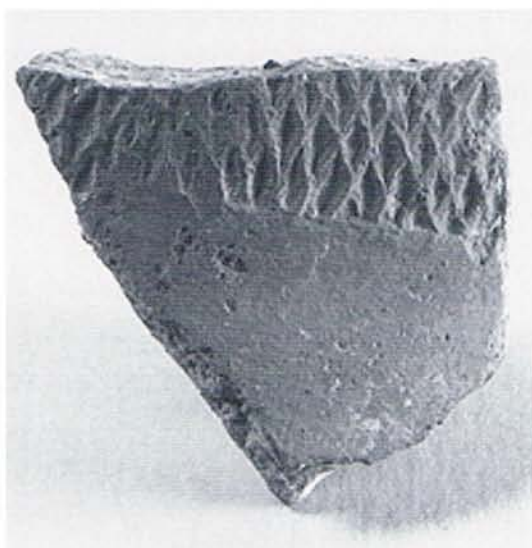


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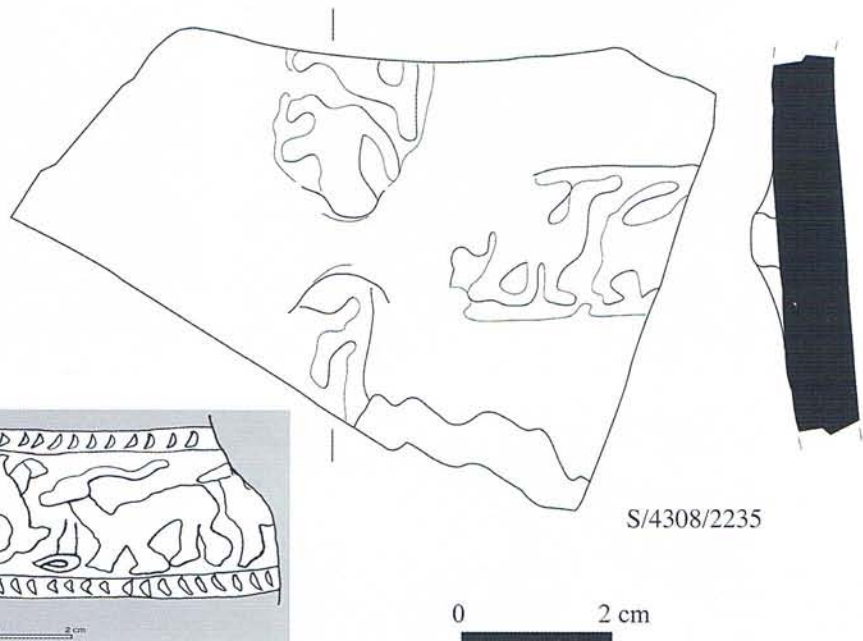
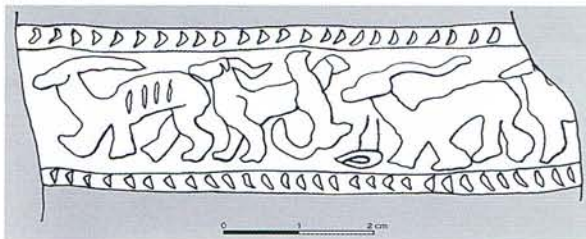
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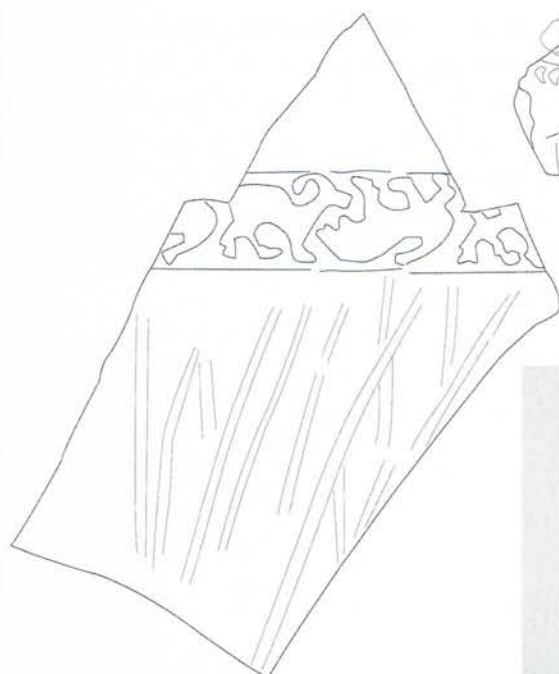


Animal classification

The lion which is the most common animal found in Sidon with a tail bent almost parallel over its hindquarters (S/4308, 4377, 4054, 4052, 4053, 4379) and hatched bands on its body (S/4377/2249) is not depicted independently in this group but with caprids. Stylistic differences can be distinguished in the method of execution of the lions even though unlike the horned animals, they are not sketchily drawn. On two impressions (S/4054 and S/4377) the horned animals are portrayed schematically. On seal S/4377 the caprid is depicted with one short horn, a tail and only two legs. This degree of schematization increases on seal S/4308 with what seems to be the protomes of two horned animals put together. The long undulating horn of a *tête bêche* animal joins the protome of another non-horned one. The general effect of the design when reversed is of another head instead of a front leg⁶. The appearance of the lion and the horned animal side by side now found on 4 impressions is commonly found in Byblos and in Palestine in the 3rd millennium.

