ÄGYPTEN UND ALTES TESTAMENT 107

From Stone Age to Stellenbosch

Studies on the Ancient Near East in Honour of Izak (Sakkie) Cornelius

Edited by Renate M. van Dijk-Coombes,
Liani C. Swanepoel and Gideon R. Kotzé

Zaphon

From Stone Age to Stellenbosch

Studies on the Ancient Near East
in Honour of Izak (Sakkie) Cornelius

Edited by Renate M. van Dijk-Coombes,
Liani C. Swanepoel and Gideon R. Kotzé

ÄGYPTEN UND ALTES TESTAMENT

Studien zu Geschichte, Kultur und Religion Ägyptens und des Alten Testaments

Band 107

Gegründet von Manfred Görg

Herausgegeben von Stefan Jakob Wimmer und Wolfgang Zwickel

From Stone Age to Stellenbosch

Studies on the Ancient Near East
in Honour of Izak (Sakkie) Cornelius

Edited by Renate M. van Dijk-Coombes,
Liani C. Swanepoel and Gideon R. Kotzé

Zaphon
Münster
2021

Illustration on the cover: An ancient Palestinian terracotta horse figurine from the collection of Iziko Museums of South Africa (SACHM1429), which was published by Izak Cornelius in 2007, when it was on display in the "Living Antiquity" exhibition of the Department of Ancient Studies in the Sasol Art Museum of Stellenbosch University. Photograph by Nigel Pamplin.

Ägypten und Altes Testament, Band 107

From Stone Age to Stellenbosch.
Studies on the Ancient Near East in Honour of Izak (Sakkie) Cornelius

Edited by Renate M. van Dijk-Coombes, Liani C. Swanepoel and Gideon R. Kotzé

Printed in Germany.
Printed on acid-free paper.

ISBN 978-3-96327-150-2 (book)

ISBN 978-3-96327-151-9 (e-book)

ISSN 0720-9061

Preface

Prof. Dr. Izak (Sakkie) Cornelius has devoted his ongoing scholarly career to the cultures of the ancient Near East (including North Africa and Western Asia) and he continues to make important contributions to our understanding of their religions and material images. We know Sakkie not only as a scholar, but also as a mentor, a colleague, and a friend who embodies the famous motto of Max Freiherr von Oppenheim: "Kopf hoch! Mut hoch! und Humor hoch!" It is our pleasure to dedicate this volume of studies on the ancient Near East to him as a token of our great appreciation of his scholarship, collegiality, and friendship. Our very best wishes accompany Sakkie, Magna, and their family, and we look forward to many more years of collaboration.

As editors, it is our pleasant duty to thank colleagues who helped to make this Festschrift a reality. We wish to thank the authors for their contributions to the volume. We appreciate the fact that they worked hard, sometimes under very trying circumstances, to complete their articles. We also thank two other colleagues, Prof. Dr. Christo H. J. van der Merwe (Stellenbosch University) and Prof. Dr. Markus Witte (Humboldt Universität zu Berlin), for their support during the production of the volume. We owe a great debt of gratitude to Florian Lippke of the BIBLE+ORIENT Museum in Fribourg who organised the permission for us to use many images from the museum's databank. Merci vielmal, Florian! A special word of thanks goes to Dr. Kai Metzler of Zaphon and the editors of the *Ägypten und Altes Testament* series, Prof. Dr. Stefan Jakob Wimmer and Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Zwickel, for accepting the volume as part of the series.

Renate M. van Dijk-Coombes
Liani C. Swanepoel
Gideon R. Kotzé

Table of Contents

List of Contributors

Angelika Berlejung	Universität Leipzig / Stellenbosch University
Izaak J. de Hulster	University of Helsinki / Georg-August-Universität Göttingen
Christian Frevel	Ruhr-Universität Bochum / University of Pretoria
Alison Acker Gruseke	Yale Divinity School
Salima Ikram	American University in Cairo / Stellenbosch University
Louis C. Jonker	Stellenbosch University
Gideon R. Kotzé	North-West University
Joel M. LeMon	Candler School of Theology, Emory University / Stellenbosch University
Martin Leuenberger	Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen
Samantha Masters	Stellenbosch University
Franziska Naether	Universität Leipzig and Saxon Academy of Sciences and Humanities / Stellenbosch University
Herbert Niehr	Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen / Stellenbosch University
Astrid Nunn	Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg
Takayoshi Oshima	Universität Leipzig
Katharina Pyschny	Humboldt Universität zu Berlin
Silvia Schroer	Universität Bern
Ruhan Slabbert	Stellenbosch University
Liani C. Swanepoel	Stellenbosch University
Renate van Dijk-Coombes	North-West University

List of Abbreviations

ÄAT	Ägypten und Altes Testament
AB	Anchor Yale Bible
ABD	Freedman, D. N. (ed.), 1992: *Anchor Bible Dictionary*. 6 Vols. New York.
ABG	Arbeiten zur Bibel und ihrer Geschichte
ACEBT	Amsterdamse Cahiers voor Exegese van de Bijbel en zijn Tradities
AfO	Archiv für Orientforschung
AHw	Von Soden, W., 1965–1981: *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*. 3 Vols. Wiesbaden.
AI	Acta Iranica
AJA	American Journal of Archaeology
AJBA	Australian Journal of Biblical Archaeology
AJP	American Journal of Philology
ANEP	Pritchard, J. B., 1954: *The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament*. Princeton.
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
ArBib	The Aramaic Bible
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
AThANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
AuOrS	Aula Orientalis Supplement
BA	Biblical Archaeologist
BaF	Baghdader Forschungen
BaghM	Baghdader Mitteilungen
BAH	Bibliothèque archéologique et historique
BAR	Biblical Archaeology Review
BARIS	British Archaeological Reports International Series
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BCOTWP	Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms
BdA	La Bible d'Alexandrie
BHQ	Biblia Hebraica Quinta
BK	Bibel und Kirche
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament
BN	Biblische Notizen
BPOA	Biblioteca Próximo Oriente Antiguo
BSac	Bibliotheca sacra
BTB	Biblical Theology Bulletin
BThZ	Berliner Theologische Zeitschrift
BTS	Beiruter Texte und Studien
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZABR	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für Altorientalische und Biblische Rechtsgeschichte
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CAD	Roth, M. et al. (eds.), 1956–2010: *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*. 21 Vols. Chicago.

CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
CC	Continental Commentary
CDOG	Colloquien der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft
CH	Codex Hammurapi
CHANE	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East
CLeO	Classica et Orientalia
CM	Cuneiform Monographs
ConBOT	Coniectanea biblica: Old Testament Series
DCLS	Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies
DHR	Dynamics in the History of Religions
EB NS	Études Bibliques Nouvelle Série
EBR	Klauck, H-J. et al. (eds.), 2009–: *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*. Berlin/New York.
ErIsr	Eretz-Israel
ETCSL	Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature
EvT	Evangelische Theologie
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FOTL	Forms of the Old Testament Literature
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GKC	Gesenius, W. / Kautzsch, E., 1910: *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*. Transl. A. E. Cowley. 2nd ed. Oxford.
HdO	Handbuch der Orientalistik
HeBAI	Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
HThKAT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament
HUCA	Hebrew Union College Annual
IEJ	Israel Exploration Journal
JANEH	Journal of Ancient Near Eastern History
JANER	Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions
JANES	Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JAS	Journal of Archaeological Science
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JCS	Journal of Cuneiform Studies
JEA	Journal of Egyptian Archaeology
JETS	Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society
JM	Joüon, P. / Muraoka, T., 2011: *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*. 3rd ed. SubBi 27. Rome.
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JNSL	Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages
JSOT	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JTSA	Journal of Theology for Southern Africa
KAI	Donner, H. / Röllig, W., 2002: *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften* I. 5th ed. Wiesbaden.
KAR	Ebeling, E. (ed.) 1919–1923: *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts*. Leipzig.
KTU	Dietrich, M. / Loretz, O. / Sanmartín, J., 2013: *Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani und anderen Orten*. 3rd ed. AOAT 360/1. Münster.
LÄ	Helck, W. / Otto, E. (eds.), 1975–1992: *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*. 7 Vols. Wiesbaden.
LAOS	Leipziger Altorientalistische Studien
LHBOTS	Library of Hebrew Bible / Old Testament Studies

LKA	Ebeling, E., 1953: *Literarische Keilschrifttexte aus Assur*. Berlin.
MDOG	Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft
MNS	Mnemosyne Supplements
MT	Masoretic Text
NEA	Near Eastern Archaeology
NEAEHL	Stern, E. (ed.), 1993–2008: *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*. 5 Vols. Jerusalem.
NEchtB	Neue Echter Bibel
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NRSV	New International Version
NTOA	Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus
OAC	Orientis Antiqui Collectio
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OBO SA	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis Series Archaeologica
OIP	Oriental Institute Publications
OLA	Orientalia lovaniensia analecta
Or	Orientalia
ORA	Orientalische Religionen in der Antike
OrAnt	Oriens Antiquus
OTL	Old Testament Library
OtSt	Oudtestamentische Studiën
QD	Quaestiones Disputatae
RA	Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale
RAr	Revue Archéologique
RB	Revue Biblique
RHPR	Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses
RIME	Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Early Periods
RlA	Ebeling, E. et al. (eds.), 1928–: *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie.* Berlin.
SAA	State Archives of Assyria
SAAB	State Archives of Assyria Bulletin
SAAS	State Archives of Assyria Studies
SANER	Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Records
SANTAG	Santag—Arbeiten und Untersuchungen zur Keilschriftkunde
SAOC	Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization
SBLABS	Society of Biblical Literature Archaeology and Biblical Studies
SBLANEM	Society of Biblical Literature Ancient Near East Monographs
SBLRBS	Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Studies
SBLWAW	Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Ancient World
SEL	Studi Epigrafici e Linguistici sul Vicino Oriente Antico
SHANE	Studies in the History and Culture of the Ancient Near East
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
StPhoen	Studia Phoenicia
StPohlSM	Studia Pohl: Series Maior
SubBi	Subsidia Biblica
SVTG	Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis
TA	Tel Aviv
TDOT	Botterweck, G. J. / Ringgren, H. / Fabry, H-J., (eds.) 1975–2018: *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. 16 Vols. Grand Rapids.
TGW	Tydskrif vir Geesteswetenskappe
ThWAT	Botterweck, G. J. / Ringgren, H. / Fabry, H-J., (eds.) 1973–2015: *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament*. 10 Vols. Stuttgart.
Trans	Transeuphratène

TUAT	Janowski, B. / Schwemer, D. (eds.), 2004–2015: *Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments, Neue Folge*. 8 Vols. Gütersloh.
TZ	Theologische Zeitschrift
UAVA	Untersuchungen zur Assyriologie und vorderasiatischen Archäologie
UE	Ur Excavations
UF	Ugarit-Forschungen
UTB	Uni-Taschenbücher
VT	Vetus Testamentum
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
VWGTh	Veröffentlichungen der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft für Theologie
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WO	Welt des Orients
WOO	Wiener Offene Orientalistik
WVDOG	Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft
WZKM	Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes
ZA	Zeitschrift für Assyriologie
ZAH	Zeitschrift für Althebräistik
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
ZDPV	Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins
ZKT	Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie
ZNW	Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft

FROM STONE AGE TO STELLENBOSCH: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE VOLUME

Renate M. van Dijk-Coombes / Liani C. Swanepoel / Gideon R. Kotzé

The contributions in this volume are dedicated to Izak (Sakkie) Cornelius, professor in the Department of Ancient Studies of Stellenbosch University,[1] and reflect several of his research interests.

Sakkie has devoted his past and present research to many areas and eras of the ancient Near East, as well as to its reception in modern times.[2] From his earliest papers on Mari[3] to his recent article on Tell Halaf,[4] he has modelled several aspects that are characteristic of the modern study of the ancient world. These aspects include a focus on environments, peoples, and cultures (not only on events, names, and dates), the dependence on a diversity of material, visual, and textual resources, interdisciplinary cooperation between specialists in various fields of study, the combination of tried and tested methods of interpretation and innovative technologies, and an interest in preserving ancient artefacts and understanding the influence of motifs from antiquity on the modern world.

Following in the footsteps of his teachers and working together with colleagues at home and abroad, Sakkie's research exemplifies how the modern study of the ancient Near East involves much more than important names and dates. It not only has the doings and dealings of the rulers of the ancient Near East on its agenda, but also the multi-coloured dress of the many cultures.[5] It does focus on political history, to be sure, but never loses sight of the environments, technologies, economies, social organizations, languages, literature, art, religion, and other cultural domains of ancient peoples.[6] Sakkie has certainly not ignored

---

[1] As a long-serving member and former head of this department, Sakkie has played a seminal role in its teaching and research. The research and teaching of the department focus on the ancient Near Eastern and Greco-Roman worlds, as well as their continuing influence on contemporary societies. It endeavours to contribute to an understanding of the complexities and interrelatedness of cultures, especially the similarities and differences between the ancient and modern worlds. Through its research and teaching, the department aims to help students to develop critical thinking skills so that they can participate in a positive way in the diverse and multi-cultural South African context.

[2] Sakkie defines "ancient Near East" in both temporal and geographical terms: "'Ancient Near East' refers to the countries of the Near East including the Levant (Syria, Jordan, Palestine/Israel), Egypt and Kush, Anatolia, Mesopotamia, and Persia. The time period extends from the Stone Age ca. 12,000 BCE to the advent of Islam in the seventh century CE" (Cornelius, 2018b: 152). Of course, the term is not a neutral designation for a particular period in history or a part of the inhabited world; rather, like ancient and modern maps, which "are not depictions of the world in an empirical, spatial sense, but of the worlds (i.e. the societies) that produce them" (Cornelius, 1998a: 223; cf. also Olivier, 1996: 237), the term "ancient Near East" shows the ideological slip of the people who coined it. Although the term reflects a certain Eurocentric and political bias, Sakkie's research, the work of his present and past colleagues in South Africa (such as Charles Fensham, Ferdinand Deist, and Hannes Olivier), his friends and former students, and the contributions of this volume are all a testament to the fact that the modern study of the ancient Near East is truly an international enterprise. It holds the interest of people all over the world.

[3] Cf., e.g., Cornelius, 1985: 23–32; 1988a: 15–21.

[4] Cornelius, 2020. This article includes sections on geography, archaeology, history, architecture, material images, inscriptions, religion, and Tell Halaf and the Hebrew Bible. These topics are representative of major foci in Sakkie's research.

[5] This alludes to the titles of two popular publications by one of Sakkie's doctoral supervisors, Charles Fensham: *Heersers van die Ou Nabye Ooste* and *Die Veelkleurige Kleed: Agtergrondsketse oor die ou Nabye Ooste en die Bybel*. Fensham, 1970; 1971.

[6] Cf. Deist, 2000: 102–103. Deist recognises that distinctions between cultural domains are made from a modern perspective and are theoretical in nature. "In reality", he says, a culture is "constituted by the constant *interaction* of a

histoire événementielle, accounts of important events. For example, one of his earliest publications examines "the first naval battle in history", where pharaoh Ramesses III repulsed an invasion of Egypt by the so-called Sea Peoples.[7] By his own admission, however, he is primarily interested "in the general culture of the ancient Near East with an emphasis on the visual material (i.e. iconography)".[8] He initially studied the *longue durée* of commerce or international trade,[9] which reveals the role of foreign merchants and trading colonies as the carriers of culture, the communicators of customs,[10] and the transmitters of visual religious symbols.[11] But after meeting Othmar Keel and visiting Fribourg several times during the 1980s, Sakkie developed a passion for ancient Near Eastern iconography,[12] and since that time, visual imagery, its meaning, and the material objects themselves, have been major foci of his research. He has contributed studies on artefacts of different times and places in the ancient Near East, from the masks of the pre-pottery Neolithic and Bronze Age Levant[13] to the terracotta figurines of the Persian province of Yehud,[14] and from the royal reliefs in Assyrian palaces[15] to the evidence of Eastern deities in Egypt.[16] His research tackles a wide range of topics such as the motifs of gardens,[17] animals,[18] weapons and warfare,[19] the portrayals of officials,[20] "the other",[21] divine body parts,[22] expressions of emotions,[23] and cultural identity,[24] to mention only a few examples. He has provided valuable surveys of important aspects of ancient Near Eastern religions,[25] and his numerous publications on

variety of human activities that cannot be separated in watertight compartments. The theoretical demarcated 'domains' merely enables an observer to focus more clearly on one *kind* of activity at a time and to investigate its interrelationship with the rest of the cultural system, and is *our* way of constructing the other".

[7] Cornelius, 1987: 141.

[8] Cornelius, 1998a: 217.

[9] Cf., e.g., Cornelius, 1981: 13–31; 1988a: 14–32. These studies on Mari and Ugarit as centres of trade draw primarily or exclusively on data from textual resources.

[10] Cornelius, 1988a: 22–23; 2014a: 155. Cf. also Cornelius, 1981: 26: "Due to trade [in Ugarit] there emerged a prosperous economy which in turn led to cultural contact and subsequently to the exchange of ideas and conceptions".

[11] Visual religious symbols were exchanged between cultures and travelled along international trade routes. The travels of the winged (sun) disk from Egypt to Persia and the emblem of the moon god Sîn from Harran to Egypt are good examples. Cornelius 2014a: 141–165.

[12] Cf. Cornelius, 2007a: 238, n. 2.

[13] Cornelius, 2018a: 115–132.

[14] Cornelius, 2014b: 67–91.

[15] Cornelius, 1989b: 41–60.

[16] Cornelius, 2017a: 214–217.

[17] Cornelius, 1989a: 204–228.

[18] Cornelius, 1989c: 53–85; 2007b: 28–36; 2007c: 605–623.

[19] Cornelius, 1995: 15–36; 1999b: 263–275.

[20] Cornelius, 2009a: 321–333. Sakkie's interpretation of terracotta horse figurines from the Levant can also be mentioned here. He argues that they cannot be directly associated with deities, because they lack clear divine attributes: "Very few are decorated with sundisks (if a sun at all) and are rather elite symbols of a new military class, the cavalry, which becomes important especially in the Persian period" (Cornelius, 2008c: 108–109; cf. also 2007b: 31).

[21] Cornelius, 2010: 322–340.

[22] Cornelius, 2017b: 195–227.

[23] Cornelius, 2017d: 123–148.

[24] Cornelius, 2011: 213–237; 2019: 183–205.

[25] Cf., e.g., Cornelius, 1997a: 21–43; 1999a: 586–602; 2008b: 1–12; 2008c: 96–118; Cornelius / Niehr, 2004: 43–57. Special mention must be made of his overviews of the iconography of Ugaritic deities and the religions of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Regarding the latter, Sakkie has sketched some of the perspectives that have developed on the basis of evidence from archaeological discoveries, especially material images and inscriptions. The religions in question were not monolithic and not unique. They were local manifestations of Northwest Semitic religions and were characterised by diversity. It is possible to distinguish between the religions of different historical periods, regions, and social strata. For example, the religions of Iron Age I (ca. 1200–1000 BCE) were not the same as those of Iron Age II (ca. 1000–600 BCE), the religions of the Northern Kingdom differed from those of the Southern Kingdom, and local-regional and "family" religions cannot simply be equated with official religions, or the national state cults. "Monotheism was part of a complex historical process as panthea shrank in size" (Cornelius, 2008b: 6). When and under what circumstances Yahwism became monotheistic is a debated issue; nevertheless, it is clear that Yahwism "was not from the start monotheistic, nor was it without visual images" (Cornelius, 2008c: 97). Yahwism was iconic and Yahweh "was not a bachelor" (Cornelius 2008b: 6). The well-known references to Asherah in the inscriptions from Kuntillet ʿAjrud and Khirbet el-Qom point to this goddess as the consort of Yahweh. Visual representations of Asherah, however, remain

the iconography of the gods Reshef and Baal,[26] as well as the identification, typology, and function[27] of visual representations of goddesses,[28] especially, but not exclusively, Anat, Asherah, Astarte, and Qedeshet, have, arguably, been his most influential works so far.

Sakkie has stressed on more than one occasion that material images are essential resources for the modern study of ancient Near Eastern cultures and their thought-world. They are just as important as other cultural products, such as literary and documentary texts.[29] The iconographic record can provide information that is complementary to or different from what is known from textual resources.[30] Indeed, there is never a one-to-one correspondence between images and texts.[31] Material images do not illustrate texts and texts do not describe images. Texts should also not be read into images.[32] It is imperative that modern researchers study material images in their own right, but not in isolation from the other available resources; rather, they should examine images and texts in conjunction with each other.[33] "Text and image should be studied independently and properly", Sakkie argues, "First the visual source should be described, analyzed, and interpreted in the appropriate way. The same applies to the textual material. Only then can the two be compared, correlated, and interfaced".[34] In other words, Sakkie suggests that the combined study of texts and images involves three procedures:

(1) Independent exegesis of the text (textual criticism, philology, historical-critical analysis, etc.);
(2) Independent description and analysis of the iconographical sources;
(3) Comparison and correlation of the conclusions on 1. and 2.[35]

Like texts, iconographical resources require interpretation, because, as ancient artefacts, they are far removed from modern audiences in time and culture. Although the material images do not speak for themselves and researchers have to make sense of them,[36] they are communicative media that reflect the conceptual world of

difficult to pin down (Cornelius, 2009b: 93). A few candidates can safely be eliminated. The lady flanked by lions on the lower register of the Taanach stand is not Asherah (Cornelius, 2008c: 103–104; 2009b: 80–82). The seated figure with a lyre on pithos A from Kuntillet ʿAjrud is also not a representation of Asherah (Cornelius, 1993a: 29, n. 33; 2008c: 107; 2009b: 82–83). Regarding the Judean Pillar Figurines, Sakkie argues that they "are not necessarily images of the goddess Asherah or replicas of her cultic statue in the temple, because there are no clear divine attributes. These are rather the worshippers than the worshipped; the devotees and not the deity, votives, or 'prayers in clay'" (Cornelius, 2008c: 108).

[26] Cornelius, 1994a; 1996: 157–166; 1998b: 167–177.

[27] Sakkie suggests that a goddess can be *identified* "by her wings, crown (horned or Egyptian types), gesture (blessing, enthroned, smiting or menacing), holding animals (snakes, doves, hares or horned animals) as a 'mistress of animals', plants and sceptres, standing on animals (lion, horse, bull) or if she is being worshipped". The goddess can then be described "as being of a specific *type*, i.e. 'armed goddess'". The identification and typology should be followed by a description of the goddess's *function*, "i.e. the armed goddess as a protector in war". Sakkie recognises how difficult it is to name the goddesses who are visually represented in various media (Cornelius, 2008a: 5). He therefore adopts an approach that starts with inscribed images which include the name of the goddess who is depicted. These inscribed images are compared with other similar images and this leads to the construction of an iconographic "profile" of the particular goddess (Cornelius, 2008a: 16–17).

[28] Cf., e.g., Cornelius, 1993a: 21–45; 1999c: 241–255; 2008a; 2009b: 77–98; 2009c: 15–40; 2012a: 15–25; 2014c: 87–101.

[29] Cf., e.g., Cornelius, 1999a: 586; 2007c: 605.

[30] Cornelius, 2018b: 156–157.

[31] Cornelius, 2009c: 16–17; 2012a: 21; 2014c: 96; 2016: 784–785; 2018b: 157.

[32] Cornelius, 2014c: 96; 2016: 785.

[33] Cf., e.g., Cornelius, 1988b: 54; 1990: 26; 1995: 24–25; 1998b: 174; 2014b: 83; 2016: 785; 2018b: 157. Sakkie puts this principle into practice, for example, in his comparisons of visual representations of Ištar with descriptions of the goddess in prophetic oracles (Cornelius, 2009c: 15–40), as well as his examinations of artefacts that contain images and texts, such as the stela of Hammurapi and the orthostat of Kulamuwa (Cornelius, 2018c: 219–232; 2019: 190–193).

[34] Cornelius, 2018b: 157.

[35] Cornelius, 2016: 785.

[36] Cornelius, 2017b: 196.

the people by whom and for whom they were created.[37] They had a functional use[38] and present a perspective, a visualisation of ideas associated with the topics that they represent. They are not merely decorations, they do not give portraits of terrestrial or supernatural beings,[39] and they are not eyewitness accounts of events:[40]

> The ancient Near East created conceptual rather than perceptual images. It is not so much a matter of what is seen but of what the viewer is supposed to see or perceive—a notion or symbol that was communicated or was supposed to be communicated. Images are neither always realistic nor historical in the sense of representing reality. It is not a case of what some ruler or historical person really looked like or what really happened that matters, but rather, for example, the "idea" of kingship that is communicated. This is important, as it means that iconography provides information on the world of ideas of the ancient Near East.[41]

Given the importance of material images as resources for the study of the thought-world of the ancient Near East, they are relevant to research on the larger cultural and intellectual environment in which the wordings and subject matter of Hebrew Bible writings are embedded. The interpretation of Hebrew Bible writings in their ancient context is another area of scholarly interest where Sakkie has made a notable contribution. He points out that the ancient Near Eastern environment of the Hebrew Bible "is a world not so much 'behind' or 'before' the text, but *in* the text itself".[42] The collection of literary writings in the Hebrew Bible corpus "breathes this ancient context and its conceptual world"[43] and, therefore, taking the ancient context into account when interpreting the texts "is not an academic luxury, but a critical necessity—not a nice-to-have, but essential".[44] To understand the ancient context and conceptual world reflected by the Hebrew Bible writings, modern readers of these textual artefacts depend on information produced by interpretations of material images, the material culture unearthed and surveyed by archaeologists, documentary and literary writings from the ancient Near East, as well as the study of the physical environment. Sakkie has not only shown how motifs shared by biblical writings and other ancient Near Eastern literature can shed light on details in the Hebrew texts,[45] but also that the geographical context of ancient Israel and Judah influenced the ideas expressed by Hebrew Bible writings.[46] In several publications, he argues that iconography "has

---

[37] It is not only the imagery or constellation of images embodied by the artefacts that are important, but also the objects themselves and the material from which they are made. The medium is part of the message (cf. Cornelius, 2018c: 227) and although the value of line drawings and photographs for the interpretation of material images is beyond question, it is best for researchers to study the original artefacts whenever they can (Cornelius, 1999c: 248; 2004a: 25).

[38] Material images from the ancient Near East "did not merely constitute illustrations or 'art' in the modern sense of the word, but served a specific function and could serve as a medium of communication" (Cornelius, 2018c: 220). The modern adage *ars gratia artis* therefore does not apply to these artefacts (Cornelius, 2013: 49).

[39] Cf., e.g., Cornelius, 2015a: 38–39.

[40] Cf., e.g., Cornelius, 1989b: 55.

[41] Cornelius, 2018b: 152.

[42] Cornelius, 2017b: 195 (italics in original). The Hebrew Bible "formed part of a broader ancient Near Eastern tradition, sharing in a common world of ideas. In order to understand the Hebrew Bible, one also has to study this world of ideas. It is therefore not so much a case of the Bible *and* the ancient Near East, or Israel *and* the ancient Near East, but the ancient Near East *in* the Bible or Israel *in* the ancient Near East, meaning that the Bible formed an intrinsic part of ancient Near Eastern culture and thought" (Cornelius, 1994b: 195; italics in original).

