



Near Eastern Seals (Interpreting the Past)

Dominique Collon

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A rich source of pictorial information about the Ancient Near East comes to us in the form of miniature reliefs, created from the impressions made in clay by tiny engraved stone seals. Originally used for sealing goods and writing tablets, these seals now provide important evidence for administrative practices, technical development, and long-distance trade. The designs themselves record religious beliefs, mythical characters, architectural styles, musical instruments, festivals, sport, warfare, transportation, and fashions in dress.

In this first comprehensive introduction to pre-Islamic Near Eastern seals, Dominique Collon discusses cylinder seals—a form unique to the Ancient Near East—as well as stamp seals, the earliest dating from the fifth millennium B.C. As a reflection of how their owners saw the world around them, Near Eastern seals are an essential tool for archaeologists in interpreting the past.

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