Appendix E: Potters’ marks and signs

Signs that were impressed before firing.
Seventeen signs were impressed in the wet or leather-hard clay, before firing. They can be classified in five groups. Most impressed signs are simple crescent shapes (ten signs).

Cuneiform signs (cf. Appendix F)
Fig. IV.43.j H9 51-100: P99-21, three cuneiform signs are visible, of which the middle can be identified as “si”. See Appendix F for more information. Just below the rim of a tiny fragment of a small carinated bowl type 111. Rim diameter unknown. Level 5.
Fig. IV.67.e H8 30-232:6, one cuneiform sign in very large script, fragmentarily preserved but no other signs preceding or following. See Appendix F for more information. The sign was placed on the shoulder of a large storage pot (type 213). Rim diameter 320 mm, round base, fragmentary. The capacity was calculated at 132.20 litres from the drawing, but the shape and height are reconstructed. The capacity calculated here is therefore very imprecise. The inside of the pot was completely covered in a layer of bitumen, perhaps to make it watertight, or left over from bitumen contents of the pot. Level 5.
Fig. IV.98.j I9 48-110:2, one cuneiform sign in very large script, fragmentary. Possibly part of a sign similar to the one on no. 2. On a thick (15 mm) body sherd of a large vessel. Level 5.
Fig. F.7 H12 8-42: P99-339, rim fragment of a large vessel, impressed cuneiform sign. See Appendix F for more information.

Impressed crescent 1 (fig. E.1)
This sign is clearly impressed with a straight-ended, curved tool (possibly a piece of bone?). A similar tool was sometimes used to make curved impressions as a decoration.
Fig. IV.75.i H11 25-40:1, on the shoulder of a middle-sized type 312 jar. Rim diameter 120 mm, fragmentary. Level 5.
Fig. IV.80.f M9 18-248:1, on the shoulder of a large type 321 jar. Rim diameter 170 mm, fragmentary. Level 5.
Fig. IV.85.g H8 40-267:5, on the rim of a large type 322 jar. Rim diameter 130 mm, fragmentary. Level 5.
Fig. IV.87.b H8 41-280:3, on the shoulder of a large type 322 jar. Rim diameter 120 mm, fragmentary. Level 5.
- K8 102-239:10, on a body sherd of the shoulder of a small jar. Level 5.
Fig. IV.109.e L11 28-60:8, on the rim of a large type 321 jar. Rim diameter 140 mm, fragmentary. Level 4.

Impressed crescent 2 (fig. E.2)
This sign is identical to the signs in the group “impressed crescent 1”, but then applied upside down. An identical impression was found in Middle Assyrian Tell Bderi, on a jar of the same type as our 322 jars (Pfälzner 1995: Taf. 151a). A jar from Tell Barri (also of the same type) shows two crescent impressions on the rim, of which one is impressed sidewards (Anastasio 1993: fig. 14 no. 3). The sign on K12 8-19:21 is fragmentarily preserved and seems to be S-shaped rather than crescent-shaped.
Fig. IV.80.j H8 44-294:9, on the rim of a large type 321 jar. Rim diameter 145 mm, fragmentary. Level 5.
Fig. IV.83.k H11 25-85: P96-527, on the shoulder of a large type 322 jar. Rim diameter 135 mm, height 670 mm, complete, capacity 25 litres. Level 5.
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Fig. IV.85.h H8 13-108:4, on the rim of a large type 322 jar. Rim diameter 130 mm, fragmentary. Level 5.

Fig. IV.112.n K12 8-19:21, fragment, on a body sherd of the shoulder of a large jar. Level 4.

Impressed figure (fig. E.3)
A stylized figure or symbol, made with a kind of stamp. Similar signs have been found on sherds from Mitanni / Middle Assyrian Nemrik, Tell Mohammed Arab and Aššur (A. Reiche pers. comm.). Koliński (1993/94: 15) takes the similarities of these signs as an indication for a travelling potter; however, none of the other signs has been illustrated in the publications so it is unclear whether they were made by the same stamp.

Fig. IV.9.i K11 21-54:6, on a body sherd of the shoulder of a large jar. Level 7.

Seal impressions
Seal impressions on ceramics have also been reported at Tell al Rimah (C. Postgate et al. 1997: plate 64 no. 604 (on the body of a pot) and at other sites (cf. Aruz 2005).