[43] Cornelius, 2017b: 195. Cf. also Cornelius, 1994c: 327.

[44] Cornelius, 2017b: 195.

[45] Cf., e.g., Cornelius, 1984: 53–61. In this article, Sakkie indicates how the theme of a dispute over water and evidence regarding the way of life of "nomadic" tribes in the Mari texts elucidate aspects of the story of Isaac in Genesis 26. He concludes that the Mari texts can open new ways of looking at the portrayal of the patriarchs (and matriarchs) of Israel. At the same time, he emphasises that comparable motifs do not guarantee historical reliability and that a combination of information culled from a critical investigation of textual and archaeological resources is necessary in the study of Israel's ancestors: "These remarks do not propose to see 'parallels' between the Mari texts and the Patriarchal stories. It is more a case of 'analogy' or motif. There is no reason to date the Patriarchs in the Mari period on these analogies or to credit the Patriarchal traditions with historical credibility. Gen. 26, as is the case with all the Patriarchal stories, contains definite literary-critical and tradition-historical problems. These as well as the question of etiological narrative in the story of the wells has to be kept in mind and cannot be accepted on its historical face value. Only by way of symbiosis, combining literal-critical analysis and archaeological-textual comparative study, can a tenable conclusion be stipulated as far as the 'Patriarchal Period' is concerned, a period which is like 'mercury'" (Cornelius, 1984: 57–58).

[46] Cf., e.g., Cornelius, 1994b: 195: "Situated on the crossing of routes of communication, Palestine formed the connection

much to offer the biblical scholar, especially with regard to the world of ideas".[47] In other words, the contribution of ancient Near Eastern material images to the interpretation of Hebrew Bible writings is not simply to supply "background" information or to provide "pictures" of customs and *realia* that are mentioned in the texts; rather, iconography is important for an understanding of the literary imagery, metaphors, symbols, motifs, and concepts that are part and parcel of the subject matter of Hebrew Bible writings.[48] For example, the evidence of common conceptualisations exemplified by material images can help modern readers of the Hebrew Bible to make sense of figures of speech, such as expressions involving body parts,[49] the metaphorical language with which the texts describe divine attributes and actions,[50] the cosmology implied by passages in the corpus,[51] and themes that run through more than one of the writings.[52] Material images bring modern readers close to seeing the writings of the Hebrew Bible through the eyes of the ancient Near East,[53] "thereby bridging the conceptual gap that lies between the world view of biblical times and ours".[54] In view of the potential importance of iconography for the interpretation of Hebrew Bible writings, Sakkie correctly regards the exclusively textual orientation of some biblical scholars as "a serious flaw"[55] and encourages his colleagues in biblical studies "to learn not only to read texts, but also to see and interpret art".[56]

Seeing as the modern study of the ancient Near East is based on different resources and draws on insights from more than one field of research, it requires the collaboration of experts in a number of disciplines. Modern mummy research is a case in point. It is an interdisciplinary endeavour that makes use of advanced experimental and analytical methods, as well as various forms of technology.[57] Specialists in the social sciences and natural sciences[58] are involved in research on mummies.[59] A good example is the study of the ancient Egyptian animal mummies housed in the collections of Iziko Museums of South Africa in Cape Town and Ditsong: National Museum of Cultural History in Pretoria.[60] Sakkie has worked together with colleagues in several areas of expertise to analyse these animal mummies.[61] For the analyses, the animal mummies were scanned using a state of the art computed tomography (CT) scanner at Stellenbosch University. This is an important non-destructive method of study that not only provides valuable data, but also ensures that the integrity of the objects are not violated and that they are preserved for future analyses.[62]

It goes without saying that the preservation of artefacts is all-important for the continued study of antiquity. In addition to the surviving artefacts, modern audiences can also appreciate ancient cultures for their legacy and influence on the modern world. The modern world continues to be interested in and

---

between Egypt in the South and Mesopotamia in the East. Through its territory ran some of the most important routes of the ancient world. Because of its geographical location, it was a pawn in the hands of the great powers throughout its history: Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia and Persia. These geo-political factors had an effect on the world of ideas".

[47] Cornelius, 1994b: 195.

[48] Cornelius, 1988b: 54.

[49] Cf. Van der Merwe / Cornelius, 2019: 279–304.

[50] Cf. Sakkie's work on representations of "the God of Job" and his commentary on the book (Cornelius, 1990: 25–43; 2009d: 247–315; 2009e: 21–33).

[51] Cf. Cornelius, 1994b: 193–218.

[52] Cf. Cornelius, 1988b: 41–83.

[53] According to Keel (1980: 8; 1992: 358–359), iconography compels us to see with the eyes of the ancient Near East.

[54] Cornelius, 1994c: 329.

[55] Cornelius, 1988b: 54.

[56] Cornelius, 1988b: 54.

[57] Slabbert / Swanepoel / Cornelius, 2015: 5, 6. Sakkie has always been in tune with the importance of advances in technology and the digital world for ancient studies. Cf., e.g., Cornelius / Venter, 2000: 153–169.

[58] They include anthropologists, anatomists, chemists, physicists, biologists, and geneticists (Slabbert / Swanepoel / Cornelius, 2015: 5).

[59] Mummies are unique sources of information about the lives of people in ancient cultures. For example, the technical and religious aspects of mummification are important for the study of funerary practices (Slabbert / Swanepoel / Cornelius, 2015: 4).

[60] South African museums also have other artefacts from ancient Egypt in their collections and Sakkie has described some of them. Cf., e.g., Cornelius, 2005: 125–136.

[61] Cf. Cornelius et al., 2012: 129–148; Du Plessis et al., 2015: 368–372; Ikram et al., 2015: 72–77; Cornelius et al., 2017: 131–136.

[62] Du Plessis et al., 2015: 370; Ikram et al., 2015: 73; Cornelius et al., 2017: 131.

fascinated by ancient cultures, as evidenced by motifs in music, art, architecture, literature, films, pop culture, and politics. The ancient world, says Sakkie, is "all around us every day".[63] He discusses numerous examples, especially from ancient Egypt—the culture that is closest to his heart[64]—in his inaugural lecture as professor of ancient studies at Stellenbosch University. In other publications, he examines Egyptianising motifs in South African architecture,[65] the reception history of the Eden narrative in visual arts,[66] as well as the interpretation of biblical texts exhibited by Bible illustrations[67] and the works of artists from Southern Africa.[68] These kinds of studies on the reception of motifs, ideas, and cultural products from antiquity will undoubtedly remain an important part of the modern study of the ancient world. Indeed, the study of ancient cultures and civilizations has lost none of its relevance for the twenty-first century[69] and Sakkie, who labours in the conviction that "the future is … in ruins",[70] has set an example of how this can be done that is worthy of emulation.

The contributions in this volume reflect aspects of the modern study of the ancient Near East that are also characteristic of Sakkie's research (a focus on the cultures of the ancient Near East, multiple resources for the study of these cultures [iconography, inscriptions, literary texts, and artefacts], analyses that draw on insights from more than one discipline, and the reception of the ancient world). More specifically, the contributions touch on themes such as the identification of goddesses, typologies of visual representations of divine and mortal women, combined analyses of literary texts and visual images, motifs in material images, inscriptions as resources of knowledge about deities and royal ideology, the use of technologies to analyse ancient artefacts, and the accessibility of artefacts in museum collections.

Silvia Schroer takes a religious-historical look at recent finds of female figurines from the Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods in the Southern Levant. She points out important developments of symbolic constellations reflected by the artefacts and considers whether or not these representations of women should be identified as goddesses.

Salima Ikram examines the image of a striding carnivore carved on the northwest side of a sandstone inselberg in Egypt's Western Desert (Kharga Oasis). She identifies the feline in the pictoglyph as a lioness and suggests that it might be an image of the goddess Mehit.

Renate M. van Dijk-Coombes compares the descriptions of the goddess Inana in three literary texts attributed to Enheduanna to visual images of the Akkadian and Old Babylonian periods. This comparison makes a contribution to the debates over the dating of the Enheduanna poetry and their authorship.

Takayoshi M. Oshima and Alison Acker Gruseke study images of goddesses in a nimbus (a circular ring sometimes surrounded by representations of light). They analyse the posture, clothing, and weaponry of the goddesses, as well as divine symbols and other divine beings that appear together with the goddesses in a nimbus. Based on their analyses, they suggest that the nimbus represents the planet Venus and its bright light, while the goddesses in question include local manifestations of Ištar and Nanāya.

In his contribution, Christian Frevel considers the evidence of the Egyptian deity Sekhmet in the archaeological record of the Southern Levant (for example, faience amulets, stamp seals, seal amulets, figurines, and plaques). In view of the evidence, he argues that the female figure depicted on a terracotta plaque from Tel Ḥarasim might very well be a local variant of the goddess.

Angelika Berlejung publishes here for the first time a new female terracotta plaque that was found during archaeological excavations at Qubur al-Walaydah. She describes in detail the features of the female figure on the plaque and concludes that the identity of this figure as a goddess, an intermediate being, or a priestess/worshipper cannot be determined with certainty.

On the basis of gestures and other criteria, Astrid Nunn provides a very helpful typology of representations of women in artefacts from the Southern Levant that date to archaeological periods ranging from the Middle Bronze age to the Achaemenid era.

---

[63] Cornelius, 2000: 7.
[64] Cornelius, 2000: 3.
[65] Cornelius, 2001: 75–91; 2003: 247–255.
[66] Cornelius, 1997b: 221–234.
[67] Cornelius, 1993b: 59–77.
[68] Cornelius, 2004b: 254–260.
[69] Cornelius, 2000: 7.
[70] Cornelius, 2000: 7.

In the next contribution, Katharina Pyschny examines a subset of these representations, namely the woman-and-child figurines from the Persian period. Based on the typology of the figurines, Pyschny argues that the function of their iconography is not to indicate maternity or fertility, but rather aspects such as feeding, nursing, and caring. The figurines portray the woman's role as protector and caretaker and the child's dependence on her. From the perspectives of typology and iconography, it is possible (but not certain) that the figurines represent goddesses.

Louis C. Jonker shifts the focus away from the artefacts of the Southern Levant to the thought-world of the Achaemenid period reflected by the symbol of the winged disk and apadana architecture. He points out that recent research on these images and audience halls emphasise their polyvalence. They are prominent expressions of royal ideology, but also have religious undertones. Jonker argues that the iconography and architecture should be studied analogically in order to gain a deeper understanding of the complex ideological context of Achaemenid times.

Herbert Niehr also tackles the theme of royal ideology and focuses on the statue of Haddayisʿi, the ruler of Bīt Baḫiāni, from Tell Fekheriye (ancient Sikāni). The statue, with its bilingual Akkadian-Aramaic inscription, has been underutilised as a resource in recent studies on West Semitic royal ideology and Niehr's investigation makes strides in addressing this desideratum.

Martin Leuenberger re-evaluates the pithoi inscriptions from Kuntillet ʿAjrud as invaluable resources for a religious-historical reconstruction of Asherah during the period of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Focusing on the relationship between Yahweh and Asherah, he argues that Asherah in the Kuntillet ʿAjrud inscriptions is the proper name of a goddess and that she plays an auxiliary role in the joint blessing with Yahweh.

The next three contributions deal with the thought-world underlying the writings of the Hebrew Bible and visual images from the ancient Near East. In the first of these contributions, Izaak J. de Hulster examines the concept of "the end(s) of the earth" in biblical texts and revises the reconstruction of the ancient view of the world developed by Sakkie and Ferdinand Deist. He adds islands to the reconstruction and thereby extends its horizontal dimension.

Gideon R. Kotzé takes a relook at the nakedness of Noah in Gen 9:21–22 and suggests that the debated details in the passage allude to ideas about lowered status, powerlessness, and shame. Comparable ideas are associated with visual representations of men whose genitals are uncovered in public, such as the prisoner transport scene of the well-known Megiddo ivory plaque. Kotzé concludes that Genesis 9 and the Megiddo ivory plaque present independent and different expressions of widespread ideas that circulated into the period of early Judaism.

Joel M. LeMon analyses Psalm 47 and surveys ancient Near Eastern iconography of applause. In light of the literary context and evidence from material images, he argues that the clapping and shouting of the peoples in Ps 47:2 can be understood either as a way to humiliate them or as a plea for divine deliverance whereby they acknowledge Yahweh's kingship. The clapping and shouting should therefore not be associated with joy as many modern translations of the passage do.

The final two contributions focus on artefacts that are housed in South African museums. Ruhan Slabbert and Liani C. Swanepoel reconsider the classification of two of the animal mummies in the collection of the Iziko Museums of South Africa, SACHM 1718a and SACHM 1718b. These votive mummies have been classified as fakes, that is, they do not contain complete skeletons, but only some animal remains or none at all. Taking their cue from recent discussions on the categorisation of votive mummies, Slabbert and Swanepoel argue that SACHM 1718a and SACHM 1718b can be regarded as true mummies.

In the closing contribution, Samantha Masters and Franziska Naether give a brief overview of the current state of the display of ancient Near Eastern and Greco-Roman artefacts in South African museums, as well as present and future ways of making the objects accessible to the public and to scholars. They also report on their good practice model of teaching and digitising artefacts of ancient cultures.

By covering a wide range of times and places, from the Stone Age to Stellenbosch, so to speak, and by focusing on deities, material images, and the reception of ancient cultures, the contributions in this volume celebrate Sakkie's ongoing work, accomplishments, and impact on the modern study of the ancient Near East.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cornelius, I., 1981: "A Bird's Eye View of Trade in Ancient Ugarit". JNSL 9, 13–31.
— 1984: "Genesis XXVI and Mari: The Dispute over Water and the Socio-economic Way of Life of the Patriarchs". JNSL 12, 53–61.
— 1985: "Ice and Ice-Houses in the Mari Texts". JNSL 13, 23–32.
— 1987: "The Battle of the Nile circa 1190 B.C." Military History Journal 7/4, 141–145.
— 1988a: "The Commercial Relations of Canaan in the Second Millennium B.C.—A Discussion of the Cuneiform Texts from Mari and Ugarit". In M. Sharon (ed.): *Pillars of Smoke and Fire: The Holy Land in History and Thought*. Johannesburg. Pp. 14–32.
— 1988b: "Paradise Motifs in the 'Eschatology' of the Minor Prophets and the Iconography of the Ancient Near East: The Concepts of Fertility, Water, Trees and 'Tierfrieden' and Gen 2–3". JNSL 14, 41–83.
— 1989a: "The Garden in the Iconography of the Ancient Near East". JSem 1/2, 204–228.
— 1989b: "The Image of Assyria: An Iconographic Approach by way of a Study of Selected Material on the Theme of 'Power and Propaganda' in the Neo-Assyrian Palace Reliefs". OTE 2/1, 41–60.
— 1989c: "The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East: A Study of Selected Motifs". JNSL 15, 53–85.
— 1990: "The Sun Epiphany in Job 38:12–15 and the Iconography of the Gods in the Ancient Near East—The Palestinian Connection". JNSL 16, 25–43.
— 1993a: "Anat and Qudshu as the 'Mistress of Animals': Aspects of the Iconography of the Canaanite Goddesses". SEL 10, 21–45.
— 1993b: "Aspects of Contextual Bible Illustrations". JNSL 19, 59–77.
— 1994a: *The Iconography of the Canaanite Gods Reshef and Baʿal: Late Bronze and Iron Age I Periods (c 1500–1000 BCE)*. OBO 140. Fribourg/Göttingen.
— 1994b: "The Visual Representation of the World in the Ancient Near East and the Hebrew Bible". JNSL 20/2, 193–218.
— 1994c: "Communicating the Old Testament World of Ideas by way of Ancient Near Eastern Iconography". OTE 7/4, 327–332.
— 1995: "The Iconography of Divine War in the Pre-Islamic Near East: A Survey". JNSL 21/1, 15–36.
— 1996: "Some additional Representations of the God Baal-Seth on Seal-amulets". JNSL 22/2, 157–166.
— 1997a: "The Many Faces of God: Divine Images and Symbols in Ancient Near Eastern Religions". In K. van der Toorn (ed.): *The Image and the Book: Iconic Cults, Aniconism, and the Rise of Book Religion in Israel and the Ancient Near East*. CBET 21. Leuven. Pp. 21–43.
— 1997b: "Some Pages from the Reception History of Genesis 3: The Visual Arts". JNSL 23/2, 221–234.
— 1998a: "How Maps 'Lie'. Some Remarks on the Ideology of Ancient and 'Scriptural' Maps". JNSL 24/1, 217–230.
— 1998b: "The Iconography of the Canaanite Gods Reshef and Baal: A Rejoinder". JNSL 24/2, 167–177.
— 1999a: "The Iconography of Ugarit". In W. G. E. Watson / N. Wyatt (eds.): *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*. HdO 1/39. Leiden/Boston/Köln. Pp. 586–602.
— 1999b: "The Iconography of Weapons and Warfare in Palestine/Israel c. 1500–1200 BCE". JNSL 25/1, 263–275.
— 1999c: "The Goddess Qedeshet in Syro-Palestinian Iconography". JNSL 25/2, 241–255.
— 2000. *"Back to the Future …" Die Antieke in die Nuwe Millennium*. Inaugural lecture, Stellenbosch University.
— 2003: "Egyptianizing Motifs in South African Architecture". In J-M. Humbert / C. Price (eds.): *Imhotep Today: Egyptianizing Architecture*. London. Pp. 247–255.
— 2004a: "A Preliminary Typology for the Female Plaque Figurines and their Value for the Religion of Ancient Palestine and Jordan". JNSL 30/1, 21–39.
— 2004b: "The Power of Images: The Bible in Art and Visual Representation in South Africa". Scriptura 87, 254–260.
— 2005: "Van die Nyl tot Stellenbosch: Antieke Egiptiese Voorwerpe op Stellenbosch". Akroterion 50, 125–136.
— 2007a: "The Headgear and Hairstyles of Pre-Persian Palestinian Female Plaque Figurines". In S. Bickel et al. (eds.): *Bilder als Quellen / Images as Sources: Studies on Ancient Near Eastern Artefacts and the Bible inspired by the work of Othmar Keel*. OBO Special Volume. Fribourg/Göttingen. Pp. 237–252.

— 2007b: “A Horse Figurine in Stellenbosch and the Iconography and Function of Palestinian Horse Figurines”. ZDPV 123, 28–36.
— 2007c: “Animals in the Art of Ugarit”. JSem 16/3, 605–623.
— 2008a: *The Many Faces of the Goddess: The Iconography of the Syro-Palestinian Goddesses Anat, Astarte, Qedeshet, and Asherah c. 1500–1000 BCE*. OBO 204. 2nd ed. Fribourg/Göttingen.
— 2008b: “From Ebla to Stellenbosch”. In I. Cornelius / L. C. Jonker (eds.): *“From Ebla to Stellenbosch”: Syro-Palestinian Religions and the Hebrew Bible*. ADPV 37. Wiesbaden. Pp. 1–12.
— 2008c: “The Religious Iconography of Israel and Judah ca. 1200–587 BCE”. Religion Compass 2/2, 96–118.
— 2009a: “‘Eunuchs’? The Ancient Background of *eunouchos* in the Septuagint”. In J. Cook (ed.): *Septuagint and Reception*. VTSup 127. Leiden/Boston. Pp. 321–333.
— 2009b: “In Search of the Goddess in Ancient Palestinian Iconography”. In M. Pietsch / F. Hartenstein (eds.): *Israel zwischen den Mächten: Festschrift für Stefan Timm zum 65. Geburtstag*. AOAT 364. Münster. Pp. 77–98.
— 2009c: “Aspects of the Iconography of the Warrior Goddess Ištar and Ancient Near Eastern Prophecies”. In M. Nissinen / C. E. Carter (eds.): *Images and Prophecy in the Ancient Eastern Mediterranean*. FRLANT 233. Göttingen. Pp. 15–40.
— 2009d: “Job”. In J. H. Walton (ed.): *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary. Vol. 5: The Minor Prophets, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*. Grand Rapids. Pp. 247–315.
— 2009e: “The God of Job: Iconographical Perspectives *after* Keel”. In I. J. de Hulster / R. Schmitt (eds.): *Iconography and Biblical Studies: Proceedings of the Iconography Session at the Joint EABS/SBL Conference, 22–26 July 2007, Vienna, Austria*. AOAT 361. Münster. Pp. 21–33.
— 2010: “Ancient Egypt and the Other”. Scriptura 104, 322–340.
— 2011: “‘A Tale of Two Cities’: The Visual Imagery of Yehud and Samaria, and Identity/Self-Understanding in Persian-period Palestine”. In L. C. Jonker (ed.): *Texts, Contexts and Readings in Postexilic Literature: Explorations into Historiography and Identity Negotiation in Hebrew Bible and Related Texts*. FAT II/53. Tübingen. Pp. 213–237.
— 2012a: “In Search of the Goddesses of Zincirli (Samʾal)”. ZDPV 128, 15–25.
— 2013: “Art, Bronze and Iron Age”. In D. M. Master (ed.): *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Archaeology*. Oxford. Pp. 49–57.
— 2014a: “‘Trading Religions’ and ‘Visible Religion’ in the Ancient Near East”. In P. Wick / V. Rabens (eds.): *Religions and Trade: Religious Formation, Transformation and Cross-Cultural Exchange between East and West*. DHR 5. Leiden/Boston. Pp. 141–165.
— 2014b: “‘East Meets West’: Trends in Terracotta Figurines”. In C. Frevel / K. Pyschny / I. Cornelius (eds.): *A “Religious Revolution” in Yehûd? The Material Culture of the Persian Period as a Test Case*. OBO 267. Fribourg/Göttingen. Pp. 67–91.
— 2014c: “‘Revisiting’ Astarte in the Iconography of the Bronze Age Levant”. In D. T. Sugimoto (ed.): *Transformation of a Goddess: Ishtar—Astarte—Aphrodite*. OBO 263. Fribourg/Göttingen. Pp. 87–101.
— 2015a: “Revisiting the Seated Figure from *Ḫirbet Ṣāliḥ*/*Rāmat Rāḥēl*”. ZDPV 131, 29–43.
— 2016: “Iconography, Iconology: II Hebrew Bible/Old Testament”. EBR 12, 783–785.
— 2017a: “‘From Bes to Baal’: Religious Interconnections between Egypt and the East”. In P. P. Creasman / R. H. Wilkinson (eds.): *Pharaoh’s Land and Beyond: Ancient Egypt and Its Neighbors*. New York. Pp. 209–217.
— 2017b: “The Study of the Old Testament and the Material Imagery of the Ancient Near East, with a Focus on the Body Parts of the Deity”. In L. C. Jonker / G. R. Kotzé / C. M. Maier (eds.): *Congress Volume Stellenbosch 2016*. VTSup 177. Leiden/Boston. Pp. 195–227.
— 2017d: “‘The Eyes Have It and the Benign Smile’: The Iconography of Emotions in the Ancient Near East: From Gestures to Facial Expressions?” In S. Kipfer (ed.): *Visualizing Emotions in the Ancient Near East*. OBO 285. Fribourg/Göttingen. Pp. 123–148.
— 2018a: “The ‘Face of Death’ and the ‘Face of Baal’? Masks from the Stone Age and Bronze Age”. In A. Berlejung / J. E. Filitz (eds.): *The Physicality of the Other: Masks from the Ancient Near East and the Eastern Mediterranean*. ORA 27. Tübingen. Pp. 115–132.

— 2018b. “Introduction to Ancient Near Eastern Iconography”. In J. S. Greer / J. W. Hilber / J. H. Walton (eds.): *Behind the Scenes of the Old Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts*. Grand Rapids. Pp. 151–158.

— 2018c: “Communicating Divine Order and Authority: The Stela of Hammurapi of Babylon”. In T. M. Oshima (ed.): *Teaching Morality in Antiquity: Wisdom Texts, Oral Traditions, and Images*. ORA 29. Tübingen. Pp. 219–232.

— 2019: “The Material Imagery of the Samʾal (Zincirli) Monuments and ‘Aramaean Identity’”. WO 49/2, 183–205.

— 2020: “Tell Halaf”. WiBiLex, http://www.bibelwissenschaft.de/stichwort/33063/.

Cornelius, I. / Venter, P. J., 2000: “(Cyber)space … ‘The Final Frontier’: The Future of Ancient Studies in the Digital World”. JNSL 26/1, 153–169.

Cornelius, I. / Niehr, H., 2004: *Götter und Kulte in Ugarit: Kultur und Religion einer nordsyrischen Königsstadt in der Spätbronzezeit*. Mainz am Rhein.

Cornelius, I. et al., 2012: “Looking inside Votive Creatures: Computed Tomography (CT) Scanning of Ancient Egyptian Mummified Animals in Iziko Museums of South Africa: A Preliminary Report”. Akroterion 57, 129–148.

Cornelius, I. et al., 2017: “Animal Mummies in South African Collections”. In G. Rosati / M. C. Guidotti (eds.): *Proceedings of the XI International Congress of Egyptologists: Florence Egyptian Museum, Florence, 23–30 August 2015*. Archaeopress Egyptology 19. Oxford. Pp. 131–136.

Deist, F. E., 2000. *The Material Culture of the Bible: An Introduction*. BS 70. London.

Du Plessis, A. et al., 2015: “Three-dimensional Model of an Ancient Egyptian Falcon Mummy Skeleton”. Rapid Prototyping Journal 21/4, 368–372.

Fensham, F. C. 1970: *Heersers van die Ou Nabye Ooste*. Kaapstad.

— 1971: *Die Veelkleurige Kleed: Agtergrondsketse oor die ou Nabye Ooste en die Bybel*. Kaapstad.

Ikram, S. et al., 2015: “Fatal Force-feeding or Gluttonous Gagging? The Death of Kestrel SACHM 2575”. JAS 63, 72–77.

Keel, O., 1980: *Die Welt der altorientalischen Bildsymbolik und das Alte Testament: Am Beispiel der Psalmen*. 3rd ed. Zurich/Neukirchen-Vluyn.

— 1992: “Iconography and the Bible”. ABD 3, 358–374.

Olivier, H., 1996: “Putting the Holy Land on the Map”. OTE 9/2, 237–248.

Slabbert, R. / Swanepoel, L. C. / Cornelius, I., 2015: “Wat Maak Jou Mummie? ’n Oorsig van die Stand van Mummienavorsing aan die Hand van die 8ste Wêreldkongres”. TGW 55/1, 1–14.

Van der Merwe, C. H. J. / Cornelius, I., 2019: “A Profile of יָד in the Book of Jeremiah: A Perspective from Lexical Typology and Material Imagery”. In A. Michel / N. K. Rüttgers (eds.): *Jeremia, Deuteronomismus und Priesterschrift: Beiträge zur Literatur- und Theologiegeschichte des Alten Testaments. Festschrift für Hermann-Josef Stipp zum 65. Geburtstag*. ATSAT 105. St. Ottilien. Pp. 279–304.

