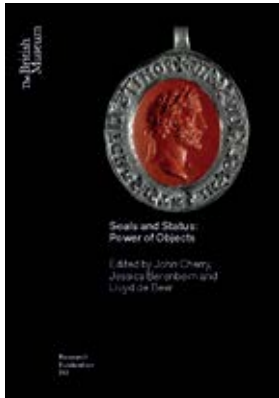


Forthcoming publication

Seals and Status: Power of Objects

Edited by John Cherry, Jessica Berenbeim and Lloyd de Beer



For 7,000 years seals have functioned as signs of authority. This publication deals specifically with aspects of status in the history of seals, exploring this theme across a diverse range of cultural contexts – from the 9th century up to the Early Modern period, and, across the world, looking at Byzantine, European, Islamic and Chinese examples. These objects are united by the significant role they play in social status hierarchies, in the status of institutions, indications of power and finally in notions of relative status among objects themselves. In addition to their chronological and geographical diversity, these studies concentrate on many different phases of seal use. Therefore, together they highlight the importance of studying the full life cycle of seals, from the way in which they were made and used through to their cancellation, loss and sometimes destruction.

The volume looks at seals used by all members of society, from kings to fishmongers, and examines the history of objects, with examples ranging from the medieval matrix with a classical gem showing the Roman emperor Antoninus Pius to the 17th-century Providence Island matrix from America. This publication complements the British Museum's ongoing programme of the digitisation of the Museum's collection of medieval seal matrices that will widen access to this fascinating body of material.

Publication date: February 2018

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