- M11 13-113: P96-503, fragmentary seal impression on the base of a fine ware cup, knob base type 712. Fragmentary. From room 1 in the potter’s workshop level 5 East. The seal image is only partly legible from the careless rolling on the vessel wall, but it seems to be of a type known from seal impressions on door sealings at Sabi Abyad. Only the top of the cylinder has been impressed. The image shows a lion with an opened mouth looking back towards another animal. For comparable seal impressions from Sabi Abyad, see Duistermaat (in prep.c).

Fig. E.4 M7 30-227: P01-122, carinated bowl type 111, with several impressions of a geometric, circular stamp seal.

Signs that were incised before firing
These 42 signs are all incised with a rather blunt tool in the leather-hard, or sometimes still soft, clay. The signs have been grouped into 11 different groups.

Five-pointed star (fig. E.5)

Fig. IV.98.h K13 4-39:4, on a body sherd. Level 5.
Fig. IV.98.k H8 14-56:2, on a body sherd of the upper body of a large jar. No level assignment.
- K10 23-46:1, on a body sherd. Level 5.

“St. Andrew’s” cross (fig. E.6)

Fig. IV.87.c H10 21-123:1, three cross incisions at regular distances on top of the rim of a middle-sized type 323 jar. Rim diameter 110 mm, fragmentary. Level 5.
Fig. IV.87.d K12 21-56: P93-448, on the rim of a large 323 type jar. Rim diameter 190 mm, height 605 mm, complete, capacity 36.8 litres. Level 5.
- K9 100-405:3, fragmentary incision on a body sherd of a “pilgrim flask” (type 911). Level 5.

“Greek” cross (fig. E.7)
A comparison for this sign was found at Tell al Rimah, where it is incised under the rim of a large deep pot (C. Postgate et al. 1997: pl. 64 no. 606).
- O10 21-65:2, mark in the shape of a cross on the base (underside of flat base). Base diameter 50 mm. Level 6?

Fig. IV.52.j H10 7-57:7, fragmentary incision just below the rim of a 131 type bowl. Rim diameter 300 mm, fragmentary. Level 5.
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Fig. IV.78.d H8 45: P98-57, on the upper body of a middle-sized type 318 jar. Rim diameter 120 mm, height 395 mm, complete, capacity 12.8 litres. The jar was used to hold a rich cremation burial, and was sealed with cloth and a clay sealing. No level assignment.

Fig. IV.99.al H9 3-9: P93-91, near the base of a 111 type bowl of middle size. Rim diameter 220 mm, height 70 mm, fragmentary, capacity 1.2 litres. Level 4.

“Plough” shape (fig. E.8)
This group combines a number of signs consisting of two or three incised lines forming an irregular triangle.

Fig. IV.78.b K8 102-235: P97-314, on the shoulder of a middle-sized type 318 jar. Rim diameter 90 mm, height 444 mm, fragmentary, capacity 13.9 litres. Level 5.

Fig. IV.85.e H8 22-202:22, on the shoulder of a large type 322 jar. Rim diameter 140 mm, fragmentary. Level 4/5.

Fig. IV.85.f H8 22-202:18, fragmentary sign on the shoulder of a large type 322 jar. Rim diameter 160 mm, fragmentary. Level 4/5.

Crossing lines (fig. E.9)
The signs in this group are all fragmentarily preserved, so it is unclear what their original shape was. They consist of two or more lines crossing each other in a more or less irregular way.

Fig. IV.70.o M9 18-229: P97-320, just under the rim of a deep type 222 pot. Rim diameter 340 mm, height 290 mm, fragmentary, capacity 10.2 litres. Level 5.

Fig. E.9 J10 32-62:2, cross in a square, lightly incised on body of a jar base. Level 5.

Trident (fig. E.10)

Fig. IV.80.k K8 57-127:1, three incisions forming a fork on top of the rim of a large type 322 jar. Rim diameter 140 mm, fragmentary. Level 5.

Fig. IV.82.a M9 34-191:1, on the shoulder of a large type 322 jar. Rim diameter 150 mm, fragmentary. Level 5.

Fig. IV.98.i J12 12-39: P99-48, on a body sherd, probably of a large jar. Level 5.

“Tree” (fig. E.11)
This is a somewhat irregular sign, consisting of a vertical line with several “branches” and a horizontal line crossing it.

Star (fig. E.12)

Fig. IV.32.a O12 57-171: P03-384, incised star made of four crossing lines, on the upper body of a large jar. Level 6.

Crescent (fig. E.13)

Fig. IV.81.d K12 32-61: P93-454, on the shoulder of a large type 322 jar. Rim diameter 150 mm, height 615 mm, complete, capacity 23.4 litres. Level 5.