WERE GODDESSES ALREADY WORSHIPPED IN THE EARLY CHALCOLITHIC PERIOD?

Silvia Schroer[1]

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the 1980s, the question of the veneration of female deities has held a central place in feminist biblical interpretation. There is justified suspicion that the Hebrew Bible does not contain reliable information about the worship of goddesses, since it consistently depicts such worship critically or in a polemical fashion. In the 1980s and 1990s, some female theologians incorporated contemporary research on matriarchal societies into their search for goddesses in the Bible.[2] They thus assumed that the worship of female deities is connected to a universal form of cultural organisation—a matriarchal culture—that was increasingly suppressed by patriarchal systems and ultimately disappeared completely. In the long term, the basic theory of a worldwide matriarchal culture—at its core a return to nineteenth-century ideas expressed by Johann Jakob Bachofen and others—did not find widespread acceptance in feminist theology or beyond.[3]

In our book *Feministische Exegese*, Marie-Theres Wacker already pointed out the problems and contradictions in this theory.[4] My own religio-historical interest in visual material from the earliest cultures of the Near East and Egypt constantly led me back to the so-called idols and so-called goddesses. It is important to me to remove the common, often completely unreflected clichés from artefacts depicting naked women. For example, "fertility idol" is a cliché that says more about the puritanical suppression of "eroticism" during the nineteenth century than it does about the figurines to which it refers.[5] Even in the rare case of Neolithic female figurines that come from controlled excavations, such as those from Shaʾar ha-Golan, it is important not to speak too hastily of goddesses. This is because as soon as one speaks of goddesses, one assumes that the culture in question had the concept of gods and goddesses, which is well documented in the polytheistic symbol system of the Near East beginning in the third millennium BCE but not before then. Reference to a "great goddess" or "great mother" also evokes notions that cannot be substantiated by the material finds. Although there is an indisputable preponderance of female figurines in many prehistoric cultures, regarding all of these as expressions of one and the same "mother goddess" is beyond speculative. Additionally, finding a sort of primordial idea of the "female", "motherly", and "divine" behind all of the varied types of female images spanning multiple cultures and millennia seems like a utopian projection of the monotheistic conception of the divine onto earlier times.

In what follows, recent finds from Israel/Palestine will be situated within their broader religio-historical context. They will be treated as witnesses to developments within a particular region (and its cultural environment, the Near East) and within a particular time period (Neolithic and Chalcolithic, with a view to the Early

---

[1] This article was published in German in *lectio difficilior* 2/2018 under the title "Gab es schon im frühen Chalkolithikum Göttinnenverehrung?" (Schroer, 2018b). Thanks go to Stephen Germany (University of Basel) for his translation. In what follows, several artefacts will be cited from the four-volume work *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels und der Alte Orient*: Schroer / Keel, 2005; Schroer, 2008; 2011; 2018a.

[2] See already Schottroff / Schroer / Wacker, 1998: 48–50.

[3] Cf. the quite different entries under "Matriarchat" in the first and second editions of Gössmann et al., 2002. It is not possible to discuss here the research on "matriarchy" and its reception in the study of ancient Near Eastern religions and in biblical studies. For an overview, see Jost, 2006.

[4] See Schottroff / Schroer / Wacker, 1998: 48–50.

[5] Keel / Schroer, 2010: 22–25.

Bronze Age). There is no direct connection to the (suppressed) veneration of goddesses that are also mentioned in biblical texts (e.g., Asherah or the Queen of Heaven). The development of symbolic constellations that were passed down over millennia is, however, an important backdrop for understanding religious concepts.

2. NOTABLE RECENT DISCOVERIES

There is a well-known alabaster plaque dating to the early third millennium from a temple in Mari (fig. 1).[6] It shows a dotted pubic triangle surrounded by caprids grazing on trees as well as running caprids. Above this are radiant-looking eyes and above them eyebrows; the hair is indicated at the top by a herringbone pattern. This highly stylised representation brings to mind a face with large eyes. The face is placed seamlessly above the pubic area.

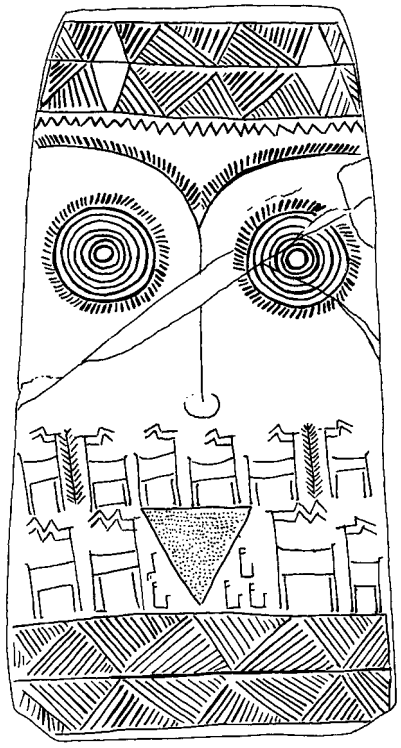


Fig. 1: Alabaster plaque, Mari (third millennium BCE). Source: Schroer / Keel, 2005: no. 106.

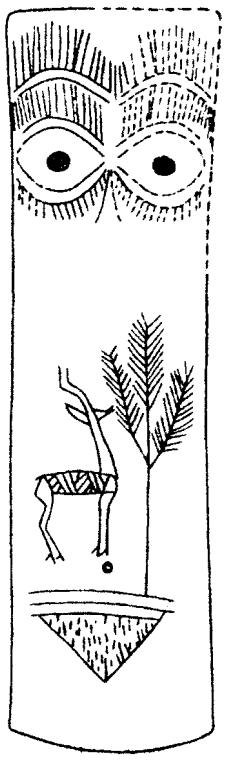


Fig. 2: Bone figurine, HaGoshrim (early fifth millennium BCE). Source: Staubli, 2013: 81, fig. 4a.

This alabaster plaque from Mari can now be understood in a better light thanks to more recent finds. Carved bone figurines have been found in late Neolithic or early Chalcolithic contexts (early fifth millennium BCE) in the Southern Levant; they are stylised quite similarly to the pubic area, caprids, and/or trees on the Mari plaque.[7] In particular, a bone figurine from HaGoshrim in northern Galilee (fig. 2)[8] has a striking similarity to the later alabaster plaque from Mari. The bone rods and a small limestone plaque from En Zippori clearly display eyes in a rhomboid, non-circular shape.[9] In terms of *longue durée* development, it is significant that

[6] In Schroer / Keel, 2005: 208–209, I interpreted the circles as breasts, although in light of the recently-discovered parallels, this interpretation no longer seems plausible. See also Schroer, forthcoming.

[7] Galili et al., 2016: 129–150; see also Milevski et al., 2015: 241–262. Unlike the authors of the latter article, I consider it quite possible that the Levant played a leading role in the formation and spread of iconographic traditions during the sixth and fifth millennia.

[8] Galili et al., 2016: 136, fig. 3.

[9] For a summary of the finds, see Milevski et al., 2015: fig. 16. Cf. the eyes of the Early Bronze eye idols from Tell Brak (Schroer / Keel, 2005: 270–271, no. 196).

this object attests to the constellation "pubic triangle—caprids—branch/tree" already in the fifth millennium in the northern part of the Southern Levant.[10]

The Pottery Neolithic, particularly the Yarmukian culture attested in Anatolia, Syria, and Israel/Palestine, provides evidence of the seated female figurines, which are not necessarily characterised by large breasts but which do sometimes hold up their breasts, a pose that would continue for millennia to come. Caprids also appear as carvings, albeit in the area around the neck.[11] Otherwise, the Neolithic is dominated by the theme of the cult of the dead or ancestor veneration.[12] This also applies to the Chalcolithic, which gave special attention to horned animals such as wild goats, ibexes, and rams and produced, for example, costly copper sceptre-heads in the form of stylised animal figures. While in the Neolithic period certain deceased persons were buried under their dwellings and their skulls were artfully remodelled and kept in the dwellings, the Chalcolithic burials took place in graveyards outside of settlements, where the corpses were initially stripped of their flesh by vultures and other scavengers.[13] The secondary burial then took place in ossuaries, which were deposited in burial caves in large numbers. These bone boxes were made of baked clay and had an opening (usually on the front side) for laying the bones inside. Due to their elongated shape, these objects have sometimes been interpreted as representing houses, although this is probably not correct. Yet the shaping and painting of the (usually rectangular) front side displays faces, often large noses, less frequently breasts or large eyes, which suggests that the ossuary might symbolise a human (or perhaps animal) body rather than a house. The examples from Azor (figs. 3–4)[14] show in one case a face with a large nose (typical of the Chalcolithic period) and circular, radiant eyes and on the sides perhaps eyebrows and hair; in the other case, only breasts can be seen. The painting of many of the elongated bone boxes could hint at body art or textiles, as is also found on figurines from this time period.[15]

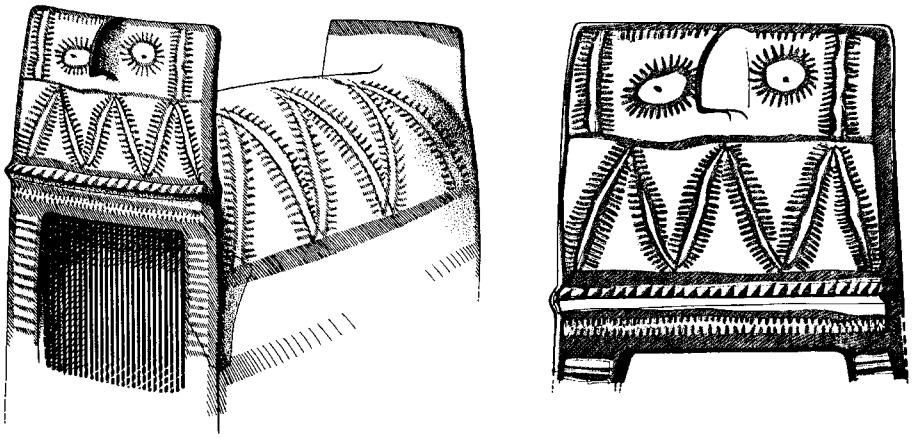


Fig. 3: Ossuary, Azor (Chalcolithic period). Source: Schroer / Keel, 2005: no. 80.

[10] In earlier studies, I traced this constellation of motifs beginning in the Early Bronze Age; see esp. Schroer, 1989: 104–110.

[11] Schroer / Keel, 2005: 82–83, no. 25.

[12] Cf. Schroer / Keel, 2005: 54–63.

[13] Arav, 2011: 40–50. Excavations in the Golan Heights have shown that circular, enclosed burial sites were used for initial burials. The deceased were first left to the vultures or other scavengers. Birds already appear in Neolithic art (Schroer / Keel, 2005: 74–75, no. 15–16), and they began to be depicted more frequently during the Chalcolithic period in a variety of media (Schroer / Keel, 2005: 128–131, no. 64–68). The nature of the representation often makes a precise identification—such as on the basis of the head, curvature of the beak, length of the neck and legs, and shape of the tail—impossible. Following Arav, the interpretation of Schroer / Keel, 2005: 130–131, no. 68 should be revised. The two birds that appear on the rim of the copper "crown" from the cave hoard at Nahal Mishmar are probably not pigeons but rather vultures, despite their rather atypical posture. This is suggested by the curvature of the head, the long neck, and the long legs. Thus, it seems likely that the "crown" was part of the cult of the dead. This expensive metal object symbolises a resting place for the dead. The role of vultures (which consumed the flesh of the deceased) in earlier religious thinking is shown by the wall paintings from Çatal Höyük (see Schroer / Keel, 2005: 74–75, no. 16). The top of a standard in the form of a flying vulture was also found in the hoard from the cave at Nahal Mishmar (Schroer / Keel, 2005: 128–129, no. 64).

[14] Schroer / Keel, 2005: 142–143, no. 80–81.

[15] Schroer / Keel, 2005: 132–133, no. 69–70.

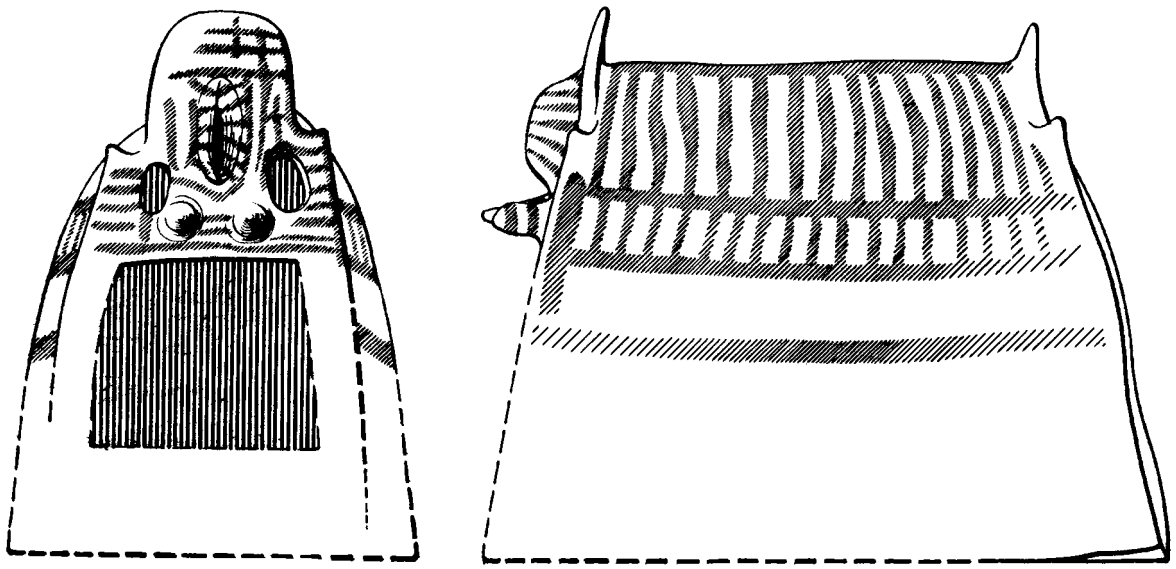


Fig. 4a: Ossuary, Azor (Chalcolithic period). Source: Schroer / Keel, 2005: no. 81.

3. SHOULD THE NEOLITHIC AND CHALCOLITHIC REPRESENTATIONS OF WOMEN BE IDENTIFIED AS GODDESSES?

The finds from Israe/Palestine discussed above once again raise the question of whether they might reflect an early concept of a goddess, a female, numinous, superhuman being that held a firm place in human life and death, bound up with human fears and hopes, and perhaps also venerated in certain places.

The following considerations may help to answer this question:

1. The seated figures from the Pre-Pottery Neolithic,[16] with their corpulence, painted bodies, and tall headgear—as far as can be seen from the excavations at Shaʾar ha-Golan—are not cultic images (or are at most small representations of such). They were found exclusively in domestic contexts, predominately in courtyards.[17] Their professional production could be an indication that they were representations of a female ancestor that was venerated by the entire local community. The Neolithic skulls and masks, as well as almost life-sized clay figures from En Ghazal in Jordan, show that the earliest religious concepts were closely connected to the experience of the death of other community members. There was an attempt to bring certain individuals back into the life of the community and to have them close by. Unlike the skulls of the deceased, however, the small female figurines of the Yarmukian culture or round-bodied vessels in the shape of a female figure symbolise abundant life. During the Chalcolithic period, the corpulent, seated women disappear and give way to slenderer, standing female forms.[18] It is fairly certain that the Neolithic female figurines are connected to ancestor veneration; whether they reflect the veneration of a goddess, however, is an open question. Certain conceptual developments are, however, conceivable, such as the idea that elected deceased persons were venerated and were in a way deified.

2. Although women are depicted as standing rather than sitting and as less corpulent beginning in the Early Bronze Age (i.e., third millennium BCE), some aspects of the earlier representations should be understood as a continuation of prior traditions. The female body continues to be associated with a jug.[19] The pubic triangle, branches, and caprids constitute a variable constellation, such as on the aforementioned alabaster plaque from Mari. The combination of the pubic triangle and branches as well as the pubic triangle and caprids is attested continuously in ceramic and glyptic art in quite a few variations in the Middle and Late

[16] On the semantics of the body language of so-called idols (the significance of their corpulence, seated position, and holding up of their breasts), see Keel / Schroer, 2010: 27–28.

[17] For an overview of these finds, see Schroer / Keel, 2005: 60–63; Keel / Schroer, 2010: 17–19.

[18] A figurine from a site identified as a temple structure at Gilat near Beersheba (Schroer / Keel, 2005: 132–133, no. 69) wears the typical Chalcolithic butter churn on its head; it is the latest attested example of this sitting type.

[19] See Kipfer / Schroer, 2015.

Bronze Ages, and during these periods such symbolism is without doubt connected to the concept and veneration of a goddess.[20] Sometimes trees and/or caprids serve as substitutes for the goddess, whereby the pubic triangle and the tree are even interchangeable, although the full female representation also continues to be attested in the Late Bronze Age. There are certain lines of continuity from the Neolithic down to the Late Bronze Age, such as the association between women and lions, which speaks in favour of a continual development of ideas.

3. The combination of the pubic triangle, branch, caprids, and woman/goddess expresses what is summarised in Gen 3:20 with the honorary title *havvah*, "mother of all living".[21] It relates to life and the regeneration of life, not to motherhood or the mother-child relationship in the narrow sense, but in the sense of motherhood as the origin of all life—plants, animals, and children. The biblical Eve is the heiress of the divine, life-giving mothers. It seems that such ideas first emerged in the Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods. In terms of iconography, during the Neolithic period plump women holding up their breasts occur alongside attestations of the cult of the dead and ancestor veneration; in the Chalcolithic period, they appear alongside numinous horned animals such as ibexes. The Chalcolithic seems to be the period in which the cult of the dead as well as ideas of superhuman, numinous beings developed.[22]

4. Building on the study by Ziffer and Shalem,[23] the Chalcolithic burials in ossuaries should most likely be interpreted as representing the return of the deceased into the body of a nourishing mother. The notion that the latter should be identified as a rain goddess, as Ziffer and Shalem suggest, seems less compelling to me. The connection that they posit between flowing breasts and rain is implausible. The flow of milk might instead emphasise the nourishing fullness of the mother who provides this milk. On some ossuaries, the breasts are associated with plant motifs, similar to other artefacts that associate the pubic area with plants. The symbolic connection involves life and growth; thus, the cult of the dead seems to point to an earth goddess rather than a rain goddess.

4. CONCLUSION

The finds from Chalcolithic-period excavations in Israel/Palestine indeed suggest that there—and probably also in other parts of the Near East—the vital force that plants, animals, and humans derive from the earth was perceived and interpreted as a numinous, superhuman power beginning in the fifth millennium BCE. The deceased were given back to the earth, presumably in the hope that they would be sheltered, nourished, and perhaps also instilled with life. The earliest concepts of superhuman powers as represented by hybrid creatures, such as human figures with the head of an ibex or stylised animal heads with horns, also first appear in the Chalcolithic period. Nevertheless, the connections between the Chalcolithic "mother of all living" and these hybrid creatures are not very clear, whereas her association with death and burial is readily discernible. This association was possibly already established in the Neolithic period (albeit without the symbolic link through flora and fauna), when skulls of the deceased and the figurines of well-nourished and nourishing women (who could, however, also be earthly individuals) appear close in time to each other.[24] Moving from the Chalcolithic toward later periods, the concept of goddesses and gods who are associated with different symbols begins to develop. The cluster "goddess—earth—vegetation—animal kingdom" becomes and remains central in Israel/Palestine, particularly in the Middle Bronze Age, but also well beyond this formative Canaanite period and into the Iron Age. A continuous development from an early conception of a life-giving, nourishing, motherly earth that was responsible for the living and the dead toward the later conception of goddesses with similar (but often more specialised) profiles is emerging ever more clearly. Considering the worship of Asherah mentioned in biblical texts, the recent finds further support our knowledge that the cult

[20] See Schroer, 1987: 201–225.

[21] Keel / Schroer, 2010: 10–11. A new contribution by Thomas Staubli (2020) also underlines the connection between the mentioned artefacts and Gen 3:20.

[22] Schroer / Keel, 2005: 122–125, 130–131, no. 58–60, 68.

[23] Ziffer / Shalem, 2015: 455–488.

[24] Among the clay statues from En Ghazal from the end of the Pre-Pottery Neolithic is a female figure holding up her breasts (Schroer / Keel, 2005: 96–97, no. 45). The group of sculptures, which were buried in a fosse, might be associated with the local cult of the dead or ancestor cult; the faces are similar to the skulls of the deceased treated with clay. See also Shalem, 2014.

of the goddess associated with trees and branches was deeply rooted in the land. It is possible—and this would be a new insight—that the striking gap in Yahwistic religion with respect to the realm of the dead can be explained in light of this. The autochthonous Canaanite religion ascribed the care of the dead to the goddess of earth and vegetation; thus, up to the time of the exile, Israel's god Yahweh had no responsibility in this area. The earth was responsible for the dead, not Yahweh, who was associated rather with the heavenly realm. Years ago, Keel already pointed to the biblical notion of the earth as a mother's womb.[25] Job 1:21 states, for example, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there" (cf. Qoh 5:14; Sir 40:1; John 3:4). In light of the broader context of the verse, the "there" cannot refer literally to a mother's womb, but must refer to the earth. The notion that humans return to the earth after death is also attested in Gen 3:19 and Ps 90:3. Occasional references to burial under trees also reflect such a notion (Gen 35:8; 1 Sam 31:13).[26]

It is striking that the memory that the "earthling" Adam named his wife *havvah*, "Eve", since she was "the mother of all living" (Gen 3:20), follows directly upon the announcement of the toil of producing sustenance (from the earth) and the return of human life to the earth (Gen 3:19). The Chalcolithic finds help to illuminate the deeper connection that lies behind these biblical verses. According to Gen 1:11–12, 24–25, the earth is a (not completely dethroned) divine force that allows plants to sprout and brings forth animals. According to Gen 2:7, the "earthling" Adam is created out of earth (*adamah*), just as trees grow from the earth (Gen 2:9) and animals are formed from earth (Gen 2:19). Humans are nourished by this earth and, according to Gen 3:19–20, ultimately return to it. The "earthling" names the earth-woman "mother of all living", and in this respect she adopts the role of the nourishing earth and takes on a mythic significance. The first human woman has taken on the legacy of the earth goddess.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Arav, R., 2011: "Excarnation: Food for the Vultures". BAR 37, 40–50.

Galili, E. et al., 2016: "Figurative Representations from Neveh Yam and Other Sites in Israel: Markers of the Late Neolithic / Early Chalcolithic South Levant Cultures". IEJ 66, 129–150.

Gössmann, E. et al. (eds.), 2002: "Matriarchat": *Wörterbuch der Feministischen Theologie*. 2nd ed. Gütersloh. Pp. 408–409.

Jost, R., 2006: "Matriarchat/Mutterrecht". WiBiLex, https://www.bibelwissenschaft.de/de/stichwort/25599/.

Keel, O., 1989: "Die Ω-Gruppe: Ein mittelbronzezeitlicher Stempelsiegel-Typ mit erhabenem Relief aus Anatolien-Nordsyrien und Palästina". In O. Keel / H. Keel-Leu / S. Schroer: *Studien zu den Stempelsiegeln aus Palästina/Israel II*. OBO 88. Fribourg/Göttingen. Pp. 39–87.

Keel, O. / Schroer, S., 2008: *Schöpfung: Biblische Theologien im Kontext altorientalischer Religionen*. 2nd ed. Fribourg/Göttingen.

— 2010: *Eva—Mutter alles Lebendigen: Frauen- und Göttinnenidole aus dem Alten Orient*. 3rd ed. Fribourg.

Kipfer, S. / Schroer, S., 2015: "Der Körper als Gefäß. Eine Studie zur visuellen Anthropologie des Alten Orients". lectio difficilior 1/2015, http://www.lectio.unibe.ch/15_1/pdf/kipfer_schroer_der_koerper_als_gefaess.pdf.

Milevski, I. et al., 2015: "Die Palette von Ein Zippori und andere weibliche Kompositfiguren aus dem sechsten und fünften Jahrtausend v. u. Z. in der südlichen Levante und in Mesopotamien". Das Altertum 60, 241–262.

Schottroff, L. / Schroer, S. / Wacker, M-T., 1998: *Feminist Interpretation: The Bible in Women's Perspective*. Minneapolis.

Schroer, S., 1987: "Die Zweiggöttin in Palästina/Israel: Von der Mittelbronze IIB-Zeit bis zu Jesus Sirach". In M. Küchler / C. Uehlinger (eds.): *Jerusalem: Texte—Bilder—Steine. Zum 100: Geburtstag von Hildi und Othmar Keel-Leu*. NTOA 6. Fribourg/Göttingen. Pp. 201–225.

— 1989: "Die Göttin auf den Stempelsiegeln aus Palästina/Israel". In O. Keel / H. Keel-Leu / S. Schroer: *Studien zu den Stempelsiegeln aus Palästina/Israel II*. OBO 88. Fribourg/Göttingen. Pp. 89–207.

[25] Keel, 1989: 39–87, esp. 70–75; see also Schroer, 2008: 62 as well as Keel / Schroer, 2008: 52–61.

[26] On death as a "reverse birth", see Staubli / Schroer, 2014: 58–59.

— 2008: *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels und der Alte Orient: Eine Religionsgeschichte in Bildern. Band 2: Die Mittelbronzezeit*. Fribourg.
— 2011: *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels und der Alte Orient: Eine Religionsgeschichte in Bildern. Band 3: Die Spätbronzezeit*. Fribourg.
— 2018a: *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels und der Alte Orient: Eine Religionsgeschichte in Bildern. Band 4: Die Eisenzeit bis zum Beginn der achämenidischen Herrschaft*. Basel.
— 2018b: "Gab es schon im frühen Chalkolithikum Göttinnenverehrung?" lectio difficilior 2/2018, http://www.lectio.unibe.ch/18_2/pdf/schroer_gab_es_schon_im_fruehen_chalkolithikum_goettinnenverehrung.pdf.
— forthcoming: "Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels und der Alte Orient in Bildern (IPIAO) in Review". HeBAI.
Schroer, S. / Keel, O., 2005: *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels und der Alte Orient: Eine Religionsgeschichte in Bildern. Band 1: Vom ausgehenden Mesolithikum bis zur Frühbronzezeit*. Fribourg.
Shalem, D., 2014: "Do the Images on the Chalcolithic Ossuaries Comprise Attributes?" In P. Bieliński (ed.): *Proceedings of the 8th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East, 30 April–4 May 2012, University of Warsaw. Vol. 1: Plenary Sessions, Township and Villages, High and Low—The Minor Arts for the Elite and for the Populace*. Wiesbaden. Pp. 505–523.
Staubli, T., 2013: "Die kanaanäische Vegetationsfrömmigkeit und ihr Fortleben in Judentum, Christentum und Islam, in palästinischer Volkskultur und säkularer Staatsemblematik: Neue Einsichten aus der Ikonographie der Südlevante". In M. Bauks / M. F. Meyer (eds.): *Zur Kulturgeschichte der Botanik*. Trier. Pp. 73–106.
— 2020: "Die 'Mutter alles Lebendigen' auf den ältesten Bildzeugnissen der Levante und im Genesis-Prolog". BN 187, 3–14.
Staubli, T. / Schroer, S., 2014: *Menschenbilder der Bibel*. Ostfildern.
Ziffer, I. / Shalem, D., 2015: "'Receive my Breast and Suck from It, that You may Live': Towards the Imagery of Two Ossuaries from the Chalcolithic Peqʿin Cave". UF 46, 455–488.