C. Doumet-Serhal, 2006,
pl. 171, 19.



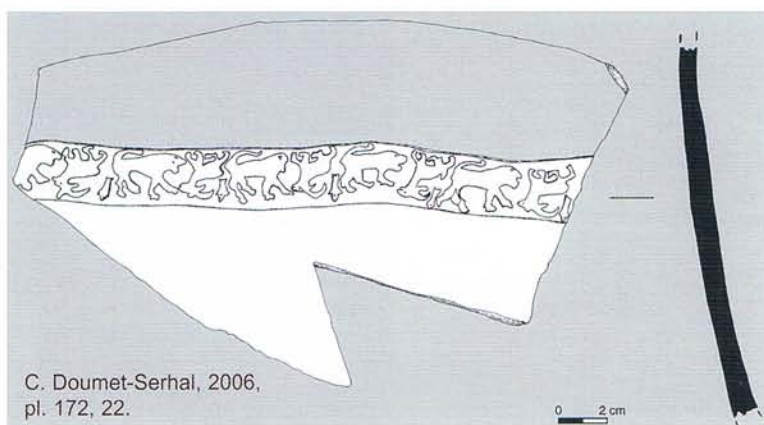
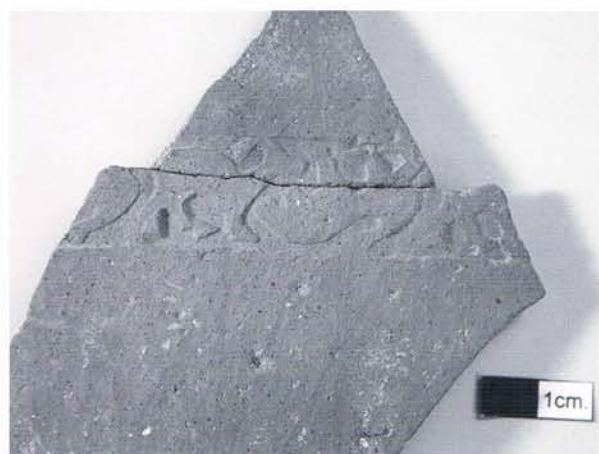
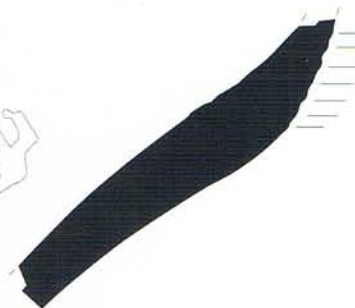


S/4054/2235



S/4377/2249

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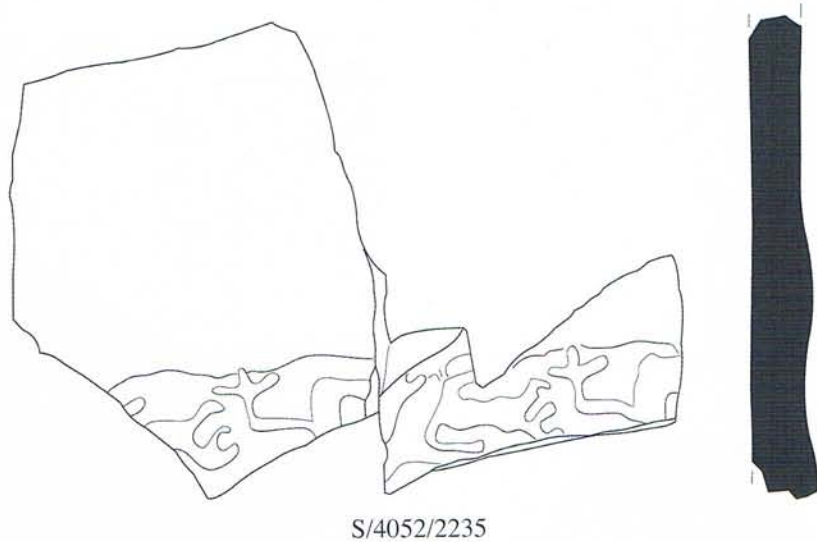
C. Doumet-Serhal, 2006,
pl. 172, 22.