Fig. IV.89.a L11 55-124:24, on the shoulder of a large type 323 jar. Rim diameter 130 mm, fragmentary. Level 5. This sign is combined with a painted cross on the opposite side of the same jar (see below).

Fig. IV.92.k H8 13-133: P97-282, four crescent-shaped incisions on the rim of a completely preserved fenestrated pot stand with closed base. Rim diameter 280 mm, height 180 mm. Level 5.
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**Vertical line**
This group contains single, vertical lines. All are fragmentary, and may belong to designs of other types.
- L8 40-115:14, on a body sherd, probably of a large jar. Level 5.
- L9 45-92:12, on a body sherd. Level 4.
- L8 1-3:3, on a body sherd. No level assigned.

**Notches at rim or base (fig. E.14)**
This group includes ten sherds with notches incised at the top of the rim or in the ring or carination of the base. As a comparison, a goblet from Sheikh Hamad shows similar incisions on the rim (Pfälzner 1995: Taf. 135h).

- Fig. IV.2.a K10 61-129: P93-127, on the edge of a flat base of a small type 122 bowl, 1 incision. Rim diameter 100 mm, height 32 mm, fragmentary, capacity 0.1 litre. Level 7.
- Fig. IV.2.c K10 61-121: P93-110, on the edge of a flat base of a small type 122 bowl, 1 incision. Rim diameter 120 mm, height 30 mm, fragmentary, capacity 0.2 litre. Level 7.
- Fig. IV.10.g L11 68-150:4, on the edge of a flat base of a small bowl, 1 incision. Base diameter 43 mm, fragmentary. Tower room 6, level 7.
- Fig. IV.30.b M12 4-15:30, on top of the rim of a large type 322 jar, 3 incisions. Rim diameter 150 mm, fragmentary. Level 6.
- Fig. IV.75.d K9 63-133:7, on top of the rim of a small type 311 jar, 5 incisions. Rim diameter 120 mm, fragmentary. Level 5.
- Fig. IV.96.c K8 48-103:18, on the ring of a ring base, 3 incisions. Base diameter 90 mm, fragmentary. Level 5.
- K10 25-60:30, on top of the rim of a large type 322 jar, 3 incisions. Rim diameter 180 mm, fragmentary. Tower room 2, level 5.
- K12 8-19:24, on the edge of a flat base, 1 incision. Base diameter 100 mm, fragmentary. Level 4.
- K10 5-12:92, on top of the rim of a large type 322 jar, 3 incisions. In addition, under the rim a horizontal line of 6 cm with a triangle are incised. Rim diameter 160 mm, fragmentary. Tower room 1, level 3.

**Incisions of unknown shape**
This group contains sherds that are described as having an incised potters’ mark, but for which no drawings are available.
- N11 40-113:3, incisions on the rim of a straight-sided type 131 bowl. Rim diameter 300 mm, fragmentary. Level 6?
- N11 31-132:2, incisions on the rim of a large type 322 jar. Rim diameter 130 mm, fragmentary. Level 6?
- N11 42-128:3, incised mark on the outside of the fragment, rim fragment of a large type 322 jar. Rim diameter 135 mm. Level 6?
- L12 50-146: P93-249, several sharp incisions at the lower rim of a pot stand. Rim diameter 190 mm, height 135 mm, lower rim diameter 220 mm, fragmentary. Level 5.
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Painted signs, applied after firing

Triangle with point up (fig. E.15)

Fig. IV.84.d  K13 4-41:16, on the body of a large type 322 jar. The shoulder of the jar, above a horizontal incised line, is painted completely black. Rim diameter 170 mm, fragmentary. No level assignment.

- I10 1-14:23, fragmentary sign on a body sherd. Level 3.

Triangle with point down (fig. E.16)

- H11 17-29:6, fragmentary sign in V-shape, perhaps a triangle, on a body sherd. Level 5.

Fig. IV.109.s L12 51-147: P93-334, fragmentary sign on the shoulder of a large type 323 jar. Rim diameter 160 mm, height 660 mm, almost complete, capacity 27.4 litres. Level 4.

Fig. IV.112.i I7 10-29:4, fragmentary but almost complete sign on a body sherd of a large jar. Level 4.

Crescent closed on top (fig. E.17)

This sign is a little disturbed by the many paint drippings, both upwards and downwards. This indicates that the vessel had been standing both on the rim and on the base before the paint was dry.