A GREAT CAT WALKS SOUTH:
A PETROGLYPH FROM KHARGA OASIS (EGYPT)

Salima Ikram[1]

South Africa is one of the acknowledged leaders in rock art research, and is well known for its magnificent painted and incised panels found throughout the area. Rock art is also found in the north of the continent, in Egypt, both in the Western (East Sahara) and Eastern Deserts, as well as in certain rocky areas along the Nile. The North Kharga Oasis Darb al-Arbain Survey (NKODAAS) has been focusing on exploring the hitherto undocumented north and western parts of Kharga Oasis in Egypt's Western Desert in an effort to find and record archaeological sites.[2] Several of the sites that NKODAAS has found are petroglyph panels inscribed on the local sandstone.

During the course of the survey, one long sandstone inselberg was found that bore petroglyphs from prehistory through the pharaonic era. The rock was named "Aa's rock" due to an inscription with a royal name, dating to ca. 3000 BCE or so (fig. 1).[3] One isolated image of a striding carnivore facing left proper (south) is carved on the northwest side of this rock, and is the subject of this article (figs. 2 and 3).

Fig. 1: Aa's rock in Egypt's Western Desert with an arrow indicating the position of the petroglyph. Photo: S. Ikram.

[1] Sakkie Cornelius is a man of diverse talents and wide ranging interests. It is through one of these—mummies—that we came to know one another, and found that we had many other common interests. Since our first meeting we became fast friends and I owe many wonderful experiences and a network of friends, colleagues, and students in South Africa thanks to him. Thus, it is with pleasure and a great deal of affection that I offer this small article, connecting Africa, north to south, to him for his amusement.

[2] Ikram, 2019: 135–151.

[3] Ikram / Rossi, 2004: 211–215.

Fig. 2: The carved and scraped image of the feline, facing south. Photo: S. Ikram.

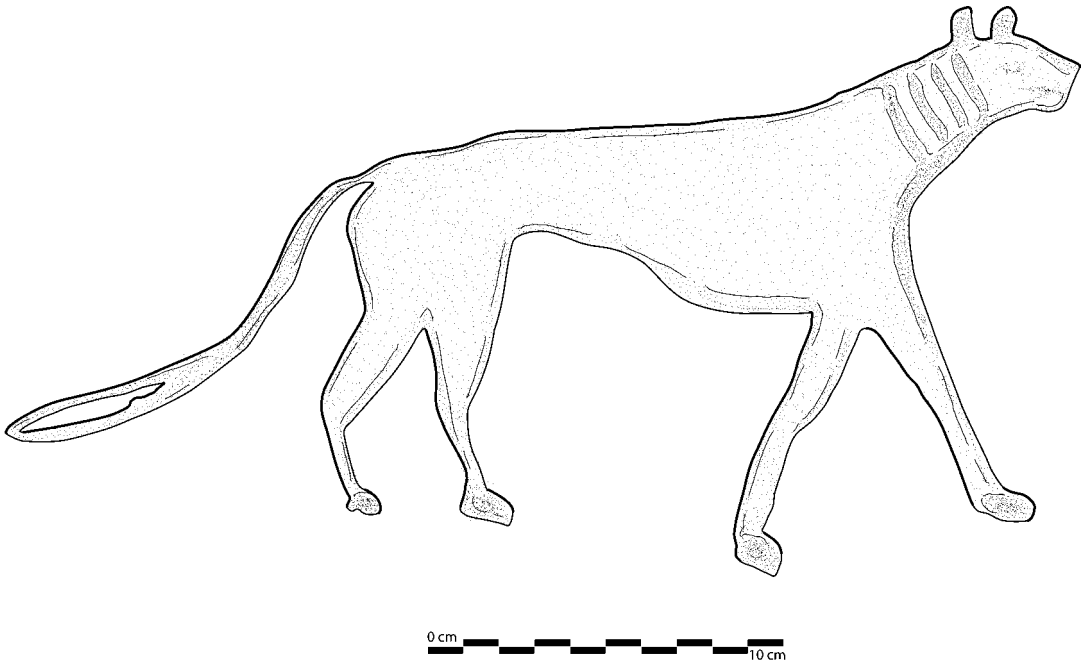


Fig. 3: Drawing of the feline. Drawing: P. Collet.

The image is carved in sunk relief, with a confident hand, and the interior of the figure has been smoothed, with head and neck details incised. The animal is shown with a distinct muzzle, upright ears, long limbs, with the hind limbs more muscular and solid than the forelimbs, clearly defined paws, and a tail that is thicker at the end than at its root, possibly because it is tufted. A curious feature is the three ridged collar depicted on the animal's neck. There are no images of humans, or indeed anything else, carved in the immediate vicinity of the animal. The closest images are some 2.5 metres away to the south, and about 5 metres away to the north (although from 2 metres away to the north the rock is damaged, so it is possible that images have vanished with the decaying rock).

It is often difficult to identify animals to species in rock art as the depiction depends on whether or not (or to what degree) the maker wished for accuracy, the carver's skill, the quality of the rock, and the level of preservation of the image. In this case, the animal appears to be a large feline of some sort—the ears and the collar are not of the type seen in depictions of canines in Egyptian art, whether in the prehistoric (ca. 12,000–4400 BCE), Predynastic (ca. 4400–3050 BCE), or the Dynastic (ca. 3050–30 BCE) eras. In antiquity, Egypt boasted three types of large cats: cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*), leopard (*Panthera pardus*, but in the Sinai *P. p. jarvisi*, and *P. p. pardus* in the Eastern and Western deserts),[4] and lion (*Panthera leo*).[5]

The head of the animal could belong to any of the three, but more likely a lioness or leopard, as cheetahs have more rounded heads, and small muzzles and ears. The outline of the body, in terms of the line of the belly, is akin to a cheetah's, though it lacks the pronounced swayback that is typical of both male and females of that species.[6] Younger lionesses have somewhat similar body profiles,[7] and even leopards might be found to be similar, though their limbs are a bit shorter and more solidly muscled (which fits the hind legs, but not the forelegs).[8] The pronounced paws are more leonine. At first glance the tail is closer to that of a cheetah or leopard, unless one interprets the thickening toward the tip as a tuft, in which case it would be a lioness. Images of all three species have been identified in Egyptian rock art, although one can argue that many of the representations are more schematic and cruder than the one on Aa's rock, and therefore cannot reliably be identified to species.[9]

The one possibly distinguishing feature of this representation is the collar. In the early part of Dynastic imagery, in particular Dynasties I–IV (ca. 3020–2495 BCE), lionesses, in both two- and three-dimensional representations, are shown wearing collars. The three-dimensional examples are gaming pieces. The collars on these are not always like the one in the petroglyph; they sometimes consist of two parallel lines joined by a series of vertical ones.[10] The similarity to the petroglyph is particularly striking in some hieroglyphs that are unique to these eras (figs. 4 and 5).[11] In some of the texts, the lioness glyph is used in titles that are a bit obscure, but in at least one case (slab stela of Wepemnefret, see n. 11) the glyph relates to Mehit, a lioness goddess, whose cult centre was at This, next to the better known Abydos on the Nile's west bank.[12] Both these areas were doorways to the Western Desert, and tracks from there into the desert and its oases continued to be used until the 20th century.

A few much later images (ca. 1479–1420 BCE) show leashed and collared cheetahs and leopards being brought as trade or tribute from Africa proper. These animals still retain their painted detail, so it is easy to identify them,[13] as cheetahs have solid spots and lacrimal markings, while leopards are marked with rosettes,[14] and thus there is no possibility of confusing them. Pet lions are often shown accompanying royalty, but not lionesses.

It is possible that the creature shown on Aa's rock is not a single feline, but an amalgam of noted predators—when showing totemic animals associated with deities, the Egyptians often created uber-creatures, combining the features of several animals of a certain genus or phenotype to create a super-animal.[15] However, in two- and three-dimensional art, a feline collared in this manner is always a lioness; in game pieces, they are paired with easily identifiable maned lions, and on reliefs where the paint survives, they are clearly identifiable by the pelage (fig. 5). Thus, it seems that this image depicts a striding lioness rather than any other feline. The presence of a collar implies human control over fierce and wild forces, thus helping to create a balanced world, in keeping with the ancient Egyptian idea of order (*maʿat*).

---

[4] Osborn / Helmy, 1980: 455–459; Osborn / Osbornova, 1998: 121–123; Hoath, 2003: 104–105.
[5] Brunner, 1969: 559–563; Osborn / Osbornova, 1998: 113–119.
[6] Kingdon, 1997: 286–287; Estes, 1999: 323–327.
[7] Kingdon, 1997: 284–285; Estes, 1999: 318–322.
[8] Kingdon, 1997: 282–283; Estes, 1999: 314–317.
[9] Winkler, 1938; Cervicek, 1974: fig. 184; Lankester, 2012.
[10] Saleh / Sourouzian, 1987: no. 12: ivory gaming piece, Dynasty I.
[11] Quibell, 1913: 4–5, pl. XXIX–XXXII; Saleh / Sourouzian, 1987: no. 21: wooden door of Hesire, Dynasty III; Der Manuelian, 2003: 32–41; Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology, 6-19825: slab stela of Wepemnefret, from Mastaba G 1201.
[12] Kaplony, 1982: 5–6.
[13] Naville, 1898: pl. XXX; Davies, 1943: pls. XVII, XIX.
[14] Dynastic depictions of cheetahs, leopards, and lions in the wild are not being taken into account here.
[15] Houlihan / Goodman, 1986: 48; Ikram, 2015: 9.

Fig. 4: Part of the panel from the wooden door of Hesire (Egyptian Museum Cairo, JE 28504) showing the lioness with collar hieroglyphs. Also note the lion head and forequarters. Photo courtesy of the Egyptian Museum.

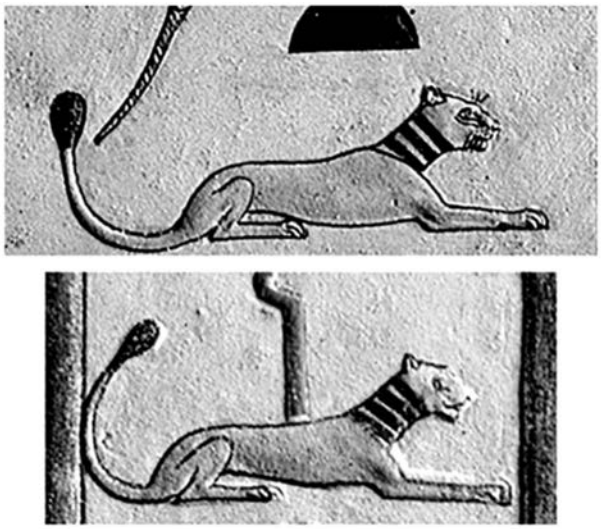


Fig. 5: Two carved and painted images of the lioness from the slab stela of Wepemnefret, Mastaba G 1201 (Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology, 6-19825). Photo courtesy of P. der Manuelian and B. White.

Now that the identity of the animal is established, insofar as is possible, one can turn to other issues. Four of the many questions in rock art are: (1) what is its date; (2) why did its creator choose to place a particular image in a certain place; (3) what does the image mean; and (4) is the location tied to the meaning of the image and the choice of representation? For all the questions, save the first, there are practical as well as religious or way-finding explanations. To address the first issue, if one is to accept the dating, based on parallels from the Nile Valley, then the lioness could have been carved at any time from the First to the Fourth

Dynasty. Also, there are other images on the rock, such as the royal name (see n. 3), that show other activity on this rock for the early part of this period.

For the other questions, one can first tackle the practical explanations before moving on to more esoteric ones. Practical reasons for issues two to four: a traveller could just have happened to rest in a particular spot because he/she was tired, it was shady, there was water nearby, or he/she was waiting for someone or something. The person could have decided to draw something to while away the time, or to illustrate prowess in carving to a fellow traveller—there are myriad possible reasons. Tools in the form of flint and limestone fragments are plentiful, and can easily cut into the soft sandstone, as shown by experimental work carried out by the NKODAAS team members. The choice of image could be arbitrary: perhaps a lioness had been sighted, or was a particular favourite of the "artist", or served as an illustration for a fellow traveller. Thus, it is possible that the image itself and its position had little significance, save as marking time or the presence of an individual.

Now one can move on to explore other possible reasons for the choice of image and its location. The lioness might be a depiction of a lioness seen elsewhere or in the area. The collar might then indicate a way of controlling the animal magically so that it would not cause harm. The image could also be a manifestation of a desire to find and capture a lioness, hence the collar. The carving might indicate to others that lions lived in the area, or that if one went west or/and south, more lions were to be found.

The fact that the lioness stands alone could be significant. Was this perhaps a representation of the totemic animal of the goddess Mehit, or even the goddess herself, and thus left in solitary and divine splendour? In the earliest periods of Egyptian history, when this image was probably carved, she was viewed as a protector goddess,[16] very relevant in the wilderness. It is possible that this single image served as a focal point of veneration for those wishing for her protection. Mehit was the consort of Onuris or Anhur, a hunter god. The main Egyptian myth (possibly of a slightly later date) pertaining to Mehit and Onuris relates to when she, as a manifestation of the eye of the sun god Ra (many goddesses had this role), runs away to the south (the "Distant Goddess" myth), and Onuris brings her back to Egypt.[17] Pinch has suggested that the Distant Goddess originally might have been a personification of the untamed desert, and her early myth was subsequently syncretised with the complex (and many later) myths associated with the Eye of Ra.[18] Thus, this early image might indeed be an image of Mehit as a goddess of deserts and wildernesses, and the carving might have served as a protective image or one that could have been prayed to in order to safeguard those who passed through her domain. The location on the west side of the rock, facing the wilderness, as opposed to the east and the inhabited Nile Valley, would support this, as would her facing south, stalking away to Nubia to return later to Egypt, restoring power to the sun.

It is unlikely that the reasons for placing the image of the lioness, striding to the south, on this particular rock's west face, will ever be clear to us. As discussed above, the possible explanations for this are numerous. However, it does seem as if she was carved at some time between 3000 and 2550 BCE, and might well have been venerated as a guardian of those venturing into the unknown wilderness of the western and southern deserts.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brunner, E., 1969: "Animals of Ancient Egypt". Animals 11/12, 559–563.

Cervicek, P., 1974: *Felsbilder des Nord-Etbai, Oberägyptens und Unternubiens*. Wiesbaden.

Davies, N. de G., 1943: *The Tomb of Rekh-Mi-Re at Thebes II*. New York.

Der Manuelian, P., 2003: *Slab Stelae of the Giza Necropolis*. Publications of the Pennsylvania-Yale Expedition to Egypt 7. New Haven/Philadelphia.

Estes, R. D., 1999: *The Safari Companion: A Guide to Watching African Mammals*. Rev. ed. White River Junction.

Hoath, R., 2003: *A Field Guide to the Mammals of Egypt*. Cairo.

Houlihan, P. / Goodman, S., 1986: *The Birds of Ancient Egypt*. Cairo/Warminster.

[16] Wilkinson, 2001: 290.

[17] Kaplony, 1982: 5–6.

[18] Pinch, 2004: 71–73, 177.

Ikram, S., 2015: “Divine Creatures: Animal Mummies”. In S. Ikram (ed.): *Divine Creatures: Animal Mummies in Ancient Egypt*. Cairo. Pp. 1–16.

— 2019: “The North Kharga Oasis Darb Ain Amur Survey (NKODAAS): Surveying the Tracks between the Two Oases”. In R. S. Bagnall / G. Tallet (eds.): *The Great Oasis of Egypt: The Kharga and Dakhla Oases in Antiquity*. Cambridge. Pp. 135–151.

Ikram, S. / Rossi, C., 2004: “An Early Dynastic *Serekh* from Kharga Oasis”. JEA 90, 211–215.

Kaplony, P., 1982: “Mehit”. LÄ 4, 5–6.

Kingdon, J., 1997: *The Kingdon Field Guide to African Mammals*. London.

Lankester, F. D., 2012: *Predynastic and Pharaonic Era Rock-Art in Egypt’s Central Eastern Desert: Distribution, Dating and Interpretation*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Durham University.

Naville, E., 1898: *The Temple of Deir el Bahari III*. London.

Osborn, D. J. / Helmy, I., 1980: *The Contemporary Land Mammals of Egypt (Including Sinai)*. Fieldiana Zoology New Series 5. Chicago.

Osborn, D. J. / Osbornova, J., 1998: *The Mammals of Ancient Egypt*. Warminster.

Pinch, G., 2004: *Egyptian Mythology: A Guide to the Gods, Goddesses, and Traditions of Ancient Egypt*. Oxford.

Quibell, J. E., 1913: *Excavations at Saqqara (1911–12): The Tomb of Hesy*. Cairo.

Saleh, M. / Sourouzian, H., 1987: *The Egyptian Museum Cairo*. Mainz.

Wilkinson, T. A. H., 2001: *Early Dynastic Egypt*. London.

Winkler, H., 1938: *Rock Drawings of Southern Upper Egypt I*. London.

THE MANY FACES OF ENHEDUANNA'S INANA: LITERARY IMAGES OF INANA AND THE VISUAL CULTURE FROM THE AKKADIAN TO THE OLD BABYLONIAN PERIOD

Renate M. van Dijk-Coombes[1]

> The fray is her celebration, whirling in battle, while she
> dances, untiring, in battle, with her combat footgear on,
> A raging storm, whirling in battle, her queenly robe glinting,
> Where she strikes is a rout, a scorching[?] south wind
> blasting against the brown. Inanna stands on leashed lions,
> she slashes to pieces anyone who does not respect her.[2]

1. INTRODUCTION

Enheduanna was the daughter of Sargon of Akkad and the En-priestess of Nanna at Ur.[3] She is known from both the visual culture and textual records. From the archaeological record are seals owned by three of her servants, and a calcite disk,[4] while the most important texts relating to her are those which have been ascribed to her. These include *The Temple Hymns*, also known by its opening line e-u-nir, a collection of 42 hymns addressed to temples in southern Mesopotamia;[5] three works relating to Inana, *Inana B*, or *The Exaltation of Inana*, also known by its opening line nin-me-šara,[6] *Inana C* or in-nin ša-gur-ra,[7] and *Inana and Ebih* or in-nin me-huš-a;[8] *Nanna C*, a *balbale to Nanna*;[9] and a fragment of Ur III date.[10] All of these texts except *Inana and Ebih* bear Enheduanna's name, but there is debate over their authorship.

This debate over the authorship of the poems ascribed to Enheduanna is linked to the dating of the poems, and often to individual poems. For example, Black argues that Enheduanna was not the composer of *The*

---

[1] While I was Professor Cornelius's postdoctoral fellow, he encouraged me to write more about the Mesopotamian goddesses, and would ask when I was going to write something about Enheduanna. This contribution is therefore dedicated to him as my mentor, colleague, and friend. *Dankie vir al die hot tjoklit*.

[2] *Inana C* lines 20–23; Foster, 2016: 337

[3] For a detailed study on Enheduanna, her titles and epithets, and her cultic obligations, see Westenholz, 1989.

[4] The seals and calcite disk are discussed below.

[5] See Sjöberg / Bergmann, 1969 for a full treatment in English; and De Shong Meador, 2009 for an in-depth, but popular, study. See also ETCSL 4.80.1.

[6] For a full treatment of this text in English, see Hallo / Van Dijk, 1968; and in German, see Zgoll, 1997. See also ETCSL 4.07.2 for a transliteration and English translation and Foster, 2016: 331–336 for another English translation.

[7] For a transliteration and English translation of this text, see ETCSL 4.07.3. See also Sjöberg, 1975 for a full treatment of this poem and Foster, 2016: 336–341 for another English translation.

[8] See Bottéro / Kramer, 1989: 219–229 for a French translation and commentary of this narrative, Attinger, 1998 for a full study in French, and Attinger, 2015 for a translation and commentary in German. See also ETCSL 1.3.2 for a transliteration and English translation and Foster, 2016: 341–347 for another English translation.

[9] Or more accurately a hymn to Ekišnugal, the temple of Nanna in Ur. See Hall, 1985: 764–775 for a full treatment of this poem. For a transliteration and English translation, see Westenholz, 1989: 552–555.

[10] For a transliteration and English translation, see Westenholz, 1989: 555–556.

Temple Hymns,[11] while Civil believes that *Inana C* dates to the Isin-Larsa Period.[12] Black et al. state that *Inana B* was not written by Enheduanna, and that, at best, "we can say that En-ḫedu-ana had a scribe, known to us by his cylinder seal, and that it is possibly, even likely, that hymns were composed on her behalf—perhaps including a precursor of this one. At worst it should be pointed out that all the manuscript sources are from the second millennium BCE, mostly from the eighteenth century, some six centuries after she lived".[13] In this regard, Lambert suggests that a ghost writer wrote the Enheduanna poems.[14] However, as Bahrani points out, Enheduanna "is documented as a powerful high-ranking official in the cult of the moon god, but the authority of that position is doubted, at the same time, on no other evidence than the fact that those who held it were women. Enheduanna is also clearly recorded as the author of a number of poetical works, but her authorship has been likewise doubted on grounds of gender. This doubting of the written word is exceptional in a philological methodology that is otherwise heavily dependent on the laws of positivist empirical evidence".[15] Indeed, the *Royal Love Song for Šu-Sîn* of the Ur III Dynasty is believed to have been written by a woman,[16] which leads Westenholz to "infer that woman poets were the rule rather than the exception in third-millennium Sumer".[17] Furthermore, the inscription on Enheduanna's disk was included on the Old Babylonian copies of Akkadian royal inscriptions, indicating that the inscriptions of the En-priestess were considered as important as those of the rulers.[18] Additionally, while most rulers were not literate, the Ur III ruler Šulgi claims to have written poetry, and this is not questioned by modern scholars.[19]

Still, it remains that none of the tablets bearing her poems date to before around 1800 BCE.[20] Rubio states that Enheduanna only started being regarded as an author centuries after her death, and that "[t]his is a case of traditional authorship, not historical".[21] However, a lack of historical textual evidence does not necessarily equal a lack of evidence. For example, Winter has argued convincingly for the office of En-priestess during the Early Dynastic Period on "the weight and significance of visual evidence, *even in the absence of textual confirmation*".[22] She further argues that in this way "we see the extraordinary visual record preserved in Mesopotamian art not merely as illustration of (and hence secondary to) texts, but rather as a highly-developed system of communication in its own right".[23] In this manner, it may be possible to use the iconographic material to advance the debate over the dating of the Enheduanna poetry, and therefore to the authorship of the texts. However, as Cornelius states, we need to keep "in mind that there is never a 1:1 relationship, as iconography does not simply illustrate the texts nor do the texts merely describe the visual imagery".[24] Instead, a "mental background" should be sought.[25] Therefore, looking at the literary imagery of the Enheduanna texts, and ascertaining whether they align more closely with the iconographic imagery of the visual repertoire of the Akkadian or Old Babylonian Period, may help in determining which thought-world the poetry better represents.[26] This will be done specifically by looking at how Inana/Ištar is described in the three works ascribed to Enheduanna that deal directly with this goddess, namely, *Inana B*, *Inana C*, and *Inana and Ebih*.[27]

---

[11] Black, 2002.
[12] Civil, 2017: 677.
[13] Black et al., 2004: 316.
[14] Lambert, 2001.
[15] Bahrani, 2001: 116.
[16] Jacobsen, 1987: 85. For this poem, see Jacobsen, 1987: 88–89; and Sefati, 1998: 353–359.
[17] Westenholz, 1989: 549.
[18] Westenholz, 1989: 540.
[19] Bahrani, 2001: 116.
[20] Veldhuis, 2003: 31, n. 2.
[21] Rubio, 2009: 29.
[22] Winter, 2010: 76 (her emphasis).
[23] Winter, 2010: 76.
[24] Cornelius, 2009: 16–17.
[25] Suter, 2000: 8.
[26] An in-depth study is needed to analyse texts from these periods in order to compare the literary imagery which best aligns with that in the Enheduanna texts. This was already suggested by Hallo and Van Dijk: "It may remain for literary criticism to trace the influence of her [i.e., Enheduanna's] writings on other and later compositions" (Hallo / Van Dijk, 1969: 4). This however, falls outside the scope of the present contribution.
[27] I assume here that these three texts were composed by a single author. De Shong Meador (2009: 248) argues for a "consistent poetic voice" in the works, and Foster (2016: 207) identifies "the highly personal, singular style of the

2. VISUAL IMAGERY DIRECTLY ASSOCIATED WITH ENHEDUANNA

There is little visual imagery which can be associated with Enheduanna which has survived. The most famous is the calcite disk of Enheduanna, badly damaged in antiquity and now reconstructed from the fragments discovered at Ur (fig. 1).[28] On one side of the disk is an inscription naming Enheduanna as the dedicant of the disk, on the other side is a libation scene. This scene has been reconstructed to show a procession of four figures which approaches a four-tiered stand, usually identified as a ziggurat.[29] The first figure is a nude male who pours a libation into a large vessel, most likely a plant stand. Second is Enheduanna, wearing a flounced garment and a rolled-brim cap, identified as the aga, a headdress peculiar to the En-priestess.[30] Behind Enheduanna are two more figures which were badly damaged. Despite the first figure pouring the libation, Enheduanna's importance is portrayed through her being depicted as taller than the other three figures, and through her central placement in the scene. Winter argues convincingly, based on iconographic analysis and comparison to the Early Dynastic plaque from Ur[31] and Early Dynastic III cylinder seal,[32] that the scene on the disk of Enheduanna is a ritual libation to the moon god.[33] The circular shape of the disk, unique in Mesopotamian visual culture, was already associated with the full moon in the Ur excavation report,[34] and may also allude to the moon god. Furthermore, the disk was found in the fill of the Isin-Larsa levels of the Giparu,[35] which, as the abode of the En-priestess of the moon god, would also suggest an association with the moon god. However, the inscription on the disk, presumably self-referential, states that it was made for the Inana-ZA.ZA temple in Ur,[36] and was therefore dedicated to Inana and not to Nanna. The scene depicted upon the disk would therefore more likely be associated with Inana and not Nanna. Indeed, as Westenholz states, "the statement as well as the depiction [on the disk] portray her [Enheduanna] in relation to Inanna in one of her forms. Neither the inscription nor the picture testifies to her relationship with Nanna/Suen or anything related to his cult beyond the titles which she adopts".[37] Whether the scene depicted on the disk is associated with Nanna or with Inana,[38] it remains that neither deity is actually depicted on the disk, either in anthropomorphic, corporeal form, or symbolically.[39] The disk therefore does not reveal anything about the conception of whichever deity is being honoured by the ritual, other than that they were worthy of libation.