0 2 cm

Human figures

Fertility

To date, the combination of a lion and human with an oval head, his arm raised, an erect penis probably symbolizing potency, holding a ⁶ three-stemmed plant ⁷, has now been found on a total of 4 impressions from College site. On seal S/4379, only the lion and the dividing pattern remain. It is however reasonable to assume that this seal belongs to this group as it is in the same style as seals S/4052 and S/4053. So far this group is the most common among the non-geometric seal impressions and constitutes a design ⁸ which seems specific to Sidon shedding a new light on a special group of Sidonian artisans.

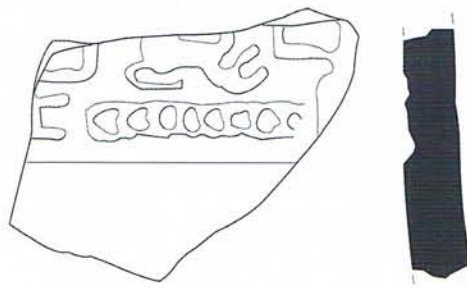


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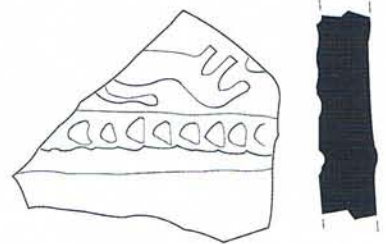


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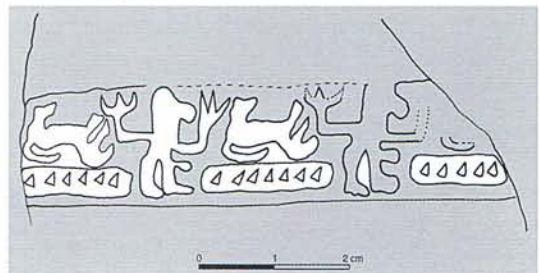
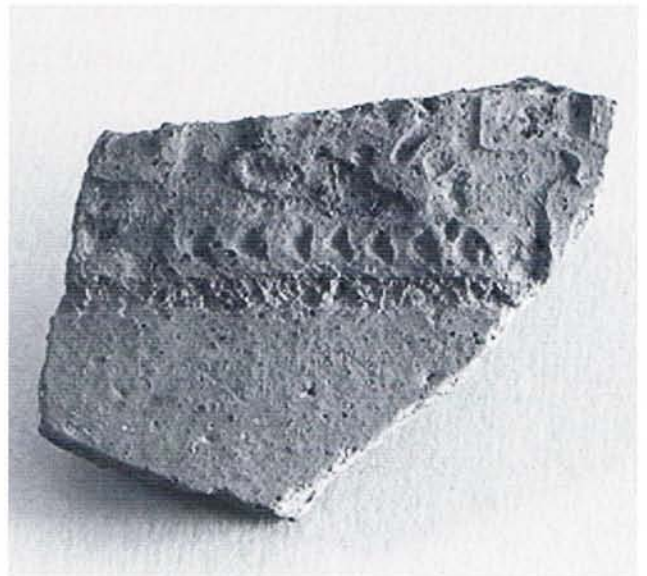
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S/4053/2235