Fig. IV.83.g  K12 28-60:6, on the body of a large type 322 jar. Rim diameter 150 mm, fragmentary. Level 5.

Crescent (fig. E.18)

Fig. IV.83.h  K9 70-279:1, on the shoulder of a large type 322 jar. Rim diameter 160 mm, fragmentary. Level 5.

Fig. IV.87.e  H10 10-47: P96-555, on the shoulder of a large type 323 jar. Rim diameter 140 mm, height 610 mm, complete, capacity 27.5 litres. Level 5.

Fig. IV.87.f  M9 18-145:4, on the shoulder of a large type 323 jar. Rim diameter 140 mm, fragmentary. Level 5.

- M9 18-102:3, fragmentary crescent, on the shoulder of a small type 312 jar. Rim diameter 130 mm, fragmentary. Level 5.

- M9 18-102:4, fragmentary crescent, on a body sherd. Level 5.

- M9 18-257:7, on a body sherd from the shoulder of a large jar. Level 5.

- M9 18-257:8, on a body sherd from the shoulder of a large jar. Level 5.

Fig. IV.108.d H9 18-46: P96-255, on the body of a small type 311 jar. Rim diameter 98 mm, height 215 mm, complete, capacity 1.3 litres, level 4.

Fig. E.18 H10 9-34:1, fragmentary sign perhaps depicting a crescent, below the rim of a large type 226 pot. Rim diameter >400 mm, fragmentary. Level 4.

Circle (fig. E.19)

Fig. IV.32.h  L13 8-54:1, fragmentary but almost complete sign, on a body sherd from the shoulder of a large jar. Level 6.

Fig. IV.83.i  K12 23-46:20, fragmentary sign, could also be part of a “crossed circle” (see below), on the body of a large type 322 jar. Rim diameter 14.5 cm, fragmentary. Level 5.

Crossed circle (fig. E.20)

This sign is made up of a circle filled with a “Greek” cross. A parallel can be found in a sign from Tell al Rimah, where a similar sign is combined with a #-shaped sign on the same vessel (C. Postgate et al. 1997: pl. 86 no. 997).
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Fig. IV.82.b  K12 28-60:1, on the body of a large type 322 jar. Rim diameter 145 mm, fragmentary. Level 5.

Fig. IV.85.b  K12 32-64:4, on the shoulder of a large jar. Only base and body of jar preserved. Base diameter 68 mm. Level 5.

Fig. IV.97.h  K8 57-124:6, fragmentary but reconstructable sign, on a body sherd from the shoulder of a large jar. Level 5.

Fig. IV.97.i  K8 57-124:7, fragmentary and somewhat carelessly applied sign, on a body sherd from the shoulder of a large jar. Level 5.

Fig. IV.97.j  L8 40-102:22, fragmentary sign, on a body sherd from a large jar. Level 5.

Crossed square (fig. E.21)
This sign is made up of a square filled with a “St. Andrew’s” cross, and is the most popular painted sign.

Fig. IV.32.f  K13 14-64:15, fragmentary sign with thin lines, on a body sherd from the shoulder of a large jar. Level 6.

Fig. IV.88.e  K8 57-122:2, on the body of a large type 323 jar. Jar has horizontal incised lines all around the shoulder. Rim diameter 170 mm, fragmentary. Level 5.

Fig. IV.96.a  M11 13-166: P96-486, fragmentary but reconstructable sign, on the body of a large jar. The base and body of the jar were reused as a pot after shoulder and rim had broken off, the fractures have been smoothed. “Rim” diameter 430 mm, height 410 mm, base diameter 88 mm. Level 5.

Fig. IV.97.a  K13 4-38:1, fragmentary sign with thin lines, on a body sherd. Level 5.

Comb (fig. E.22)
Vertical lines joined at the top by a horizontal line. Since only a fragmentary sign is preserved, it may also be part of a square filled with vertical lines.

Fig. IV.87.g  M9 34-227: P97-200, fragmentary sign, on the shoulder of a large type 323 jar. Rim diameter 180 mm, height 624 mm, almost complete, capacity 38.4 litres. Level 5.

Y-shape (fig. E.23)

Fig. IV.83.j  L8 40-116: P97-181, on the upper body of a large type 322 jar. Rim diameter 129 mm, height 618 mm, complete, capacity 21.7 litres. Level 5.

Fig. IV.84.g  H10 7-33:27, on the shoulder of a large type 322 jar. Rim diameter 120 mm, fragmentary. Level 5.