Two seals and one seal impression survive which are associated with Enheduanna on account of having her servants as their owners. These are the seal of Ilum-pāl[il], Enheduanna's hairdresser,[40] the seal of Adda,

---

poetry". Indeed, as shall be seen, the poems show signs of intertextuality with the same worldview and same imagery. This suggests at least that, even if Enheduanna did not produce the poems, they were the work of one author.

[28] UPenn B16665 = Moortgat, 1969: pl. 130; Aruz / Wallenfels, 2003: 200, no. 128. See also Woolley, 1955: pl. 41.d for the disk in its original condition. My thanks to Alessandro Pezzati, senior archivist at the Penn Museum for granting me permission to use this image.

[29] Although, see Glassman (2019: 340–341) for problems with this identification. Suter (2007: 324, n. 21) suggests that the structure may equally represent a deity, either Nanna or Inana-ZA.ZA, enthroned on a platform, while Glassman (2019: 341, n. 1316) offers "some sort of cult stand" as an alternative.

[30] Renger, 1967: 126–127.

[31] BM 118561 = Aruz / Wallenfels, 2003: 74, no. 33.

[32] VA 3878 = Moortgat, 1966: pl. 22.144.

[33] Winter, 2010.

[34] Woolley, 1955: 49. Although, Winter (2010: 68, n. 15) points out that the restoration of the disk as a disk is uncertain.

[35] Woolley, 1955: 172; Westenholz, 1989: 540.

[36] Frayne, 1993: 35–36; RIME E2.1.1.16.

[37] Westenholz, 1989: 540. Although, as mentioned, Winter (2010), using iconographic comparisons, argues convincingly that it is a libation for Nanna which is portrayed.

[38] The scene itself can also not be associated with one particular deity. The plant stand is depicted with worshippers on seals from Ur, and in some examples the scene can be associated with Nanna/Sîn by the inclusion of a crescent standard. See for example Legrain, 1951: pl. 18.261, 267, 277. However, Inana/Ištar herself is included in such a scene on the seal of Lugalengardu, surviving as two seal impressions, one in the Oriental Institute in Chicago, A 30769, and the other in the Yale Babylonian Collection NBC 10539. See Winter, 1987: 78, and pl. 9 for photographs of these impressions, and see Zettler, 1987: 60, fig. 1 for a reconstruction of the seal. Neither deity is therefore exclusively associated with the scene with the plant stand.

[39] Although the presence of the deity is suggested not only by the four-tiered structure, but by the libation itself.

[40] BM 120572 = Boehmer, 1965: nr. 194, pl. VI.56; Frayne, 1993: 38; RIME E2.1.1.2003.

her estate supervisor,[41] and the impression of the seal of [x]-kituš-du, her scribe.[42] The scenes depicted on these three seals (or sealings) are contest scenes. In Boehmer's catalogue of Akkadian Period glyptic, the contest scene is the most commonly represented design during the Akkadian Period,[43] and, according to Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati,[44] it was the design used by royals and officials associated directly with the royal family.[45] The use of contest scenes on the seals of Enheduanna's servants is therefore to be expected. By the time of Enmenanna, Naram-Sîn's daughter and Enheduanna's successor as En-priestess of Nanna-Sîn at Ur, the situation had changed. The seal of Ursi, her door-keeper,[46] has a presentation scene with vegetation deities, and the seal impression of her scribe[47] contains a banquet scene with the moon god and a goddess (presumably his consort), with each flanked by an attendant goddess. The moon god can be identified as such on the seal impression of Enmenanna's scribe by the crescent which surmounts his headdress, while Braun-Holzinger argues that the seated god on Ursi's seal also represents the moon god.[48] While the seals related to Enmenanna could therefore offer insight into the conception of the moon god during the Akkadian Period, the contest scenes on the seals related to Enheduanna do not similarly offer any information regarding the Akkadian Period conception, or Enheduanna's conception, of Inana.

Neither the disk nor the seals can therefore be used in an investigation into the manifestation of Enheduanna's conception of Inana in the visual culture. The iconography of Inana from the Akkadian Period to the Old Babylonian Period will therefore be analysed in relation to the literary motifs associated with Inana in the Enheduanna texts.

3. INANA AS THE GODDESS OF WAR

Inana is consistently portrayed as a goddess of war in the Enheduanna poems. In line 22 of *Inana and Ebih*, she is called "Herrin der Schlacht",[49] Lady or Mistress of Battle, while her unmatched ferocity is relayed in *Inana C* lines 53–54, "Her murderous battle no one can oppose—who rivals her? Her fierce fighting no one can look at".[50] Her destructive nature and battle prowess are portrayed, sometimes at length,[51] in a number of ways in the three works. These literary motifs are comparable to various visual iconographic motifs, particularly in the representations of the "kriegerische Ištar".[52] These various manifestations will be discussed in turn.

3.1 Inana with Lions

In *Inana and Ebih* lines 7–9, Inana is likened to a lion, "Wie ein Löwe hast *du* im Himmel und auf der Erde gebrüllt, hast die Völker erzittern lassen … wie ein grimmiger Löwe löschst du mit deinem Geifer dem Starrköpfigen und dem Ungehorsamen (*das Leben*) aus".[53] Here her fearsome nature is compared to that of a lion.

[41] IM4221 = Boehmer, 1965: nr. 204, pl. VI.53; Frayne, 1993: 38–39; RIME E2.1.1.2004.
[42] BM 123668 = Boehmer, 1965: nr. 458; pl. XI.114a–b; Frayne, 1993: 39; RIME E2.1.1.2005.
[43] 801 of the 1695 seals and seal impressions in the catalogue are contest scenes, and therefore nearly half the seals of the Akkadian Period were engraved with contest scenes. The other seals, according to Boehmer (1965), depict 28 different scenes or motifs.
[44] Buccellati / Kelly-Buccellati, 2002: 16.
[45] For more on the use of contest scenes on seals associated with royalty during the Akkadian Period, see Bucellatti / Kelly-Bucellatti, 2002: 16–18, and for more on contest scenes during this period in general, see Boehmer, 1965: 3–46, pl. I–XXIV. See Boehmer, 1965 for Akkadian Period glyptic. For an in-depth discussion on contest scenes on seals during the Akkadian Period, see Rakic, 2003.
[46] Boehmer, 1965: nr. 1287, pl. XLVI.548; Frayne, 1993: 176–177; RIME E2.1.4.2018.
[47] Boehmer, 1965: nr. 1694, pl. LXII–LXIII.725a–f; Frayne, 1993: 177; RIME E2.1.4.2020.
[48] Braun-Holzinger, 1993: 124–126. See also Van Dijk, 2016: 152–153.
[49] Attinger, 2015: 39.
[50] Sjöberg, 1975: 183.
[51] Indeed, the entirety of *Inana and Ebih* is about Inana's battle with and victory over the mountain Ebih.
[52] Discussed quite thoroughly by Colbow, 1991.
[53] Attinger, 2015: 39.

In *Inana C*, the goddess is not likened to the lion, but is associated with it. In line 23, "Inanna sits on harnessed(?) lions",[54] and in line 105, she "come[s] down from heaven riding on seven great lions".[55] In *Inana C* then, Inana is represented as so fearsome that she could conquer and control the lion, the most dangerous of wild animals. The lion thereby became her attribute through her ability to exert her power over it.

The lion as Inana/Ištar's attribute is represented in various ways in the visual repertoire in depictions of her as the "kriegerische Ištar". From the Akkadian Period, Cornelius notes one depiction on a cylinder seal in which the goddess has shafts and lion heads emerging from her shoulders.[56] More commonly, the goddess is associated with the animal itself. For example, from the beginning of the Akkadian Period is a seal where she is depicted as standing on a lion.[57] Towards the end of the Akkadian Period, this has been replaced by the more traditional and conventional depiction of her standing with one foot on the lion (fig. 2).[58] On this cylinder seal, the goddess holds the lion by a leash, recalling the harnessed lions of line 23 of *Inana C*. She is also depicted holding the sickle sword for the first time.[59] This image, with the goddess with one foot on a lion and holding a sickle sword in one hand, becomes the archetypical depiction of Inana/Ištar in the Old Babylonian Period, as for example on a seal from Ešnunna now in the Oriental Institute (fig. 3)[60] and on a terracotta plaque from Kiš now in the Louvre, where the lion is again held by a leash.[61] By this later period, she is also generally depicted holding the double lion-headed mace or "Doppellöwenkeule",[62] a weapon which again associates her with the lion, and manifests her ferocity as being greater than that of the lion. There is, however, some variation in the archetypical depiction, such as the Investiture of Zimri-Lim mural at Mari (fig. 4)[63] in which the goddess stands with one foot on a lion, holding the sickle sword in one hand and the ring-and-rod in the other. During the Old Babylonian Period, Inana/Ištar is also depicted standing on two lions.[64]

During the Akkadian Period, she is also depicted on cylinder seals as seated on a lion throne, usually with two crossed lions (fig. 5, 6).[65] Presumably, the seated Inana/Ištar on the Sargon Stela[66] was likewise enthroned on a lion throne. On one Akkadian Period seal, the goddess is seated on a lion throne and has her feet on a lion, using this lion as a footstool.[67] This type of depiction is not common after the Akkadian Period. A Neo-Sumerian cylinder seal depicts Inana/Ištar enthroned on a simple seat, but behind her, beneath the legend, are two crossed lions.[68] This goddess can further be identified as Inana/Ištar by the "Doppellöwenkeule" in the field in front of her. However, Asher-Greve and Westenholz argue that, by this period, the lion throne may be "a prerogative of Inana or of the proprietary divine couple of the city", citing some examples which may represent Bau as the consort of Ningirsu in Lagash.[69] This, however, is more likely through Ningirsu's association with the lion,[70] rather than an association with Bau, and the lion is more specifically associated with Inana/Ištar. In the few examples from the Old Babylonian Period in which Inana/Ištar is

[54] Sjöberg, 1975: 181.

[55] Foster, 2016: 339. Sjöberg (1975: 189) translates this line as "You ride on seven great dogs, you come out from heaven", while the ETCSL (4.07.3) translates it as "you ride on seven great beasts as you come forth from heaven". See Sjöberg (1975: 229, n. 105) for the possibility of translating ur-gal-gal-imin-bi as "the seven great lions". Indeed, according to Wilcke (1976–1980: 82), "Die Attributtiere der Göttin waren Löwen; unter den (großen) 'Hunden' in den Enḫeduʾanna-Dichtungen hat man sich gewiß auch Löwen vorzustellen".

[56] Cornelius, 2009: 20. VA 3605 = Boehmer, 1965: pl. XXIV.274.

[57] Boehmer, 1965: pl. XXXI.375.

[58] Oriental Institute A 27903 = Boehmer, 1965: pl. XXXII.382. My thanks to Florian Lippke, curator of the BIBLE+ORIENT Museum for granting me permission to use the images from the BODO databank.

[59] Boehmer, 1965: 68.

[60] Oriental Institute A 17898 = Frankfort, 1955: pl. 70.770.

[61] AO 10420 = Barrelet, 1968: pl. LXI.650.

[62] Porada, 1948: 46.

[63] AO 19826 = Parrot, 1958: pl. VIII–XI.

[64] For example, BLMJ 2508 = Asher-Greve / Westenholz, 2013: 432, fig. 107; YBC 10006 = Albenda, 2005: 181, fig. 3.

[65] Boehmer, 1965: pl. XXXII.383, 384, 389.

[66] Sb 2 = Moortgat, 1969: pl. 126, 127.

[67] Boehmer, 1965: pl. XXXII.387.

[68] VA 3466 = Moortgat, 1966: pl. 36.269.

[69] Asher-Greve / Westenholz, 2013: 205.

[70] For Ningirsu's association with the lion, see, for example, Marchesi, 2016.

enthroned, she does not appear to be associated with a lion, as for example, on the mural from Room 132 of Zimri-Lim's palace at Mari.[71]

3.2 Weapons

In the Enheduanna poems, Inana is said to have an array of weapons, suggesting a veritable arsenal. Indeed, this is made explicit in line 130 of *Inana and Ebih*, "Sie [Inana] öffnete das Zeughaus".[72] She is said to wield a variety of weapons in both *Inana C* and *Inana and Ebih*, although, interestingly, not in *Inana B*. In *Inana C* lines 45–46, Inana "washes the weapons with blood and gore … Axes smash heads, spears penetrate and maces are covered in blood",[73] while in line 64, "The Mistress, the proud one, holds the hip dagger in her hand".[74] In lines 40–44 of *Inana and Ebih*, and repeated in lines 99–102, Inana says of her conflict with Ebih that "Pfeile aus dem Köcher will ich genau darauf abzielen, ihm will ich einen Gürtel as Schleudersteinen flechten. Mit der Lanze will ich es plieren, Bogen- und Keulen(träger) will ich darauf richten".[75] Her shield is also mentioned in line 3, arrows in lines 6 and 75, a seven-headed mace in line 56, and her double-edged dagger, which she uses to "kill" Ebih, in line 139.[76]

In the visual repertoire, Inana/Ištar is likewise depicted with a variety of weapons during the period under discussion. During the Akkadian Period, she is regularly depicted with maces and axes emerging from her shoulders (fig. 2, 5).[77] She is also depicted holding a mace,[78] a sickle sword[79] and a weapon comprising of three maces and two spear heads.[80] While the latter may be reminiscent of the seven-headed mace mentioned in *Inana and Ebih*, this type of weapon is known from the visual repertoire where it is held not by Inana/Ištar, but by an enthroned god, probably Ningirsu, on artefacts from Tello.[81]

By the Old Babylonian Period, the goddess no longer has weapons emerging from her shoulders. Instead, she wears two quivers of arrows slung over her shoulders that are often represented merely as the "Kreuzband" across her chest. Cornelius notes that in some cases the goddess does not have quivers with arrows on her back, but maces,[82] as on a seal now in the British Museum.[83] In one hand, she holds a sickle sword or scimitar, and in the other, the "Doppellöwenkeule" (fig. 3). She is also sometimes depicted holding a bow rather than the "Doppellöwenkeule", as for example on an Old Babylonian plaque now in the Yale Babylonian Collection,[84] where she holds an arrow in the same hand as the bow, and where the two quivers across her back are also clearly shown.[85] On an Old Babylonian clay model of a chariot,[86] the goddess holds a sickle sword and a bow, and her quivers are visible at her shoulders. She stands on a lion and her astral symbol is next to her.[87]

---

[71] Parrot, 1958: pl. XVII, pl. E.

[72] Attinger, 2015: 43.

[73] ETCSL 4.07.3. The ETCSL translation has been used because the translation of the types of weapons aligns more closely to the entries in the ePSD, although zahada, translated as "mace", could perhaps instead be read as "battle axe", as in Sjöberg's (1975: 183) translation. See also Sjöberg (1975: 217–218, n. 46) for more on the translation of these words.

[74] Sjöberg, 1975: 185.

[75] Attinger, 2015: 40, 42.

[76] Attinger, 2015: 39, 41, 44.

[77] Cf. Boehmer, 1965: pl. XXXII.

[78] Boehmer, 1965: pl. XXXII.387.

[79] OI A27903 = Boehmer, 1965: pl. XXXII.382.

[80] AO 4709 = Boehmer, 1965: pl. XXVI.299. Boehmer, 1965: 65 and Asher-Greve / Westenholz, 2013: 173 follow this interpretation of the weapon. A similar triple-headed mace but without the two spear heads is held by Inana/Ištar on another Akkadian Period seal (Boehmer, 1965: pl. XXXII.383).

[81] For example, on a seal impression (YBC 13463 = Buchanan, 1981: 259, no. 673) and fragments of a stela (Börker-Klähn, 1982: pl. F.). See Van Dijk (2016: 195–196) for the argument that the figure represents Ningirsu, and also for related examples.

[82] Cornelius, 2009: 21.

[83] BM 89017 = Collon, 1986: pl. XLVIII.384.

[84] YBC 10006 = Albenda, 2005: 181, fig. 3.

[85] Albenda (2005: 180) dates the plaque to the first millennium, but the iconography is like that of the Old Babylonian Period.

[86] Colbow, 1991: pl. 29.243.

[87] AO 10479 = Barrelet, 1968: pl. LIX.623. The relationship between Inana and the lion is discussed above, and Inana's

3.3 Inana and the Net

In *Inana C*, Inana is represented as using a net. In lines 65–66, this net is used for hunting, "Her fishing net heaps up fish in the deep … As if she were a clever fowler no bird escapes her fine-meshed net which she has stretched out".[88] However, in line 85, it is not wild animals that are caught in her net, but her enemies, "The ones who do not know fear of her net do not escape … when she stretches out the fine meshes of her net".[89] These two uses for the net are not meant to be understood as mutually exclusive, but rather as symbolic of each other. As Von der Osten-Sacken states, representations of deities with humans in nets are not meant to reflect actual use, but are a manner of demonstrating the power and superiority of the gods, who catch humans in nets like fish or birds.[90] Deities using nets to hold enemies are rarely depicted in the visual culture, but the examples which exist are well known. On the Sargon Stela, Inana/Ištar is associated with a net in which enemies are caught. On this stela, Sargon is holding the net and smashing the enemy leader's head with a mace. This recalls Ningirsu, who likewise holds his net (or the Anzû symbol above the net) and smashes the enemy ruler's head with a mace on Eannatum's Stela of the Vultures.[91] Nigro, however, argues that, in contrast to Eannatum's Stela of the Vultures, it is not the god, but the ruler who holds the net on the Sargon Stela, and Sargon is therefore given primary merit for the victory rather than Inana/Ištar.[92] Nevertheless, the goddess's larger size and seated position still portray her as being superior to Sargon.

3.4 Nose Rope and Neck Stock

Lines 8–9 of *Inana C* have been variously translated. Sjöberg translates them as "she holds a halter in her hand, she is their (of the gods) first, She is a huge neckstock clamping down upon the gods of the land",[93] while the ETCSL translation reads, "she holds a shepherd's crook and she is their magnificent pre-eminent one. She is a huge shackle clamping down upon the gods of the Land".[94] Foster translates these lines as "she holds the lead rope in her hand, as she goes before them, She is a massive neck stock holding firm the gods of this land".[95] The differences relevant to the present contribution are that šibir is translated by Sjöberg as "halter", by the ETCSL as "shepherd's crook" and by Foster as "lead rope", and that Sjöberg and Foster both translate ^{giš}rab$_3$ as "neck stock", while the ETCSL translates it as "shackle". According to the ePSD, šibir means "shepherd's staff; sceptre", but Sjöberg notes that it means "nose-rope, lead-rope, halter".[96] In *Inana C*, Inana is presented as a powerful and violent goddess, and the ETCSL's translation of "shepherd's crook", an implement used to safeguard and guide, therefore does not fit with the literary imagery or context of this poem. The ePSD translates ^{giš}rab$_3$ as "clamp; neck stock; hoop", but also acknowledges that the ETCSL translates it as "shackle". By taking the visual imagery into consideration, clear arguments can be put forward for the translation of šibir as "nose rope" or "lead rope" and for the translation of ^{giš}rab$_3$ as "neck stock".

3.4.1 Nose Rope

From the Akkadian Period comes a vessel fragment with a bound prisoner with a nose rope.[97] A second rope which passes behind this prisoner has been reconstructed to be the nose rope attached to a second prisoner (fig. 7).[98] Both ropes would have been held by a third figure. The nose rope is associated directly with Inana/Ištar on rock reliefs dating from around 2000 BCE. Inana/Ištar is portrayed holding a nose rope attached to a defeated enemy in the relief of Annubanini at Sarpol-I Zohab (fig. 8).[99] Weapons emerge from her shoulders, and her astral disk is found next to her head. Another relief from Sarpol-I Zohab is badly

---

astral nature is discussed below.

[88] Sjöberg, 1975: 185.

[89] Sjöberg, 1975: 187.

[90] Von der Osten-Sacken, 1998–2001: 241.

[91] AO 16109, 50, 2346, 2348 = Moortgat, 1969: pl. 118.

[92] Nigro, 1998: 86–87.

[93] Sjöberg, 1975: 179.

[94] ETCSL 4.07.3.

[95] Foster, 2016: 336.

[96] Sjöberg, 1975: 210, n. 9.

[97] AO 5683 = Amiet, 1976: 88, no. 24.

[98] Ornan, 2007: 65, fig. 5. My thanks to Tallay Ornan for giving me permission to reproduce this image.

[99] Sarpol-I Zohab II = Colbow, 1991: pl. 8.60.

damaged,[100] but has a very similar design in which the ruler tramples a fallen adversary, while the goddess, who faces the ruler, holds a ring and a nose rope in one hand. In these Sarpol-I Zohab reliefs, Inana/Ištar is shown to be directly responsible for the victories of the rulers by holding the nose rope.[101] Suter suggests that the motif of Inana/Ištar "extending a ring to which captives are leashed by nose-rings probably dates back to the kings of Akkad", but that the rock reliefs from Sarpol-I Zohab were more likely modelled on Ur III imagery which revived the Akkadian tradition, rather than on an original Akkadian monument.[102]

On the reconstructed seal impression of Šu-Ilīia of Ešnunna, a contemporary of Ibbi-Sîn of Ur during the late Ur III Period,[103] it is Tišpak who holds the lead rope which is attached to the noses of two defeated enemies beneath his feet. Ornan notes that it is "puzzling" that a god is depicted holding defeated enemies with lead ropes, as it was usually Inana/Ištar who was thus depicted.[104] She also notes that this aligns with the textual evidence in which it was "only Ishtar who was entrusted with the role of seizing both men and kings with ropes". Frankfort, Lloyd, and Jacobsen note that the seal "is most remarkable in that it shows the traditions of Akkadian art still ruling supreme at Eshnunna as late as the last years of the Third Dynasty of Ur".[105]

3.4.2 Neck Stock

With regard to the neck stock, six nude captives with their necks in a ladder-shaped neck stock are depicted on one of the fragments from the Nasiriyah Stela.[106] The captives' arms are also tied behind their backs at the forearms. Nigro argues that the captives on the upper register of the Sargon Obelisk[107] are bound together with a neck stock like that on the Nasiriyah Stela "since the leaning posture of the first three figures suggests they are held back by the neck".[108]

While there is relatively little evidence for neck stocks from the period under discussion, there is even less clear evidence for shackles. From the earlier Early Dynastic III Period, a god is depicted shackled at the wrists and ankles on a seal from Nuzi.[109] On the reverse of the stela from Mardin, attributed to Šamši-Addad I,[110] is a figure whom Moortgat-Correns describes as "ein hoher Gefangener … dessen Hände gefesselt sind".[111] It is, however, unclear whether this figure is bound by rope or shackled. Indeed, captives are more commonly depicted with their arms tied with rope, either at the wrists or at the forearms, than they are in shackles.[112] This is the case during the Akkadian Period, as on the Nasiriyah Stela, mentioned above, as well

[100] Sarpol-I Zohab III = Colbow, 1991: pl. 8.61; Suter, 2018: 15, Fig. 2. My thanks to Claudia Suter for giving me permission to reproduce this image.

[101] Inana/Ištar is also shown holding nose ropes attached to defeated enemies on the roundel of Naram-Sîn. Cf. Aruz / Wallenfels, 2003: 206–207, catalogue number 133. In this example, Inana passes the nose ropes, attached to a ring, to a deified Naram-Sîn, and, therefore, she is indirectly responsible for the victory of Naram-Sîn over the defeated enemies. In this way, Naram-Sîn is shown to be foremost in power. For a full discussion on this work, see Hansen, 2002. See, however, Braun-Holzinger, 2017 for iconographic, stylistic, and technical arguments against the roundel's authenticity. For this reason, the roundel is not discussed in this contribution.

[102] Suter, 2010: 335.

[103] Excavation number As. 31.670 = Frankfort / Lloyd / Jacobsen, 1940: 215, fig. 100.B; Frayne, 1997: 435; RIME E3/2.3.1.1. Identified by Ornan, 2007: 66–67 as the seal of Attaia, one of Šu-Ilīia's servants.

[104] Ornan, 2007: 66–67.

[105] Frankfort / Lloyd / Jacobsen, 1940: 202.

[106] IM 59205 = Moortgat, 1969: pl. 136. See McKeon, 1970: 230, fig. 6.(1) for a proposed reconstruction of the stela from which this fragment came.

[107] Sb 1 = Moortgat, 1969: pl. 125.

[108] Nigro, 1998: 96.

[109] BM 123279 = Boehmer, 1965: pl. XXV.283.

[110] AO 2776 = Moortgat, 1969: pl. 205.

[111] Moortgat-Correns, 1952–1953: 294.

[112] Prisoners are first depicted with their hands tied behind their backs during the late Uruk/Jemdet Nasr Period, see Rova, 1994: pl. 32.566 for a composite drawing of seal impressions VA 10744 where the arms of the different prisoners are tied behind the back either at the forearms or at the wrists. This type of depiction becomes more common during the Early Dynastic Period where there was already variation as to where the arms were bound. For example, on a frieze from Palace A at Kiš, the hands are tied behind the backs at the wrists, while on the Standard of Ur the arms are tied behind the back at the forearms. For the Kiš frieze, see Langdon, 1924: pl. 36.1 and 36.3 and for the Standard of Ur, see BM 121201, Woolley, 1934: pl. 90–93.

as a stela fragment from Susa,[113] and the upper register of the Sargon Obelisk. Although only the lower half of this register survives, the captives' hands are tied behind their back as in the stela fragment from Susa. The motif of captives with their arms tied is not restricted to the Akkadian Period; on the third register of the Old Babylonian Stela of Daduša of Ešnunna,[114] two naked prisoners have their hands bound behind their backs at the wrists.[115] These examples, however, are from human victory scenes. On an Akkadian Period seal now in the British Museum,[116] three gods lead a bird-man before Enki, who can be identified by the streams issuing from his shoulders. The hands of the bird-man are tied behind the back and one of the gods leads it to Enki by a rope around its neck. On the Annubanini rock relief (fig. 8), the captives whom Inana/Ištar holds by the nose rope have their arms tied behind their backs at the wrists. There are, however, no known examples of captives shackled in association with the goddess. There are also no known examples of captives in neck stocks directly associated with Inana/Ištar. Nevertheless, prisoners in neck stocks are better represented in the extant visual evidence than prisoners in shackles. From this perspective, it appears more likely that line 9 of *Inana C* refers to a neck stock than to shackles. Furthermore, the nose rope is well represented in the visual repertoire of the second half of the third millennium, and is particularly associated with Inana/Ištar. The iconographic evidence therefore supports a reading of šibir and ^{giš}rab$_3$ in lines 8–9 of *Inana C* as "nose rope" or "lead rope", and "neck stock" respectively.

4. INANA AND EBIH

Inana and Ebih most presents Inana as a violent war goddess. In this myth, she fights and defeats the mountain Ebih for not bowing before her and acknowledging her superiority. It is the narrative which presents her at her most violent and actively engaged in battle. This narrative is even referenced in *Inana C* line 111, "(But) Epiḫ did not bow down before you, did not greet you".[117] The narrative may be referenced on cylinder seals during the Akkadian Period as well.