S/4379/2229



C. Doumet-Serhal, 2006,
pl. 172, 268.

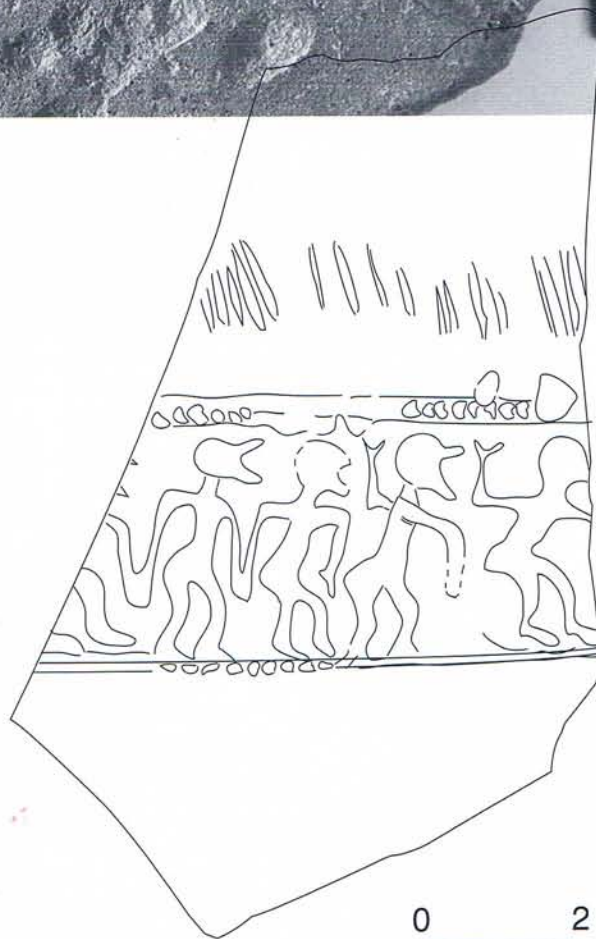
Ritual dance

The most important seal impression from the 2008 excavation is seal impression S/4378-4356 depicting a row of men with long straight noses and sharply jutting pointed beards⁹. The two men in the front row have one raised arm with outstretched fingers, the two at the back hold hands with their arms extended downwards. The first two in the front row are comparable to the Syrian ritual procession involving a structure with devotees standing on its roof, all of them lifting one or both hands in the traditional Syrian manner¹⁰. The two others at the back and shown in frontal view, heads and legs in profile turned to the right holding hands¹¹, are closer in style to Palestinian¹² seal impressions. P. Amiet¹³ connects this type of seal to the Hurrian element already in existence in Syria in the second half of the 3rd Millennium BC. A row of men in procession showing an affinity with the Syro-anatolian iconography of the Larsa period¹⁴ was widespread over a large geographical area which included Cappadocia and Palestine. In Alalakh rows of marching or dancing men dated to the 19th or 18th century may have originated in northern Syria¹⁵. The dynamic of execution of the Sidon seal and the arms pointing downward are similar to an impression from Ur depicting a cult scene with dancing human figures¹⁶.

Location

While the net pattern has been a common motif in Sidon since EB IIA¹⁷ the more elaborate motifs of rows of animals and scenes with human figures have been found in EB IIIB Sidon. The ten new seal impressions belong to EB IIIB and were found either in a street outside a large building (see p. 12 in this issue) of which 8 rooms have been excavated to date or inside this building: S/4379 was found under room 4 in storeroom n° 18 and S/4378-4356 was found in room 6.

The close connection between the Sidon impressions and those of Byblos has already been underlined above specifically with regard to the row of horned animal and lion theme¹⁸. The most distinctive characteristic of the Sidon seals is the appearance of cultic scenes involving human beings exclusively in stratum 6 (EB IIIB)¹⁹: the group of "human and lion" is a popular local Sidonian motif while the row of men shows affinities with Syria and Palestine.



0 2 cm

S/4378/2210 + S/4356/2208

NOTES

- 1 C. Doumet-Serhal, 2006, p. 259, for two similar examples from College site.
- 2 A. Ben-Tor, 1978, p. 40-47.
- 3 C. Doumet-Serhal, 2006, pl. 171, 19, p. 267.
- 4 C. Doumet-Serhal, 2006, pl. 172, 21, p. 261.
- 5 C. Doumet-Serhal, 2006, p. 260.
- 6 The design resembles the motifs on gables, R. Braidwood and L. Braidwood, 1960, p. 254, fig. 191, 7.
- 7 C. Doumet-Serhal, 2006, p. 261.
- 8 M. Flender, 2000, p. 305, on the near exclusive association of cylinder seals in connection with the production of one main category of vessel.
- 9 For the depiction of the face see A. D. Tushingham, 1971, p. 23 on a seal from Irbid and note 6, p. 25.
- 10 D. M. Matthews, 1997, p. 113-114, and pl. XXXVIII, 517.
- 11 A. Ben-Tor, 1978, fig. 18, 1.2.
- 12 In Palestine all human beings are shown in front view. A. Ben-Tor, 1978, p. 58, which is not the case in Sidon. The Hama impression (EB IV) depicting a group of people holding hands shown in frontal view provides the closest parallel to Palestinian depiction, A. Ben Tor, 1978, p. 79.
- 13 P. Amiet, 1963, p. 81-82; A. Ben-Tor, 1978, p. 81-82.
- 14 S. Mazzoni, 1975, p. 21-25.
- 15 D. Collon, 1982, for Alalakh p. 10.
- 16 A. Ben-Tor, 1978, p. 81, fig. 22.8; D. Collon, 1987, no 677, 678, p. 151-153.
- 17 C. Doumet-Serhal, 2006, p. 262.
- 18 C. Doumet-Serhal, 2006, p. 260, 261, 262.
- 19 R. Greenberg, 1996, p. 149.

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- C. Doumet-Serhal with contributions from D. Griffiths, E. Vila & C. Yazbeck, 2006, *The Early Bronze Age in Sidon, "College site" Excavations (1998-2000-2001)*, Bibliothèque Archéologique et Historique, T. 178, Beyrouth.
- M. Flender, 2000, "Cylinder Seal Impressed Vessels of the Early Bronze Age III in Northern Palestine", in G. Philip & D. Baird, *Ceramics and Change in the Early Bronze Age of the Southern Levant*, Levantine Archaeology 2, Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield, p. 295-313.

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