Fig. IV.97.m  H8 33-239:2, fragmentary sign, on a body sherd of a large jar. Level 5.

Triangle (fig. E.24)

Fig. IV.85.a  K12 32-62:1, on the body of a large type 322 jar. Rim diameter 160 mm, fragmentary. Level 5.
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Rectangle with open base (fig. E.25)
Fig. IV.67.d L12 29-131: P93-426, on the body of a large type 213 storage vessel. Rim diameter 288 mm, height 694 mm, almost complete, capacity 106 l. Level 5. Next to this sign there are two crescents, but they seem to be drippings of paint rather than real signs.

Crossing lines (fig. E.26)
This sign is irregular and consists of straight and curved lines crossing each other.
Fig. IV.86.b L11 55-125:1, on the body of a large type 323 jar. Rim diameter 140 mm, fragmentary. Level 5.
Fig. IV.97.g M9 34-180:2, on a body sherd, probably of a large jar. Level 5.

Cross (fig. E.27)
Fig. IV.89.a L11 55-124:24, on the shoulder of a large type 323 jar. Combined with an impressed crescent. Rim diameter 130 mm, fragmentary. Level 5.
The other thirteen signs in this group are all very fragmentary and could be parts of crosses or of other designs that contain crossing lines.
Fig. IV.97.b K8 59-131:6, fragmentary, on a body sherd from the lower body of a vessel. Level 5.
Fig. IV.97.c L11 71-153:169, fragment, vertical line with horizontal line attached, on a body sherd from a large jar. Level 5.
Fig. IV.97.f L11 71-153:168, fragmentary, on a body sherd from the shoulder of a large jar. Level 5.
Fig. IV.97.k H8 33-239:14, fragmentary, on a body sherd from a large jar. Level 5.
Fig. IV.97.l M11 13-113:12, fragmentary, on a body sherd. Level 5.
Fig. IV.97.o H8 33-239:15, fragmentary, on a body sherd from a large jar. Level 5.
- H10 22-127:1, fragmentary, on a body sherd. Level 5.
- H8 28-212:14, fragmentary, on a body sherd. Level 5.
- L11 71-153:170, fragment, vertical with horizontal line attached, on a body sherd. Level 5.
Fig. IV.112.j L8 33-74:1, fragmentary, on a body sherd from the shoulder of a large jar. Level 4.
Fig. IV.112.p K12 10-26:4, fragmentary, on body sherd from the shoulder of a jar. Level 4.
- J10 43-99:6, fragmentary, on a body sherd. No level assigned.
- N11 32-107:7, T-shape in black paint on fragment of a large 323 jar. Rim diameter 180 mm, fragment. No level assigned.
- O10 51-106:9, painted shape on a body sherd. No level assigned.

Rectangle (fig. E.28)
This group includes fragmentary signs, showing the corner of a square or rectangle. They do not belong to the “crossed square” group, but may belong to other signs.
Fig. IV.80.m H10 21-121: P96-569, fragmentary, on the shoulder of a middle-sized type 312 jar. Rim diameter 130 mm, height 550 mm, complete, capacity 13.8 litres. Level 5.
Fig. IV.97.n H8 41-276:2, fragmentary, on a body sherd from the shoulder of a large jar. Level 5.
- M9 34-163:2, fragmentary, on a body sherd. Level 5.

Vertical line (fig. E.29)
All signs in this group are fragmentary and may be part of other signs.
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Fig. IV.79.n  M12 8-18:9, fragmentary, on the shoulder of a large type 321 jar. Rim diameter 170 mm, fragmentary. Level 5.

Fig. IV.84.c  I10 20-62:4, fragmentary, on the shoulder of a large type 322 jar. Rim diameter 150 mm, fragmentary. Level 5.

Fig. IV.85.c  M9 34-202:1, on the body of a large type 322 jar. Rim diameter 150 mm, fragmentary. Level 5.
-  H8 28-212:21, fragmentary, on a body sherd. Level 5.
-  H8 28-222:14, fragment of vertical line, on a body sherd. Level 5.
-  H10 9-34:19, fragment of oblique line, on a body sherd. Level 4.
-  K12 13-11:29, fragment, on a body sherd from the shoulder of a large jar. Level 4.

Fig. E.29  M13 2-34:19, on the lower body of a large jar. Only the base and body of the jar preserved. Base diameter 77 mm. No level assigned.
-  O10 16-30:18, stripe of bitumen paint on a body sherd. No level assigned.