On the cylinder seal of the scribe Zaganita, Inana/Ištar is depicted standing on a mountain with a naked god below it.[118] Volk suggests that the scene depicts Inana and Šukaletuda, the gardener who rapes her in the Sumerian narrative *Inana and Šukaletuda*.[119] However, the male figure on the seal can be identified as a god by his horned headdress, so he cannot represent Šukaletuda. Winter suggests the god beneath the mountain is Šamaš rising through the sun gate,[120] but in other depictions of the sun god rising, he is depicted between two mountains, he is clothed, and he has either rays emanating from his shoulders, holds his serrated sword, or both.[121] Barrelet discusses the seal at some length, suggesting that the male figure is a god supporting a mountain, or a "génie assimilé à la montagne elle-même".[122] Before reaching this conclusion, she suggests and excludes various interpretations, such as the god representing the sun god emerging from the mountains, or a vegetation god reviving after rainfall, or the figure being a mountain god. This last interpretation, however, is the most convincing, taking into consideration Boehmer's description of this scene as the goddess trampling a mountain, while a god flees from beneath it.[123] Indeed, the foot of the goddess does not rest on the mountain, but on the god himself, and therefore the goddess is not trampling and subduing the mountain, but the god who is intrinsically linked with the mountain. It is possible then that this mountain-god pairing is meant to represent Ebih. Ebih is, after all, represented at least semi-anthropomorphically in the narrative. The mountain is said to have had a nose (line 34), lips (line 35), and a neck (line 141). In the text, Ebih is therefore also a combination of mountain and anthropomorph. The mountain-god pairing on the seal aligns

[113] Sb 3 = Moortgat, 1969: pl. 138.
[114] IM 95200 = Nadali, 2008: 143, fig. 1, 2. For more on the Stela of Daduša, see Nadali, 2008 and Suter, 2018.
[115] The stela is badly damaged and this is only clear for one of the captives, but presumably the second was similarly bound.
[116] BM 103317 = Boehmer, 1965: pl. XLIII.510.
[117] Sjöberg, 1975: 189.
[118] AO 11569 = Boehmer, 1965: pl. XXXII.379.
[119] Volk, 1995: 65–68. Volk provides a full German treatment of this narrative. See also Bottéro / Kramer, 1989 for a French translation and commentary and ETCSL 1.3.3 for a transliteration and English translation.
[120] Winter, 1983: 217–218.
[121] See Boehmer, 1965: pl. XXXIII.392–XXXVI.429.
[122] Barrelet, 1955: 223.
[123] Boehmer, 1965: 67.

with the literary imagery of Ebih the mountain, and the seal may therefore depict Inana defeating Ebih, or at least recall this episode.

Inana/Ištar with the defeated Ebih may be depicted on another Akkadian seal.[124] Inana/Ištar, identifiable by the maces emerging from her back, is seated on a theomorphic mountain which serves as her throne. This theomorphic mountain has a scalloped "body" that forms the seat of the throne, while the head and arm form part of the "footstool" and two feet emerge from the back of the throne. This graphic depiction of Inana/Ištar's subdual of and mastery over a mountain god is comparable to Inana's claim in lines 160–161 that "wie ein großer Ur wurdest du [Ebih] bei deinen stämmigen Schultern (ergriffen und) zu Boden geworfen, wie bei einem Rind habe ich deine Riesenschultern zu Boden gedrückt, dich bösartig stürzen lassen",[125] and in line 171 that "Einen Thron habe ich dort hingestellt".[126] In *Inana and Ebih*, the goddess literally forces Ebih to her will, and the goddess sitting on a throne formed by the body of a mountain god would represent this idea as well.

On a seal from Ur,[127] a god and goddess attack a naked god on a mountain while a fourth god looks on. Woolley identifies the god as Šamaš, although there are no attributes to identify him as such.[128] The goddess has weapons emerging from her shoulders, identifying her as Inana/Ištar. She grasps the mountain god's hair in one hand and, in the other, she holds what Collon identifies as a dagger.[129] This is exactly the type of weapon which she uses to dispatch Ebih (lines 140 and 142) and this scene may recall *Inana and Ebih*. A similar scene from another seal from Ur[130] depicts the goddess and a god again defeating a god seated on a mountain, and may similarly recall *Inana and Ebih*. However, in the narrative, Inana has no assistance when she fights Ebih and these seals therefore probably do not depict the culmination of *Inana and Ebih*, if by chance they do recall it. They may, however, indicate that Inana/Ištar doing battle with and defeating mountains or mountain deities was a common idea in the thought-world of the Akkadian Period.

5. INANA IN RELATION TO THE STORM

Inana is portrayed either as the storm, like the storm, or associated with the storm in all three of the works under discussion. Line 4 of *Inana and Ebih* has been variously translated. Foster translates it as "[Inana,] Keeping storm and flood as your reserve",[131] while the ETCSL translates it as "[Inana,] covered in storm and flood".[132] Attinger's translation, however, links her association with the storm with her aspect as a warrior goddess, "[Inana,] die Sturm und Sturmflut (als Waffen) ergriffen hat".[133] Indeed, as Abusch states, Inana/Ištar "is a rain-goddess who, like other storm gods, is also a war goddess and personifies the battle-line".[134] Storm deities could be understood to embody both the fertile rains and the violent storms.[135] With this in mind, Inana/Ištar as goddess of both sexual love and of war,[136] and therefore the related fertility and violence, is the storm god *par excellence*. Her association with the storm is also portrayed and expanded upon in *Inana B*. In lines 10–11, Inana is praised, "When you roar at the earth like Thunder, no vegetation can stand up to you. A flood descending from its mountain".[137] Similarly, lines 28–30 describe Inana as follows: "In the guise of a charging storm you charge. With a roaring storm you roar. With Thunder you continually thunder".[138] However, the word translated by Hallo and Van Dijk in line 10 and line 30 as "Thunder" is

[124] AO 4709 = Boehmer, 1965: pl. XXVI.299.
[125] Attinger, 2015: 44.
[126] Attinger, 2015: 44.
[127] BM 136776 = Boehmer, 1965: pl. XXIX.352.
[128] Woolley, 1934: 361.
[129] Collon, 1982: 71.
[130] Boehmer, 1965: pl. XXIX.341.
[131] Foster, 2016: 341.
[132] ETCSL 1.3.2.
[133] Attinger, 2015: 39.
[134] Abusch, 1999: 453.
[135] Green, 2003: 15.
[136] For more on Inana/Ištar's role(s) as goddess of sexual love and war during the period under discussion, see most recently Van Dijk-Coombes, 2020.
[137] Hallo / Van Dijk, 1969: 15.
[138] Hallo / Van Dijk, 1969: 19.

[d]iškur, literally the storm god.[139] Inana is therefore explicitly described as being like the storm god (line 10), and as being with the storm god (line 30). Foster translates line 29 as "You raise your battle cry, like a raging storm",[140] thereby again linking Inana's aspects of war goddess and storm goddess. He repeats this idea in his translation of *Inana C* line 52, "Her battle cry is like thunder",[141] although here the word he translates as "thunder" is [d]iškur. Sjöberg's translation, "Her howling is like Iškur's",[142] which identifies the storm god, is therefore a better rendering of this line. Inana's association with the storm is also presented in line 21, "A furious stormwind(?), prepared for battle … a whirlwind(?)",[143] the latter part of which Foster translates rather poetically as "whirling in battle".[144] Inana is therefore consistently associated with the storm, with the storm god Iškur, and/or as the storm goddess, particularly with the destructive aspects associated with each, in the Enheduanna texts.

On a series of Akkadian Period seals, the storm god, standing either on a lion-griffin or in a chariot, is accompanied by a nude female figure who stands on a lion-griffin and who sometimes wears a horned headdress marking her divine status (fig. 9).[145] Boehmer identifies these figures as the thunder god and the lightning goddess.[146] According to Dietz and Otto, this goddess is likely the rain goddess, Šala.[147] Otto, however, acknowledges that this is uncertain because Šala's name first appears in texts from the Old Babylonian Period.[148] Otto further suggests that these depictions could be evidence for Šala's origin being in northern Mesopotamia, or for the syncretism with Šalaš, who is known from the second half of the third millennium. However, the majority of these seals are from the art market and are therefore unprovenanced. The one example found in excavations is from Ur[149] and can therefore not suggest a northern Mesopotamian origin for this goddess.[150] If this goddess is not Šala, she may be Inana/Ištar in her aspect of a storm goddess. Indeed, Inana/Ištar is the only goddess explicitly associated with Iškur during the Akkadian Period.[151] However, the goddess on the seals is not shown in an obviously violent or destructive context, as Inana is in the Enheduanna poems when associated with the storm. While Inana/Ištar is consistently depicted as the "kriegerische Ištar" during the period under discussion, she is only shown as actively taking part in destructive behaviour on the seals possibly associated with Ebih, as discussed above. That the "lightning goddess" is not actively involved in violence is therefore not contradictory to the iconography of Inana/Ištar during this period. Indeed, although it dates to a later period, Asher-Greve and Westenholz suggest that an *en face* goddess holding a "Doppellöwenkeule" and standing on two addorsed lion-griffins on an Old Babylonian seal[152] is Annunītum, the manifestation of the warlike aspect of Ištar.[153] The lion-griffin could then be associated with Inana/Ištar,

[139] This word is translated by Foster in line 10 as "a tempest" (Foster 2016: 331) and in line 30 as a "thunderclap" (Foster 2016: 332), and in both lines it is translated by the ETCSL (4.07.2) as Iškur.
[140] Foster, 2016: 332.
[141] Foster, 2016: 338.
[142] Sjöberg, 1975: 183. A translation also employed in ETCSL 4.07.3.
[143] Sjöberg, 1975: 181.
[144] Foster, 2016: 337.
[145] Boehmer, 1965: pl. XXVIII.333, XXXI.367, 368, 371, 372, 373, nr. 942.
[146] Boehmer, 1965: 62–64.
[147] Dietz / Otto, 2016: 91.
[148] Otto, 2006–2008: 568. Indeed, Ziffer (2019: 6) discusses an Old Babylonian Period cylinder seal (BM 102551 = Collon, 1986: pl. XXII.279) upon which are a frontal nude female figure and a lightning fork surmounting a bull. The seal is inscribed with the names of Iškur and Šala. Because both the lightning fork and the bull are associated with the storm god, Ziffer argues that the inscription identifies the nude female as Šala. Although this would mean that at least some of the frontal nude female figures from the Old Babylonian Period would represent this goddess, it does not presuppose that the nude female figure surmounting the lion-griffin during the Akkadian Period represents the same figure.
[149] Legrain, 1951: pl. 7.92; Boehmer, 1965: pl. XXXI.372.
[150] A seal from Nimrud in the north (BM 89089 = Boehmer, 1965: pl. XXXI.369) is usually considered with these examples, but the figure on this seal differs from the "lightning goddess" in at least three ways; the figure is clothed, not nude; water streams all around the figure, unlike the goddess who holds lightning; and the figure is not associated with a lion-griffin, but stands above a bull which is being attacked by another god, and is therefore more likely associated with the latter. This figure therefore does not conform to the iconography of the "lightning goddess", and should not be considered with the other examples.
[151] In *Inana B* and *Inana C* as discussed above, if these two poems do indeed originate in the Akkadian Period.
[152] BM 89058 = Collon, 1986: pl. XXX.401.
[153] Asher-Greve / Westenholz, 2013: 260.

although this does not appear to have been generally the case during the Akkadian Period. The "lightning goddess" may therefore be Inana/Ištar in her guise as a storm goddess, although this is by no means clear.

Inana/Ištar may be related to the storm in another way in the Enheduanna poetry and visual record. Hallo and Van Dijk translate line 17 of *Inana B* as "Devastatrix of the lands, you are lent wings by the storm" and line 27 as "Oh my lady, (propelled) on your own wings, you peck away (at the land)".[154] They describe Inana in these lines "as the winged goddess, the flying Inanna who, in the guise of the storm(god), pounces on every unsuspecting culprit among sinful nations".[155] Therefore, when Inana/Ištar is depicted with wings in the visual repertoire, particularly in her guise as the "kriegerische Ištar", her wings may be indicating her violent nature as both storm goddess and warrior goddess. The goddess is first depicted with wings on the Akkadian Period seal of Adda.[156] Wiggermann notes that during the Akkadian Period, she is sometimes depicted with wings, but that this is not the norm (fig. 2),[157] and that only one example of the winged goddess is known from the Old Babylonian Period at Mari on the seal of Mukannišum.[158]

However, according to the ePSD, a_2, the word translated by Hallo and Van Dijk as "wings", means "arm; labour; wing; horn; side; strength; side; wage; power", and according to Heimpel, a_2 … $šum_2$ should be translated as "to give strength" rather than "to give wings".[159] Zgoll therefore translates a_2 as "Kraft", in line 17, "Zerstörerin der feindlichen Länder—dem Sturm hast dur Kraft gegeben",[160] and in line 27, "Meine Herrin! Durch deine Kraft zermalmt der Zahn selbst Feuerstein".[161] The winged Inana/Ištar is therefore not found or explained in *Inana B*. Tsukimoto suggests that the wings were a symbol of swiftness and protection.[162] However, because in two of the Akkadian examples[163] the goddess is depicted as the "kriegerische Ištar", in one example trampling the mountain-god pairing and in the other associated with her lion, it seems unlikely that the wings are associated with protection. Rather, they appear to be associated with her warlike nature. Because her warlike nature was associated with the storm, it is possible that her wings were connected to the storm, but this is not evident in the Enheduanna texts.

6. ASTRAL INANA

The goddess is consistently represented in her astral form as the Venus star in the Enheduanna poetry. In lines 12–15 of *Inana and Ebih*, she is praised, "daß du wie der König Utu aufgehst, daß du mit weit ausgebreiteten Armen ausgreifst, daß du am Himmel *dahinziehst* und dabei Ehrfurcht einflößend strahlst, daß du auf der Erde hellen Glanz trägst, daß du, im Gebirge angekommen, *leuchtende Strahlen* aussendest". Foster translates "König Utu" of line 12 as "the kingly Sun", highlighting the astral or heavenly nature of both deities.[164] This idea is repeated in lines 209–210 of *Inana C*, "Your divinity is proclaimed in the pure heaven like (that of Nanna and Utu), Your torch lights up the (inner) corner of heaven, turning darkness into light",[165] or as the ETCSL translates line 209, "Your divinity shines in the pure heavens like Nanna or Utu".[166] *Inana B* even begins with reference to her astral nature, "Herrin über die ME, die unzähligen, Licht, strahlend

[154] Hallo / Van Dijk, 1969: 17.
[155] Hallo / Van Dijk, 1969: 51.
[156] BM 89115 = Boehmer, 1965: 66, pl. XXXII.377.
[157] Indeed, there appear to be only three examples (Tsukimoto, 2014: 16). For these seals, see Boehmer, 1965: pl. XXXII.377, 379, 382. Barrelet (1955: 225) also only mentions these three seals in her discussion on the "déesee armée et ailée", as well as a seal from the Offord Collection (Barrelet, 1955: pl. XXI.3), although this latter appears to be a clear copy of the Adda Seal.
[158] Amiet, 1960: 230, fig. 12; Wiggermann, 1993–1997: 239. With this paucity of known examples, it is curious that the winged Inana/Ištar is so often described as a common motif. For example, Groneberg (1997: 128), citing Wiggermann notes "mehrere Darstellungen der geflügelten Inanna aus der Akkade- und eine aus der aB Zeit", while Pryke (2017: 181), in turn, states that Groneberg "has noted that it is common for Ishtar to be shown with wings".
[159] Heimpel, 1971: 233.
[160] Zgoll, 1997: 3.
[161] Zgoll, 1997: 5. Similar translations are presented by the ETCSL 4.07.4 and Foster, 2016: 332.
[162] Tsukimoto, 2014: 30.
[163] Boehmer, 1965: pl. XXXII.379, 382.
[164] Foster, 2016: 342.
[165] Sjöberg, 1975: 199.
[166] ETCSL 4.07.3.

hervorgekommen, tatkräftige Frau, die den Schreckensglanz trägt, geliebt von An und Uraš",[167] and Zgoll notes that "der Preis Inanas für ihr helles Strahlen am Himmel dort ausdrücklich vor dem Hintergrund der Strahlkraft von Nanna und Utu steht".[168] Inana as Venus is therefore directly associated with the astral nature and luminescence of both the sun and moon gods. Her astral nature is also alluded to in other lines in the poems, such as line 10 of *Inana C*, "Her radiance covers the great mountain, silences the road",[169] and line 112 of *Inana B*, "von Himmelsfundament und Himmelszenit bist du die große Herrin".[170]

While Inana/Ištar is not represented as the Venus star in the visual repertoire during this period, she is associated with the astral disk.[171] This disk is located in the field next to her as early as the Akkadian Period, although this is rare (fig. 2). It is also found next to her on the Annubanini relief, as well as the related reliefs Sarpol-I Zohab relief III and IV.[172] It becomes an increasingly common association with Inana/Ištar by the Old Babylonian Period (fig. 3). On terracotta reliefs from this period, the astral symbol could be either in the form of a disk[173] or as a rosette made of balls.[174] Inana/Ištar was identified with Venus and from the Ur III Period, the goddess came to be identified with another Venus goddess, Ninsianna.[175] Braun-Holzinger identifies the goddess on Old Babylonian seals with a star surmounting her headdress and with a star-standard or astral symbol as Ninsianna.[176]

7. CONCLUSIONS

Inana/Ištar is depicted with a lion throughout the period under discussion. She stands on two lions in both the Akkadian and Old Babylonian Periods, and she stands with one foot on a lion in both periods. Her lion throne, however, is only known from the Akkadian Period. She is depicted with an array of weapons in all periods under discussion. Her net, as described in *Inana C* lines 65–66 and 85, may be depicted on the Sargon Obelisk. The nose rope and neck stock of *Inana C* lines 8–9 are also better represented in the Akkadian Period, although only the nose rope is directly associated with Inana/Ištar. Examples in which the goddess is in conflict with or victorious over a mountain, recalling *Inana and Ebih*, are also only known from the Akkadian Period. There is no clear evidence connecting Inana to the storm in the visual repertoire of the period under discussion. However, the "lightning goddess" of the Akkadian Period may represent Inana/Ištar, and it is possible, although not certain, that when she is depicted with wings, as she is three times during the Akkadian Period and once during the Old Babylonian Period, this is also associated with her aspect as a storm deity. On the other hand, while Inana/Ištar is depicted with her astral symbol from the Akkadian to the Old Babylonian Period, this is rare in the Akkadian Period, and much more common by the Old Babylonian Period. Additionally, during the Old Babylonian Period, she is also depicted, as Ninsianna, with a star surmounting her headdress, and with a star-standard, highlighting her astral nature as the Venus star.

The literary imagery therefore appears to conform more to Akkadian Period iconography than it does to the iconography of later periods, up until the Old Babylonian Period, and therefore exhibits a thought-world more aligned to that of the Akkadian Period. This may suggest that the Enheduanna poems *Inana B*, *Inana C*, and *Inana and Ebih* were produced during the same era as the Akkadian Period iconography, in other words, during the Akkadian Period. However, this may be due to the nature of the visual repertoires of the different periods. As Asher-Greve and Westenholz point out, "In the Akkadian period, the variety of themes, motifs, and figures is greater than in the Early Dynastic or post-Akkadian periods. New mythological and religious themes appear in significant numbers first and only on Akkadian seals".[177] In other words,

[167] Zgoll, 1997: 3.
[168] Zgoll, 1997: 299.
[169] Sjöberg, 1975: 179.
[170] Zgoll, 1997: 13.
[171] For the use of the astral symbol or Venus star as a symbol of Ištar on later Middle Babylonian/Kassite *kudurrus*, see Seidl, 1989: 100–101.
[172] Colbow, 1991: pl. 8.61, 9.62.
[173] For example, AO 10479 = Barrelet, 1968: pl. LIX.623.
[174] AO 10480 = Barrelet, 1968: pl. LIX.624.
[175] Heimpel, 1982: 10–11.
[176] Braun-Holzinger, 1996: 317, pl. 36.
[177] Asher-Greve / Westenholz, 2013: 171–172.

Inana/Ištar would have been depicted in a greater variety of contexts in Akkadian Period iconography than that of later periods. Therefore, although the literary imagery of the Enheduanna texts aligns more closely with Akkadian Period iconography, it is uncertain whether this is a function of the nature of the visual repertoire, or if this speaks to a connection between the two. If the latter, if, indeed, *Inana B*, *Inana C*, and *Inana and Ebih* and Akkadian Period iconography exhibit a single worldview, which is less present in the iconography of later periods, this would suggest an Akkadian Period origin of the poems, which, in turn, may suggest Enheduanna as a viable author.

Fig. 1: The disk of Enheduanna (Akkadian Period). Courtesy of the Penn Museum; image no. 295918, object no. B16665.

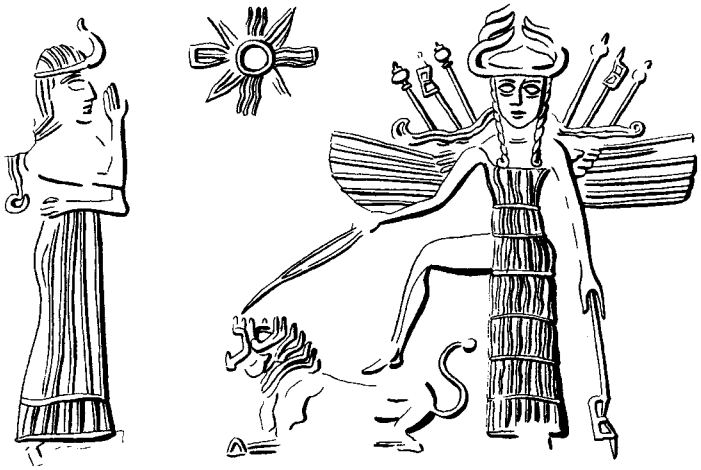


Fig. 2: Cylinder seal, Oriental Institute A 27903 (Akkadian Period). © Stiftung BIBEL+ORIENT Freiburg CH.

Fig. 3: Cylinder seal from Ešnunna, Oriental Institute A 17898 (Old Babylonian Period).

Fig. 4: Investiture of Zimri-Lim mural from Mari (Old Babylonian Period).

Fig. 5: Cylinder seal, private collection in New York (Akkadian Period).

Fig. 6: Cylinder seal, ex-Golenischtschew Collection (Akkadian Period).

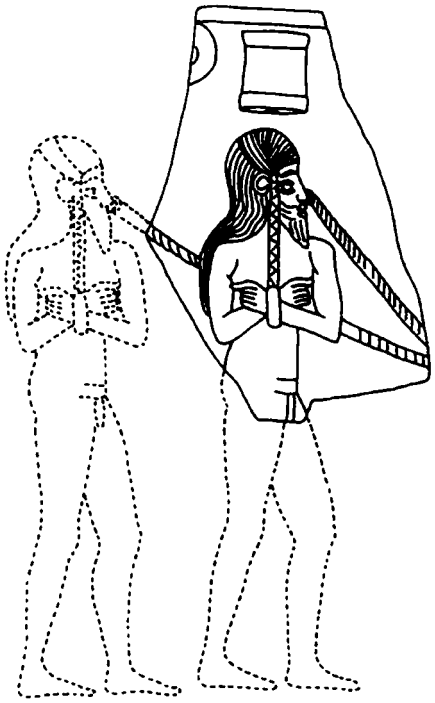


Fig. 7: Vessel fragment with proposed reconstrution (Akkadian Period). Source: Ornan, 2001: 65, fig. 5 (drawing by Pnina Arad).

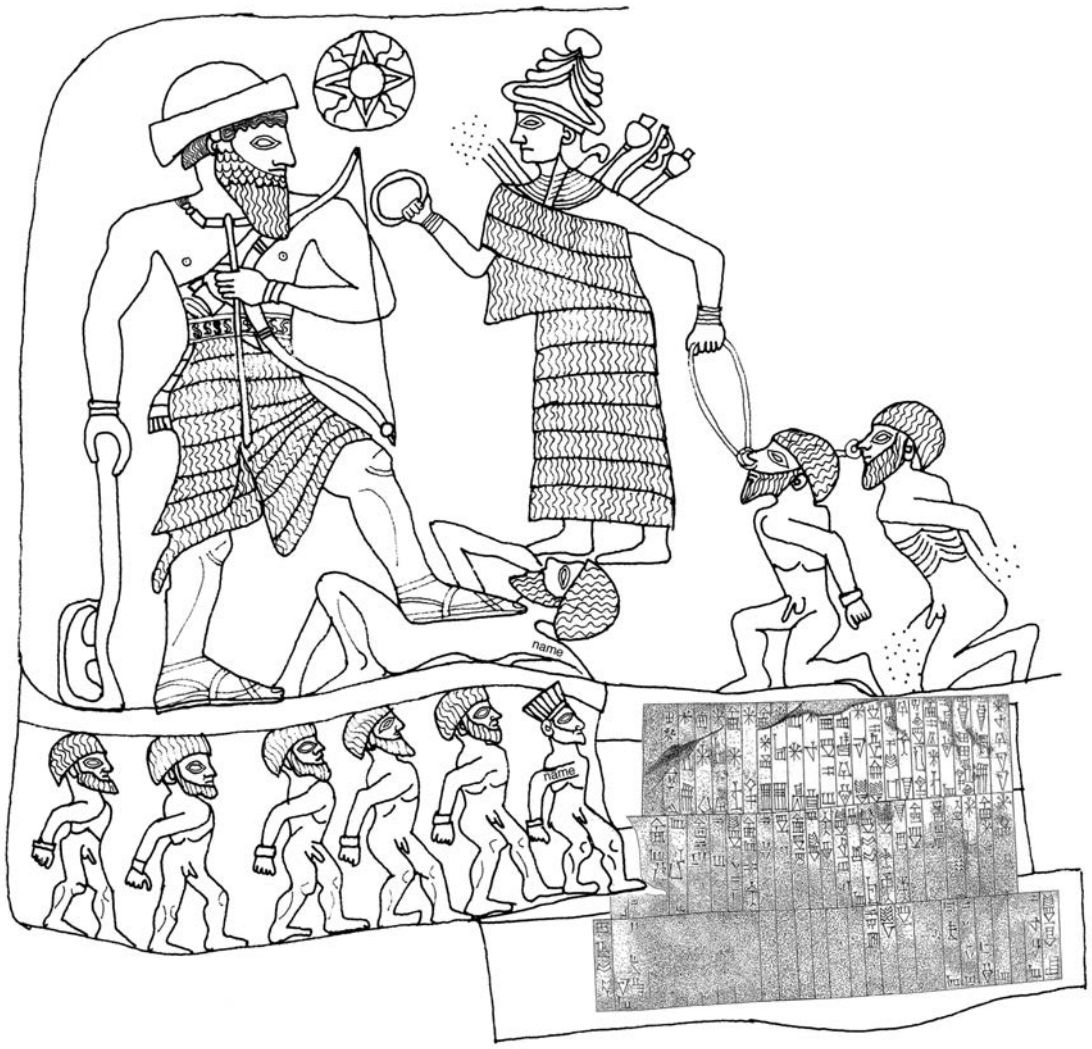


Fig. 8: Annubanini rock relief (circa 2000 BCE). Source: Suter, 2018: 15, fig. 2 (drawing by Claudia E. Suter).

Fig. 9: Cylinder seal, Morgan Seal 220 (Akkadian Period).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abusch, T., 1999: "Ishtar". In K. van der Toorn / B. Becking / P. W. van der Horst (eds.): *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*. 2nd ed. Leiden/Boston/Köln. Pp. 452–456.

Albenda, P., 2005: "The 'Queen of the Night' Plaque: A Revisit". JAOS 125/2, 171–190.

Amiet, P., 1960: "Notes sur le repertoire iconographique de Mari a l'époque du Palais". Syria 37/3, 215–232.

— 1976: *L'art d'Agadé en Musée du Louvre*. Paris.

Aruz, J. / Wallenfels, R. (eds.), 2003: *Art of the First Cities: The Third Millennium B.C. from the Mediterranean to the Indus.* New York.

Asher-Greve, J. M. / Westenholz, J. G., 2013: *Goddesses in Context: On Divine Powers, Roles, Relationships and Gender in Mesopotamian Textual and Visual Sources*. OBO 259. Fribourg/Göttingen.

Attinger, P., 1998: "Inana et Ebiḫ". ZA 88, 164–195.

— 2015: "Innana und Ebiḫ". TUAT 8, 37–45.

Bahrani, Z., 2001: *Women of Babylon: Gender and Representation in Mesopotamia*. London/New York.

Barrelet, M-T., 1955: "Les déesses armées et ailées". Syria 32 3/4, 222–260.

— 1968: *Figurines et reliefs en terre cuite de la Mésopotamie antique. Vol. 1: Potiers, termes de métier, procédés de fabrication et production*. Paris.

Black, J. A., 2002: "En-ḫedu-ana not the Composer of *The Temple Hymns*". NABU 2002, 2–4.

Black, J. A. et al., 2004: *The Literature of Ancient Sumer*. Oxford.

Boehmer, R. M., 1965: *Die Entwicklung der Glyptik während der Akkad-Zeit*. UAVA 4. Berlin.

Börker-Klähn, J., 1982: *Altvorderasiatische Bildstelen und Vergleichbare Felsreliefs*. BaF 4. Mainz am Rhein.

Bottéro, J. / Kramer, S. N., 1989: *Lorsque les dieux faisaient l'homme: Mythologie mésopotamienne*. Paris.

Braun-Holzinger, E. A., 1993: "Die Ikonographie des Mondgottes in der Glyptik des III. Jahrtausends v. Chr.". ZA 83, 119–133.

— 1996: "Altbabylonische Götter und ihre Symbole: Bennenung mit Hilfe der Siegellegenden". BaghM 27, 235–259, pl. 23–42.

— 2017: "Naramsîn und Ištar sitzen sich gegenüber: Darstellung auf einer Steinform unklarer Nutzung". ZA 107, 125–139.

Buccellati, B. / Kelly-Buccellati, M., 2002: "Tar'am-Agade, Daughter of Naram-Sin, at Urkesh". In L. Al-Gailani Werr et al. (eds.): *Of Pots and Plans: Papers on the Archaeology and History of Mesopotamia and Syria Presented to David Oates in Honour of his 75th Birthday*. London. Pp. 11–31.

Buchanan, B., 1981: *Early Near Eastern Seals in the Yale Babylonian Collection*. New Haven/London.

Civil, M., 2017: "Les limites de l'information textuelle". In L. Feliu (ed.): *Studies in Sumerian Civilization: Selected Writings of Miguel Civil.* Barcino Monographica Orientalia 7. Barcelona. Pp. 673–681.

Colbow, G., 1991: *Die kriegerische Ištar: Zu den Erscheinungsformen bewaffneter Gottheiten zwischen der Mitte des 3. und der Mitte des 2. Jahrtausends*. Münchener Universitäts-Schriften Philosophische Fakultät 12. München.

Collon, D., 1982: *Catalogue of the Western Asiatic Seals in the British Museum: Cylinder Seals II: Akkadian, post Akkadian, Ur III Periods*. London.

— 1986: *Catalogue of Western Asiatic Seals in the British Museum: Cylinder Seals III: Isin-Larsa and Old Babylonian Periods*. London.

Cornelius, I., 2009: "Aspects of the Iconography of the Warrior Goddess Ištar and Ancient Near Eastern Prophecies". In M. Nissinen / C. E. Carter (eds.): *Images and Prophecy in the Ancient Eastern Mediterranean*. FRLANT 233. Göttingen. Pp. 15–40.

De Shong Meador, B., 2009: *Princess, Priestess, Poet: The Sumerian Temple Hymns of Enheduanna*. Austin.

Dietz, A. / Otto, A., 2016: "Wettergott(heiten) B. Archäologisch. In Syrien und Mesopotamien". RlA 15, 91–100.

Foster, B. R., 2016: *The Age of Agade: Inventing Empire in Ancient Mesopotamia*. London/New York.

Frankfort, H., 1955: *Stratified Cylinder Seals from the Diyala Region*. OIP 72. Chicago.

Frankfort, H. / Lloyd, S. / Jacobsen, T., 1940: *The Gimilsin Temple and the Palace of the Rulers at Tell Asmar.* OIP 43. Chicago.

Frayne, D., 1993: *Sargonic and Gutian Periods (2334–2113 BC)*. RIME 2. Toronto.

— 1997: *Ur III Period (2112–2004 BC).* RIME 3/2. Toronto.

Glassman, M. D., 2019: *The Mesopotamian Temple Tower*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation. Yale University.
Green, A. R. W., 2003: *The Storm-god in the Ancient Near East*. Biblical and Judaic Studies 8. Winona Lake.
Groneberg, B. R. M., 1997: *Lob der Ištar: Gebet und Ritual an die Altbabylonische Venusgöttin*. CM 8. Groningen.
Hall, M. G., 1985: *A Study of the Sumerian Moon-god Nanna/Suen*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Philadelphia.
Hallo, W. W. / Van Dijk, J. J. A., 1968: *The Exaltation of Inanna*. Yale Near Eastern Researches 3. New York.
Hansen, D. P., 2002: "Through the Love of Ishtar". In L. Al-Gailani Werr et al. (eds.): *Of Pots and Plans: Papers on the Archaeology and History of Mesopotamia and Syria Presented to David Oates in Honour of his 75th Birthday*. London. Pp. 91–112.
Heimpel, W., 1971: "Review: The Exaltation of Inanna by William W. Hallo and J. J. A. van Dijk". JNES 30/3, 232–236.
— 1982: "A Catalog of Near Eastern Venus Deities". Syro-Mesopotamian Studies 4/3, 9–22.
Jacobsen, T., 1987: *The Harps that Once… Sumerian Poetry in Translation*. New Haven/London.
Lambert, W. G., 2001: "Ghost-writers?" NABU 2001, 77.
Langdon, S., 1924: *Excavations at Kish: The Herbert Weld and Field Museum of Natural History Expedition to Mesopotamia, Vol. 1: 1923–1924*. Paris.
Legrain, L., 1951: *Seal Cylinders*. UE 10. London/Philadelphia.
Marchesi, G., 2016: "Gudea and the Master of the Lions: Philological Notes on the Louvre Dish AO 153. JNES 75/1, 85–89.
McKeon, J. F. X., 1970: "An Akkadian Victory Stele". Boston Museum Bulletin 68, 226–243.
Moortgat, A., 1966: *Vorderasiatische Rollsiegel: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Steinschneidkunst*. Berlin.
— 1969: *The Art of Ancient Mesopotamia: The Classical Art of the Near East*. London/New York.
Moortgat-Correns, U., 1952–1953: "Westsemitisches in der Bildkunst Mesopotamiens". AfO 16, 287–294.
Nadali, D., 2008: "La Stele di Daduša come documento storico dell'età paleobabilonese: Immagini e iscrizione a confronto". Vicino Oriente XIV, 129–146.
Nigro, L., 1998: "The Two Steles of Sargon: Iconology and Visual Propaganda at the Beginning of Royal Akkadian Relief". Iraq 60, 85–102.
Ornan, T., 2007: "Who is Holding the Lead Rope? The Relief of the Broken Obelisk". Iraq 69, 59–72.
Otto, A., 2006–2008: "Šāla B. Archäologisch". RlA 11, 568–569.
Parrot, A., 1958: *Mission archéologique de Mari, Vol. II: Le palais: Peintures murales*. Paris.
Porada, E., 1948: *Corpus of Ancient Near Eastern Seals in North American Collections: The Collection of the Pierpont Morgan Library*. Vols. 1–2. Washington.
Pryke, L., 2017: *Ishtar*. London/New York.
Rakic, Y. Z., 2003: *The Contest Scene in Akkadian Glyptic: A Study of its Imagery and Function within the Akkadian Empire*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania.
Renger, J., 1967: "Untersuchungen zum Priestertum in der altbabylonischen Zeit". ZA 58, 110–188.
Rova, E., 1994: *Ricerche sui sigilli a cilindro vicino-orientali del periodo di Uruk/Jemdet Nasr.* OAC XX. Rome.
Rubio, G., 2009: "Sumerian Literature". In C. S. Ehrlich (ed.): *From an Antique Land: An Introduction to Ancient Near Eastern Literature.* Lanham. Pp. 11–75, 446–462.
Sefati, Y., 1998: *Love Songs in Sumerian literature: Critical Edition of the Dumuzi-Inanna Songs*. Ramat-Gan.
Seidl, U., 1989: *Die babylonischen Kudurrureliefs: Symbole mesopotamischer Gottheiten.* OBO 87. Fribourg/Göttingen.
Sjöberg, Å. W., 1975: "in-nin šà-gur$_4$-ra: A Hymn to the Goddess Inanna by the En-priestess Enḫeduanna". ZA 65, 161–253.
Sjöberg, Å. W. / Bergmann, E., 1969: "The Collection of the Sumerian Temple Hymns". In Å.W. Sjöberg / E. Bergmann / G. B. Gragg (eds.): *The Collection of the Sumerian Temple Hymns*. Texts from Cuneiform Sources III. Locust Valley. Pp. 3–154.
Suter, C. E., 2000: *Gudea's Temple Building: The Representation of an Early Mesopotamian Ruler in Text and Image*. CM 17. Groningen.

— 2007: “Between Human and Divine: High Priestesses in Images from the Akkad to the Isin-Larsa Period”. In J. Cheng / M. H. Feldman (eds.): *Ancient Near Eastern Art in Context: Studies in Honor of Irene J. Winter by her Students*. CHANE 26. London/Boston. Pp. 319–349.

— 2010: “Ur III Kings in Images: A Reappraisal”. In H.D. Baker / E. Robson / G. Zólyomi (eds.): *Your Praise is Sweet: A Memorial Volume for Jeremy Black from Students, Colleagues and Friends.* London. Pp. 317–358.

— 2018: “The Victory Stele of Dadusha of Eshnunna: A New Look at Its Unusual Culminating Scene”. Ash-sharq 2/2, 1–29.

Tsukimoto, A., 2014: “‘In the Shadow of thy Wings’: A Review of the Winged Goddess in Ancient Near Eastern Iconography”. In D. T. Sugimoto (ed.): *Transformation of a Goddess: Ishtar—Astarte—Aphrodite*. OBO 263. Fribourg/Göttingen.

Van Dijk, R. M., 2016: *The Form, Function and Symbolism of Standards in Ancient Mesopotamia during the Third and Fourth Millennia BCE: An Iconographical Study*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Stellenbosch University.

Van Dijk-Coombes, R. M., 2020: “‘Lady of Battle, His Beloved Spouse’: The Relationship between the Body of Inana/Ištar and Her Spheres of Love and War from the Jemdet Nasr to the Old Babylonian Period”. WO 50/1, 146–176.

Veldhuis, N., 2003: “Sumerian Literature”. In G. J. Dorleijn / H. L. J. Vanstiphout (eds.): *Cultural Repertoires: Structure, Function and Dynamics*. Leuven. Pp. 29–44.

Volk, K., 1995: *Inanna und Šukaletuda: Zur historisch-politischen Literaturwerkes*. SANTAG 3. Wiesbaden.

Von der Osten-Sacken, E., 1998–2001: “Netz B. In der Bildkunst”. RlA 9, 239–242.

Westenholz, J. G., 1989: “Enheduanna, En-priestess, Hen of Nanna, Spouse of Nanna”. In H. Behrens / D. Loding / M. T. Roth (eds.): *DUMU-E_2-DUB-BA-A: Studies in Honor of Åke W. Sjöberg*. Occasional Publications of the Samuel Noah Kramer Fund 11. Philadelphia. Pp. 539–556.

Wiggermann, F. A. M., 1993–1997: “Mischwesen. A. Philologisch. Mesopotamien”. RlA 8, 222–246.

Wilcke, C., 1976–1980: “Inanna/Išar A. Mesopotamien. Philologisch”. RlA 5, 74–87.

Winter, I. J., 1987: “Legitimization of Authority through Image and Legend: Seals belonging to Officials in the Administrative Bureaucracy of the Ur III State”. In M. Gibson / R. D. Biggs (eds.): *The Organization of Power: Aspects of Bureaucracy in the Ancient Near East*. Chicago. Pp. 69–116.

— 2010: “Women in Public: The Disk of Enheduanna, the Beginning of the Office of En-Priestess and the Weight of Visual Evidence”. In I. J. Winter (ed.): *On Art in the Ancient Near East. Volume II: From the Third Millennium B.C.E*. CHANE 34/2. London/Boston. Pp. 65–83.

Winter, U., 1983: *Frau und Göttin: Exegetische und ikonographische Studien zum weiblichen Gottesbild im Alten Israel und in dessen Umwelt*. OBO 53. Freiburg/Göttingen.

Woolley, L., 1934: *The Royal Cemetery*. UE 2. New York.

— 1955: *The Early Periods: A Report on the Sites and Objects Prior to the Date to the Third Dynasty of Ur Discovered in the Course of Excavations*. UE 4. London/Philadelphia.

Zettler, R. L., 1987: “Early Near Eastern Seals in the Yale Babylonian Collection. Briggs Buchanan”. JNES 46/1, 59–62.

Zgoll, A., 1997: *Der Rechtsfall der En-ḫedu-Ana im Lied nin-me-šara*. AOAT 246. Münster.

Ziffer, I., 2019: “Moon, Rain, Womb, Mercy: The Imagery of the Shrine Model from Tell el-Farʿah North—Biblical Tirzah”. Religions 10, 136.

SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY: AN ICONOGRAPHICAL STUDY OF THE GODDESS IN A NIMBUS

Takayoshi M. Oshima / Alison Acker Gruseke

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes . . .
—George Gordon, Lord Byron

1. INTRODUCTION

A number of cylinder and stamp seals dated primarily to the eighth and seventh centuries BCE show a goddess surrounded by or standing against a ring with globe- or star-tipped triangles or poles emanating from it. Modern scholars generally refer to this image as the "goddess in a nimbus".[1] While mainly featured in Mesopotamian iconography, the goddess in a nimbus is also attested in the West, at sites known to have experienced Mesopotamian cultural and political influence. Ornan, for example, discusses six cylinder and stamp seals found or purchased in the modern state of Israel and areas currently under the control of the Palestinian Authority.[2] Seals, however, are not the only medium emblazoned with the goddess in a nimbus.[3] Found at Zincirli (ancient Samʾal), near the Syrian border of south-eastern Turkey, a silver pendant shows the goddess with nimbus etched carefully onto its surface, while a cruder rendering appears on another silver pendant from Tel Miqne (biblical Ekron, in ancient Philistia), 22km west of Jerusalem.[4] Finally, the goddess in a nimbus occupies one face of a stela unearthed in northern Syria at Til Barsip (ancient Kar-Shalmaneser).[5]

The main objectives of the present study are: first, to survey images of the ancient Near Eastern goddess in a nimbus, including its variants; second, to identify the significance of the nimbus; and finally, to ascertain the identity of its bearer(s). It is our pleasure to dedicate this essay to Prof. Dr. Izak Cornelius, who has devoted himself to the study of ancient Near Eastern iconography and has greatly advanced the scholarly analysis and apprehension of goddesses, their multifaceted characters, and their variegated imagery. As the honouree rightly insists, one cannot interpret an object until it has been properly analysed.[6] We begin, therefore, by offering a description of the nimbus, its elements, and significance; then a detailed survey of the goddess figures who are surrounded by the nimbus; descriptions of the animals, deities, and divine symbols that appear with the goddess follow; and finally, we return to the nimbus, including texts that may shed light on its significance and therefore clarify the role and identity of the goddess(es) with whom it

[1] For the sake of convenience, we maintain the use of this term here. On its use, see the discussion on the nimbus and n. 12 below.
[2] Ornan, 2001: 235–256.
[3] See Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: 332–335.
[4] Ornan, 2001: 245, fig. 9.14 (= no. 21 below), 238, fig. 9.7 (= no. 22 below).
[5] Ornan, 2001: 241, fig. 9.10 (= no. 23 below).
[6] Cornelius, 2004: 19.

appears. By including textual data in a study primarily focused, as Cornelius has written, on "*visible religion*", we follow once again a methodology suggested in Cornelius's own work.[7]

The discussion refers to the following artefacts. Numbers assigned on the left serve as figure numbers (1–24) in the discussion and on figures 1–24 below:

No.	Object type	Museum reg. no.	Source of iconographical study Type of material
1	Cylinder seal	BM 89164	Collon, 2001: 133, no. 252 quartz, chalcedony grey-brown
2	Cylinder seal	BM 89810	Collon, 2001: 133, no. 253 quartz, chalcedony grey-brown
3	Cylinder seal	BM 126064	Collon, 2001: 107–108, no. 204 quartz, chalcedony grey
4	Cylinder seal	Morgan Seal 680	Porada, 1948: 82, no. 680 black serpentine
5	Cylinder seal	Morgan Seal 685	Porada, 1948: 82, no. 685 dark brown serpentine
6	Cylinder seal	Morgan Seal 691	Porada, 1948: 85, no. 691 carnelian
7	Cylinder seal	AO 1510	Delaporte, 1923: 166, A. 681 brown chalcedony
8	Cylinder seal	AO 2063	Delaporte, 1923: 198, A. 958 coralline carnelian
9	Cylinder seal	Williams Collection (Present whereabouts unknown)	Ménant, 1886: 256–257, no. 8 sapphirine chalcedony
10	Cylinder seal	VA 130	Moortgat, 1988: 140, 603 agate
11	Cylinder seal	VA 508	Moortgat, 1988: 140, 598 chalcedony
12	Cylinder seal	VA 2048	Moortgat, 1988: 140, 602 agate
13	Cylinder seal	Ash 1922.61	Buchanan, 1966: 114, 633 light to dark brown agate
14	Cylinder seal	IAA I.744	Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: 333, no. 287[8] black stone
15	Cylinder seal	Private collection in Japan	Watanabe, 1992[9] agate
16	Clay bullae	BM 84840	Mitchell / Searight, 2008: 37–38, 13d clay
17	Clay bulla	BM 84789	Mitchell / Searight, 2008: 103, 223 clay
18	Impression on a tablet	VA Ass 4276	Klengel-Brandt, 2014: 87, 289 clay
19	Impression on a tablet	Ist Ass 13319d	Klengel-Brandt, 2014: 55–56, pl. 53 clay

[7] Cornelius, 2004: 15 (emphasis original). While describing the work as a "'pure' iconographic study" (p. 16), Cornelius also offers a typically balanced view of the value of visual *and* textual sources for the study of ancient religion. Additionally, while each represents an independent communicative system and addresses its audience in a different "language", iconography and texts equally refrain from describing the belief systems that underlie them in direct or unambiguous terms, and thus, when adduced, require interpretation (pp. 13–17). Similarly, on the usefulness of and complex interplay between ancient texts and iconography, see Asher-Greve / Westenholz, 2013: 8–9, 291–292.

[8] = Ornan, 2001: fig. 9.1.

[9] For the legend and fuller bibliographical references, see also Niederreiter, 2015: 148.

No.	Object type	Museum reg. no.	Source of iconographical study Type of material
20	Stamp seal	H. E. Clark Collection (Present whereabouts unknown)[10]	Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: fig. 288a[11]
21	Silver pendant	S 3692	Ornan, 2001: 245, fig. 9.14 silver
22	Silver pendant	IAA 2009-1533	Ornan, 2001: 238, fig. 9.7 silver
23	Stone stela	AO 11503	Ornan, 2001: 241, fig. 9.10 stone
24	Wall relief	BM 124866	Ornan, 2001: 240, fig. 9.9 stone

2. NIMBUS

The so-called "nimbus",[12] with its multifaceted design comprised of a large ring with outward-projecting globe- or star-tipped triangles, is the primary feature that distinguishes the "goddess in a nimbus" from other divine images. Ornan calls it merely a "circle",[13] yet in its many complex forms it comes to resemble the inflorescence of a common dandelion, *Taraxacum officinale.* While we are aware of some, very isolated, examples of a male deity shown similarly encircled,[14] the nimbus appears almost exclusively with a female figure.

The ring normally frames only the goddess' torso. Because it is apparently a visual representation of light, some scholars suggest that the Akkadian lexeme *melammu*—divine radiance—might have been its ancient label.[15] However, *melammu* was applied much more broadly—to the appearance of gods, kings, buildings, and sacred objects—whereas, to our knowledge, the "nimbus" accompanied only divine, specifically anthropomorphic, images. Below, we discuss its various elements, then conclude by suggesting a possible interpretation.

2.1 Ring

The main element of the nimbus is a large ring (no. 2–5; 7–10; 12–24) or beaded circlet made from drill holes (no. 1; 6; 9; 11) which surrounds the goddess's torso.[16] Emanating from its circumference are various configurations of globe- or star-tipped triangles or poles. In certain cases, the ring is rendered as a lozenge shape (no. 10),[17] and, while the great majority of nimbi are formed around a single ring, a few exhibit double (no.

[10] Ornan (2001: 236) reports that this seal formerly belonged to H. E. Clark, but its present whereabouts are unknown. See also Schroer, 1987: 276.

[11] = Ornan, 2001: fig. 9.5.

[12] See, e.g., Delaporte, 1923: 166; Moortgat, 1988: 140; Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: 334; Collon, 2001: 138; Klengel-Brandt, 2014: 87. German terms applied to this design include "Strahlenkranz", "Sternenkranz", and "Sternennimbus" in, e.g., Moortgat, 1988: 140, 603 and Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: 334, respectively.

[13] Ornan, 2001.

[14] See the discussion on the winged solar disk, below.

[15] Cf., e.g., Seidl, 1976–1980: 88; Dezsö / Curtis, 1991: 107, n. 80; Parpola, 1997: XXIX; Collon, 2001: 138. For its attestation in ancient Akkadian texts, see CAD 10, 9–12. For further discussion on the Akkadian term for a nimbus, see below.

[16] The same can be observed for the majority of the winged solar disks encircling the torso of a male deity. See, e.g., Collon, 2001: 80.

[17] The quality of ancient seals, as with any other human product, varies widely, and the techniques used in their manufacture, as Moorey notes, must be inferred from the finished product—the seals themselves. It seems that the lozenge shaped "rings" resulted from a combination of the degree of expertise possessed by the individual artisan, the technique used, the hardness of the stone—here, agate, a popular, hard stone in the quartz family and thus more difficult to work than softer materials—the fineness of detail in the initial carving, and the amount of finishing applied to the design after its preliminary carving. The lozenge shape appears on seals that were probably mass produced, with rings made by a relatively quick initial filing, rather than wheel cutting or drilling, and with little fine finishing. A higher quality seal would have been created with smaller initial cuts, then rounding off the rough edges. See Moorey, 1999: 74–110, esp.

4–6; 8; 14) or even triple rings (no. 24). The goddess either holds the ring directly or grips a smaller ring attached to its inside edge (e.g., no. 6; 7; 9; 11; 15).[18]

Whether she holds the smaller or the larger ring, the large ring consistently appears to rest on the goddess's left shoulder. This is especially clear on the silver pendant from Zincirli (ancient Samʾal; no. 21). A notable exception is no. 5, on which the ring encircles the goddess's entire image, while on the stone stela from Til Barsip (Kar Shalmaneser; no. 23), only a half circle is visible, which seems to hang down the goddess's back from her left shoulder. With the exception of no. 5, the representation of the large ring, whether whole or semi-circle, is apparently driven by more than visual perspective: the goddess' grasp on it or the attached ring implies that the nimbus possesses a special kind of materiality—represented as weight—and that this requires the goddess' support or control. This feature of the nimbus appears to distinguish it further from the concept of *melammu*.

The half-nimbus is represented not only on the Til Barsip stela (no. 23) but also on no. 19 and 22. Ornan identifies the half circle as a bow,[19] while Deszö and Curtis interpret it as a shield or *melammu*.[20] Since the stela was inscribed with a dedication to Ištar of Arbela, both proposals have the merit of aligning with Ištar's well-known warrior aspect,[21] but a more likely explanation stems from the small size of the Til Barsip nimbus relative to the goddess's body. While it normally surrounds her entire torso, the Til Barsip artisan crafted a competent rendering of the goddess's nimbus at a smaller scale, so that her body just covered its forward edge (fig. 23) and thus obscured it. The result was the appearance of a bow-shaped object hanging down the goddess's back from her left shoulder. Based on the geographical position of Til Barsip at a vital crossroads along the Euphrates and its almost thoroughgoing Assyrianisation since its defeat in the mid-ninth century, we can imagine an artisan who had experienced wide exposure to Assyrian religion and iconography and thus understood the nimbus motif, its form, and meaning. He seems to have assumed the continuation of the nimbus behind the goddess's body and saw no problem with its partial rendering.[22]

The stamp seal impressions (no. 19, Aššur) and the silver pendant (no. 22) from Tel Miqne (biblical Ekron), also with half-nimbi shown behind the goddess, may stem from different causations. The incomplete representation of the nimbi may be attributed to poor craftsmanship (as demonstrated by the low quality of the Tel Miqne piece overall, described by Ornan as "negligent") and perhaps also by the artisan's misinterpretation of the motif.[23]

2.2 Rays

The larger ring is surrounded by multiple projections that appear to represent rays, rendered in three distinct patterns: triangular projections (no. 1; 3; 5; 6; 8; 11; 15; 20–24),[24] poles (no. 2; 7; 10; 12; 16), or notches (no. 4; 13; 14; 17–19). Sometimes the triangular rays are bisected, generating the appearance overall of ⩚ (e.g., no. 3; 6; 21). Whatever their form, the projections are usually globe- or star-tipped, while in rare cases a series of stars or globes encircles the rings freely, with no projections attaching them to the large ring (e.g., no. 6), and rarer still is a nimbus with no rays at all (no. 9). Globe-tipped rays, made by drilling, are a frequent feature on seals, and one might speculate that the appearance of such rays on a larger stone surface (no. 24) or metal (nos. 21, 22) came about as a result of the artisan's imitation of a glyptic model. This seems very

74–77, 93–100, 103–106 and Otto, 2019: 411–432.

[18] When present, the larger and smaller rings were normally cut using the same technique so that engraving and drilling were not mixed in this part of the design's creation. We know of no example in which the smaller ring is rendered as lozenge-shaped.

[19] Ornan, 2001: 241.

[20] Dezsö / Curtis, 1991: 107, n. 18. See also Collon, 2001: 127.

[21] Asher-Greve and Westenholz (2013: 60–64, 104–109, 171–176) discuss this aspect of the third-millennium Semitic goddess ʿAštar, whose identity the Akkade dynasty deliberately fused to the Sumerian goddess Inana, as well as the celebration of Ištar's warlike character by Nabonidus during the Neo-Babylonian era.

[22] On the long-standing and profound Assyrian influence in Til Barsip (including comparison to Zincirli), see Porter, 2003: 59–80, esp. 62–66, with bibliography.

[23] See the detailed analysis of the iconography on the silver pendant from Tel Miqne and the similar motif preserved on the silver pendant from Zincirli by Ornan, 2001: 246–248. Notice, too, how the nimbus on the Zincirli pendant (no. 21) shows both the projections and the ring mainly behind the goddess, although projections are clearly visible in front, as well.

[24] To be precise, no. 5 and 23 are notches in a triangle shape.

likely, since seals were small and readily portable, and thus constituted a perfect medium for the dissemination of religious and political motifs.[25]

Furthermore, one often observes two longer, globe-/star-tipped "rays", sometimes bisected horizontally, emerging from the goddess' shoulders (no. 1; 6; 7; 9; 23), either well integrated with the nimbus (no. 1, 6, 7), or visually more independent of it (no. 23). A closer look reveals that these are formed by two long lines meeting at one end, generating an elongated Λ-shape. In certain cases, they have a line across the middle, resulting in a stretched-out letter A. Two such globe-tipped projections appear on a sapphirine chalcedony seal from the Williams Collection (no. 9), despite the fact that the nimbus encircling the goddess's torso has no other rays, and two similar projections are prominent above the goddess's shoulders on the Til Barsip stela (no. 23).

Male deities in Neo-Assyrian iconography frequently show these star- or globe-tipped projections on their shoulders. See, for example, the central male figures in no. 1, 7, and 9. These protuberances are therefore not an identifying feature exclusive to the goddess in a nimbus, nor apparently constitutive of the nimbus idea, but they do provide a hint as to the character of the goddess. For example, a fine Neo-Assyrian chalcedony cylinder seal in the British Museum's collections shows a scene from the *Epic of Gilgameš* and indicates a plausible interpretation of these shoulder protrusions (BM 89435 = fig. 25). The craftsman has painstakingly rendered the details of the scene in which Gilgameš and Enkidu slaughter the Bull of Heaven. Since visual and textual sources provide complementary data for the study of ancient religion and rarely supply a neat match,[26] one is pleasantly surprised when text and image do correspond as well as the British Museum Gilgameš seal and the scene from *Epic of Gilgameš* Tablet VI (*Gilg.* VI, 125–150).[27] On the seal, as in the text, the winged Bull of Heaven stands centrally, already subdued by the two heroes, who flank him. The bull's horns are grasped by a male figure—Gilgameš—who wears a horned headdress, long open robe, and kilt. On each shoulder he carries a bow[28] and quiver, with a mace (?) tipped with a pomegranate-shaped head protruding from each quiver. Gilgameš grasps one of the bull's horns in his left hand, while with his right he plunges his dagger "between the yoke of the horns and the slaughter-spot" (*Gilg*. VI, 146).[29] To the right stands Enkidu, one foot planted on the bull's back, and its "tufted tail" gripped in his right hand. All of this, in addition to the mood of frantic excitement—notice Enkidu's free hand, flung upward to balance the effort of holding the bull's tail—is readily recognisable on the seal. Clearly the friends are to be apprehended by the viewer as fully armed for the conflict, and in contrast to the images discussed above, the artisan has provided detailed representations of their weaponry: the quivers, with protruding arrows and maces (?); the curvature of the bows, which contrast with the straight lines of the bowstrings; and the handle, hilt, and blade of Gilgameš's plunging dagger.

A second, somewhat indeterminate example appears on a broken cylinder seal showing a divine figure with nimbus and a recognisable bow and quiver (fig. 28). Currently in the collection of Stellenbosch University, South Africa, the seal is damaged in a way that obscures the figure's face and clothing. It is therefore impossible to determine the figure's gender via the presence or absence of a beard—a frequent, though not infallible, marker for maleness among adults in the ancient world.[30] Sufficient details remain,

---

[25] Otto (2019: 419) describes seals as the "mass media of the ancient Near East".

[26] Cornelius, 2004: 14–16; Asher-Greve / Westenholz, 2013: 8–9, 291–292.

[27] A similar Neo-Assyrian seal is discussed in George, 2003: 100–101, 475–478 (including fig. 14), 626–629.

[28] Compare the bow held by Ištar on BM 89769 (fig. 26), on which the bowstring is incised more finely than the curved wood of the bow, or the bow held by the god, most probably Nabû as Mār-bīti, who stands on a lion-griffin, third from the left on the stone-tablet (fig. 27), dated to the reign of Nabû-šuma-iškun (ca. 760–748 BCE). For an interpretation of the iconography of no. 26 (BM 89769), see Collon, 2001: 174, 340; Herles, 2006: 25. For further discussion of this deity, see below.

[29] George, 2003: 626–627.

[30] Recent theoretical work in philosophy and the social sciences has profoundly impacted scholarly discourses on both gender, now understood as a social category, and biological sex, as defined in physical terms, as well as the multiple and flexible ways in which societies elect to define the relationship between the two. In the ancient Near East, changing fashions and varying cultural norms meant that men did not routinely wear beards, although in the first millennium—the period under discussion here—elaborate beards were consistently featured in images of adult males and therefore useful when considering gender. See Collon, 1995: 503–515; and, for a view of the ongoing theoretical discussion, combined with various modes of gender expression in ancient societies, Díaz-Andreu, 2005: 13–42. On Mesopotamia in particular, see McCaffrey, 2002: 37–92. In the section "The Nimbus, Again" below, we consider an alternative way

however, to reveal a nimbus surrounding the figure's torso and a simple bow-shape protruding from the right shoulder. Just visible within the bow's outline is the flat-topped form of a quiver.[31] Given the detail provided on the Gilgameš seal from the British Museum (fig. 25) and the simpler bow and quiver on this seal from Stellenbosch University, we suggest that the elongated Λ-shapes are stylised bows, while the A-shaped objects represent a combination of bow and quiver.[32] Globe or star finials (as here) additionally sometimes appear on the bows of divine (figs. 26, 28) or semi-divine figures.[33]

2.3 Significance of Nimbus

When a nimbus is rendered by just a large circle with triangular rays, it resembles a cogged wheel; when encircled by globe-tipped poles, a dandelion seed-head; and when surrounded by curved notches, a fireball. The use of the term "nimbus" by modern scholars hints at a widely-held interpretation of these objects as aureoles—which, unlike *melammu*, as discussed above—surround only divine beings. The motif is not limited to the ancient world: a modern exemplar, including outward-projecting rays, is evident on an anonymous nineteenth-century print of the Madonna on a Moon Crescent (fig. 34). In this section, we explore the significance of the nimbus, paying particular attention to smaller images of a goddess whose torso emerges from a nimbus.

Seals no. 3, 6, and 13, all dated to the ninth and eighth centuries BCE, are earlier than the other seals in our sample and may represent a preliminary phase in the development of this motif.[34] A small image of the goddess in a nimbus appears on the celestial plane in the company of other anthropomorphic divine beings and divine symbols. Some of these anthropomorphic images also possess nimbi. Notably, the goddess with a nimbus almost always appears alongside specifically celestial symbols—that is, a solar disk with or without wings, a crescent, and a group of seven dots, symbolising the *Sibittu*, that is, the Pleiades.[35] On no. 3 (BM 126064), the goddess is on the left and emerges from a cog-shaped nimbus with triangular projections. Directly in front of her is the spade—Marduk's divine symbol—and beyond that, in the centre, is a god whose torso is surrounded by a winged solar disk. The god in the solar disk is supported by a large atlantid figure, partially kneeling, with arms upraised and streams of water flowing down either side of his body.[36] The god in the winged solar disk is slightly larger than the goddess in a nimbus, though still represented on a much smaller scale than the atlantid figure. Three bearded worshippers stand near the gods, pointing toward them and thus directing the viewer's gaze: one hovers near the goddess in a nimbus, another under the atlantid figure's right arm, and a third, the largest, almost touches Marduk's spade. To the right of the solar disk are a large stylus—Nabû's symbol, represented at a scale larger than the spade—the seven dots, and a small image of a god, who probably represents the moon god Sîn, emerging from a crescent.[37] Aside from the goddess, all of these anthropomorphic figures surrounded by nimbi are rendered from the waist up only.

On seal no. 6, near the upper line, is a similar group of three celestial objects: (1) the seven dots; (2) a female deity who wears a globe-topped headdress, her torso emerging from a nimbus that consists of a ring made from drill-holes with triangular projections around it (many of which appear to have been worn off, so that only a few are now visible); and (3) a bearded deity with a globe-topped headdress, encircled by a ring made of drill-holes with notched projections.[38] Like the other anthropomorphic figures discussed above, these small divine figures hover in mid-air, and, as in the previous example, their images are shown at a noticeably smaller scale than the human worshippers at the left of both scenes, or here, the earth-bound god and goddess

in which the Akkadian lexeme *ziqnu* ("beard") may signify in relation to the goddess in a nimbus.

[31] Cornelius, 2009: 36, fig. 14; Van Dijk-Coombes, 2016: 9–10 and fig. 6 on p. 15.

[32] Seidl and Collon also interpret the long objects carried by the goddess on the Til Barsip stela as bow cases. Seidl, 1976–1980: 88; Collon, 2001: 127.

[33] Cf. the unadorned bows Gilgameš wears on SC 1989 in George, 2003: 101, fig. 1.

[34] See Porada, 1948: 84; Collon, 2001: 108; 2005: 130.

[35] For the group of seven dots in ancient Mesopotamian iconography, see the classic study by Van Buren, 1939–1941: 277–289. See also Seidl, 1957–1971: 485.

[36] Cornelius explains the somewhat incongruous image of water streaming from a solar disk. The pairs of wavy lines, according to Cornelius, represent rain, while the god symbolised by the disk provides it. See Cornelius, 2014: 148–149, 161.

[37] Collon takes it to be a star symbol with a god. Collon, 2001: 16. However, as the object rendered by notches does not form a circle like the winged solar disk or the nimbus of the goddess, we interpret it as a lunar crescent.

[38] For the last deity, see the discussion of the winged solar disk below.

mounted on hybrid animals: a horned dragon and winged lion-griffin, respectively. Similarly, on seal no. 13, a god with winged solar disk and a goddess with notched nimbus float over a central spade flanked by two human worshippers (male and female [?]) on the left and a goddess seated on a star- and globe-backed throne on the right.

Given the fact that the planet Venus is extremely common in ancient Mesopotamian iconography—alongside the sun, moon, and Pleiades[39]—it seems almost certain that the small, torso-only image of a goddess emerging from a celestial nimbus represents the planet Venus, the brightest object in the night sky (after the moon) and sometimes also visible during the day, thus rivalling the sun as the celestial body that normally governs the day alone. One may therefore deduce that the nimbus surrounding the torso of larger goddess figures in Neo-Assyrian iconography probably also presents Venus, or, more precisely, the brightness of the planet, and that, when representations of rays appear in other Mesopotamian iconography as centrally grouped triangles, like a star—with or without the ring—this also represents the planet Venus and its principle characteristic: bright light. This includes the small image of the goddess in a nimbus, above (no. 3), with its pointed rosette, which is comparable to Venus represented as a non-anthropomorphic star on BM 89590 (fig. 30),[40] the similarly rendered star hovering over the enthroned goddess (identified in the inscription as the goddess Nanāya) on the *kudurru* of Melišipak (fig. 31),[41] and the trio of Venus, a crescent moon, and the sun on the Tablet of Šamaš of Nabû-apla-iddina (fig. 32).[42] If so, we must interpret the ring of the nimbus as the outline of the planet Venus itself, and the associated star-shaped objects or globes as various manifestations of the planet's gleaming light, rather than stars.[43] This interpretation of the rays emerging from the ring also explains why they are sometimes rendered without globes or stars (for example, no. 5; 13;[44] and 23 in our sample). All of these are simply different representations of light, a notoriously difficult phenomenon to capture visually on non-metallic surfaces.[45] The small images of the goddess in a nimbus, also shown in the sky, are more elaborate portrayals of a personified planet Venus. The same probably holds true for the larger images of the goddess in a nimbus. They, too, are personifications of the dazzling planet Venus.[46] Therefore, given the longstanding association between the planet Venus and the goddess Ištar, the goddess in a nimbus could potentially represent Ištar or various localised Ištars—for example, Ištar of the Heavens, Ištar of Kiš, Ištar of Dēr, Ištar of Babylon, Ištar of Borsippa, Ištar of Nineveh, Ištar of Arbela, Ištar of Aššur, Ištar of Raqnana[47]—or the goddesses linked to Venus (such as Anunnîtum,[48] Nanāya,[49] or Šerūʾa[50]).

[39] For the star symbol as Venus, see, e.g., Seidl, 1957–1971: 485. For Neo-Assyrian iconographical variations of the star symbols, see Collon, 2001: 15.

[40] Collon, 2001: no. 148.

[41] Herles, 2006: table 11, no. 23; Asher-Greve / Westenholz, 2013: 279–280.

[42] Woods, 2004: 26. The identification of the star symbol as a non-anthropomorphic representation of the goddess Ištar is secured by the caption on the tablet. Cf. Woods, 2004: 83, caption II 1–2: "Sîn, Šamaš, and Ištar depicted opposite the Apsû, between Nirah (and) the pillars".

[43] *Contra* Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: 335.

[44] For no. 13, cf. Porada, 1948: pl. C, no. 679.

[45] Note also rare examples of a star (probably planet Venus) with globe-tipped rays, Collon, 2001: no. 157.

[46] Teissier (1984: 37) came close to our conclusion and observed that the image of the goddess in a nimbus presented Ištar as astral goddess.

[47] See Asher-Greve / Westenholz, 2013: 104–105. However, as observed by Pongratz-Leisten and Meinhold, these localised Ištars also had unique characteristics not shared by other Ištars. See Meinhold, 2009: 202–204; Pongratz-Leisten, 2011: 90. See also the detailed analysis of Ištars in Allen, 2015: 58–199. A common characteristic, however, seems to be a connection with light.

[48] Already attested in the third millennium, Anunnîtum was an Ištar figure whose worship by the Akkade Dynasty continued into the Neo-Babylonian period, with Sippar as her principal dwelling. See Ebeling, 1932: 110–111. On her development from an epithet of Ištar, see Asher-Greve / Westenholz, 2013: 71.

[49] As early as the Ur III period, Nanāya was understood as a biform of Inana/Ištar in her astral identity as Venus's manifestation. See Steinkeller, 2013: 468–469.

[50] Šerūʾa was specifically the divinised Venus visible in the morning. See Meinhold, 2009: 219.

3. APPEARANCE OF THE GODDESS: POSTURE, CLOTHING, AND WEAPONRY

3.1 Posture

If shown at full height (rather than the torso-only images discussed above), the deity in question normally appears in a standing posture (no. 1–2; 4; 6–7; 9–12; 14–19; 21–23). A rare exception is no. 8 (AO 2063), a cylinder seal found near Aleppo, on which the goddess in a nimbus is seated on a low-backed chair, with a worshipper standing before her and a table between them.

In many seals, the goddess's feet rest directly on the ground, but in some cases, she appears mounted on a dais (no. 1; 9; 11) or on a lion, or a winged lion-griffin (no. 6; 7; 15; 17; 18; 21–23). When presented as a celestial body—probably the planet Venus, as above—her upper body is depicted as if emerging from the nimbus (no. 3; 6;[51] 13; 24).

The goddess almost always raises her right arm and hand at an angle of between 45 and 60 degrees in a gesture of acceptance or blessing (for example, no. 1), but in rare examples, her right lower arm is raised upright (for example, no. 2; 6; 15).[52] In three examples (no. 4; 14; 20), she raises her left hand,[53] but normally this hand holds the ring of the nimbus (no. 1–3; 6–10; 12–14; 16–18; 20; 24) or the smaller attached ring (no. 5–6; 11; 15).[54] The silver pendant found at Zincirli (no. 21) shows a goddess mounted on the back of a lion, raising her right arm, as in the other examples, but holding a long-handled axe in her left hand. A similar lion motif on the Til Barsip stela (no. 23), on the Tel Miqne pendant (no. 22), and on no. 15 all show the goddess grasping a set of reins—a visual indication of her ability to control the ferocious animal on which she is mounted. The three dots visible between the goddess's leg and the lion's head on Morgan Seal 691 (no. 6) probably also represent reins, while on no. 17–18, only the goddess's raised hand is visible.

3.2 Clothing

The figure's clothing varies within a relatively limited range. The goddess frequently dons a square-topped, horned headdress, and this is often crowned with upward-projecting feathers (for example, no. 2; 14–15; 21–22). By contrast, seals on which some details are less well rendered appear to show the headdress as globular (for example, no. 10), sometimes with horns barely visible, or seemingly absent altogether. In this latter group, the nimbus is rendered less skilfully as a lozenge rather than a circle. When a seal depicts the goddess emerging from a nimbus in the sky, her image is necessarily tiny (for example, no. 3 and 6), and, perhaps owing to its minute scale, the goddess also tends to wear a globular headdress.

The headdress is frequently star- or globe-topped, like the projections from the nimbus and some of the abstract bow-and-quiver renderings on the shoulders of the divine and human figures. Interestingly, artisanal tradition seems to have dictated visual cohesion among these elements, as the headdress designs tend to match the nimbi. When the headdress is star-topped, so are the rays of the nimbus (for example, no. 2; 6; 11; 15), and when the headdress is globe-topped, the nimbus is also surrounded by rays tipped with a globe (for example, no. 1). Finally, if the headdress is unadorned, (for example, no. 4; 10; 14; 16–19), the nimbi are similarly plain.[55]

The goddess is dressed in either a fringed or vertically striated, tiered robe that covers her legs (no. 4–5; 8; 14; 16–22; 24),[56] or in an open skirt, also vertically-striated, layered over a fringed kilt (no. 1–2; 6–7; 9–

[51] Here we refer not to the main goddess standing on the winged lion, but to the one in the sky.

[52] Frechette (2012: 2 and *passim*) argues that this is a gesture of greeting in response to human salutation.

[53] It is possible, as one often observes in the first millennium, that these show positive images, in which case, these also show a raised right hand.

[54] A unique exception is AO 1161 (= Delaporte, 1923: 166, pl. 88, A. 680), the small ring is attached to the outside of the larger ring, and it appears that the goddess is holding both the rings in her left hand. In the stamp seal impressions (no. 19 here), only half of the nimbus is visible behind the goddess's back.

[55] A rare exception proves the rule: VA 130 (no. 10) shows the goddess with a globe-topped, horned headdress but surrounded by star-tipped rays.

[56] On Morgan Seal 685 (no. 4), unlike many examples of the goddess in a nimbus, her entire body, including head and feet, is encircled by the nimbus as if she is floating in the air. On BM 126064, the cylinder seal found near Aleppo (no. 3), we observe a deity wearing a globular horned headdress emerging from a nimbus, hovering in the air to the left of a spade. Here, as in other such exemplars, the goddess' long robe covers her entire body, while its complete lack of

12; 15; 23). Perhaps due to an accident of the spade, we encounter fewer representations of the goddess dressed in a long closed robe and carrying weapons versus the images in which she wears an open robe over a kilt. This accords with the images in our sample of male warrior figures, who are also dressed in long robes over kilts (no. 1; 2; 7; 9). When applied to a female divine figure, this dress enhances the idiosyncratic portrait of the goddess in a nimbus as a female warrior.

3.3 Weaponry

The goddess in a nimbus is often well armed, thus emphasising her warrior aspect and serving as one of the most significant indications that the goddess in question may indeed be Ištar.[57]

Her most frequent weapon is a sword, carried at her waist (no. 1; 3; 5; 9;[58] 10–12; 15; 23), while on the silver pendant from Zincirli (no. 21), she holds a long-handled axe in her left hand.

Occasionally, stylised bows or the bow/quiver combinations (as discussed above) emerge from behind the goddess' shoulders (no. 1; 6; 7; 9; 23). BM 89810 (no. 2) lacks these highly abstract protrusions, but they would be redundant, as this goddess carries a detailed quiver with arrows attached to each shoulder.

With Yadin, Ornan interprets the half circle that protrudes behind the goddess's back on the Til Barsip stela (no. 23) as a bow, and its emanating rays as representations of light emitted by her divine weapon.[59] However, if our interpretation of the long, globe-tipped, objects on the goddess' shoulders as bows is correct, then Ornan's suggestion becomes unlikely.

4. DIVINE SYMBOLS ATTRIBUTED TO AND DEITIES APPEARING WITH THE GODDESS IN A NIMBUS

Although one must be cautious, divine symbols as well as other deities depicted alongside the goddess in a nimbus provide important clues for determining her identity. Accompanying the goddess in a nimbus, we often observe creatures such as the lion and leonine hybrid creature that are closely associated with Ištar. However, other creatures, deities, and symbols accompanying her are rather diverse and do not indicate a single identity of the goddess in question. In this section, we discuss in turn various divine symbols and other deities appearing with the goddess in a nimbus.

4.1 Lion

Among our twenty-four samples of the goddess in a nimbus, she is mounted on a lion in six (no. 15; 17; 18; 21–23). Alongside the star that signifies Venus, the lion was one of the most important attributes of the warrior goddess Ištar; she could trample a lion beneath her feet, sit on a lion throne, rest her feet on a lion footstool, and have lion decorations on her paraphernalia. Other gods and goddesses might be associated with lions,[60] and kings delighted in linking themselves to lions in various ways—using the adjective *labbiš* ("like a lion") to describe their ferociousness in battle, reserving the prerogative of lion-hunting for themselves as a symbol of their control over the powers of chaos, and battling a rampant lion on royal seals[61]—but Ištar could be described as the embodiment of courage and ferocity with the epithet *labbatu* ("the lioness").[62] Hence, the goddess in a nimbus mounted on a lion is habitually identified as Ištar.[63] On these seals, a lion

ornamentation is probably dictated by the figure's minute size.

[57] For example, Cornelius, 2009: 23.

[58] Ménant (1886: 257) speaks of a bow and quiver "drawn inside the aureole that partly encircles her". We failed to recognise any of these objects in the nimbus.

[59] Ornan, 2001: 241, n. 11. Cf. Yadin, 1963: 7–8.

[60] On lions for goddesses and gods other than Ištar, see Asher-Greve / Westenholz, 2013: 203–206. For Ištar herself, see Asher-Greve / Westenholz, 2013: 172, 203–204, 207–208.

[61] For the use of the adjective *labbiš*, see Marcus, 1977: 86–106. For the long history of the lion hunt as political and religious theatre enacted by Mesopotamian kings and on royal seals, see Strawn, 2005: 160–172, with repeated reference to Cornelius, 1989: 53–85 and Watanabe, 2002: 69–92.

[62] Asher-Greve / Westenholz, 2013: 203–204, n. 918.

[63] See, e.g., Porada, 1948: 84; Seidl, 1976–1980: 88–89; Winter, 1983: 459; Moortgat, 1988: 140, no. 598 and 601; Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: 332–335; Ornan, 2001; Cornelius, 2009: 23, 28; Asher-Greve / Westenholz, 2013: 172; Klengel-Brandt, 2014: 84.

strides forward, standing on all four legs with its mouth open wide, teeth visible, probably a depiction of roaring. The motif of a goddess mounted on a standing lion is already known from the Middle Assyrian period (VAT 9673, fig. 29). A seal impression attested on a twelfth century clay document preserves an image of a kneeling worshipper in front of a smiting goddess mounted on a roaring lion.[64] If this seal impression depicts an offering scene, as interpreted by Moortgat, it probably depicts the cult image of Ištar in the Middle Assyrian period.[65]

The juxtaposition of the goddess in a nimbus and the inscription on the Til Barsip stela (no. 23) has led scholars such as Wilcke,[66] Seidl,[67] and Herbordt[68] to identify the goddess in a nimbus, when she is mounted on a lion, as Ištar of Arbela. The combination of image and inscription, however, is suggestive but not decisive:[69]

> *ana* ^{d}*ištar āšibat* ^{uru}*arba-il bēltīšu* ^{m}*aššur-dūr-pānīja šakinnu ša* ^{uru}*kār-*^{d}*šalmanu-ašarēdu ana balāṭ napšātīšu iqīš*
> To Ištar, the dweller of Arbela, his lady, Aššur-dūr-pānīja, the governor of Kār-Shalmanesser, dedicated (this stela) for his good health.

As Asher-Greve and Westenholz point out, the deity addressed in an inscription rarely provides secure identification of the god or gods depicted on the object,[70] and indeed, other Ištars could be depicted in an almost identical manner, as we discuss in Sections 4.2 and 4.4 below.

A number of clay bullae preserve an image of the goddess in a nimbus, also mounted on a lion, who stands in front of two figures: a king and his royal consort (here, no. 17 and 18).[71] On the left, the goddess faces the worshippers in her typical posture, one foot slightly forward and right hand raised, while, on the right, the bearded king and consort, arranged according to their relative status, greet her, also with raised hands. Interestingly, the consort's posture replicates the goddess's pose almost perfectly. The scorpion visible in the upper field of these seal impressions between the goddess and the king indicates that the seal belonged to the Neo-Assyrian palace household.[72] These images are frequently compared with that of Mullissu, also known as Ištar of Nineveh and attested on Sennacherib's relief at Maltai, in northern Iraq (fig. 33).[73] Collon has suggested that these lion-mounted images of the goddess in a nimbus and one attested on a cylinder seal belonging to Nabû-uṣalla, a eunuch from the time of Sargon II, (no. 15) also depict Mullissu.[74]

4.2 Winged Lion-Griffin

In some seals, the goddess in a nimbus is mounted, not on a lion but on a *Mischwesen*, the winged lion-griffin, as seen on Morgan Library Seal 691 (no. 6) and on a cylinder seal from the Louvre Museum (AO 1510, no. 7). Her posture remains active but stately, as on the other mounted images. The winged lion has eagle legs and tail feathers in place of leonine hind legs and a tufted tail. The imagery overall is reminiscent of the lion-griffin associated with both the storm god and the naked goddess, as attested on late third-millennium seals, or Anzû, known from literature and first-millennium iconography.[75] Yet, because on seal no. 6,

---

[64] Moortgat, 1944: 36–37, fig. 36. Seals from the Old Babylonian period or older frequently show a goddess standing on a lion lying on the ground. See, e.g., Asher-Greve / Westenholz, 2013: 432, fig. 106–108.
[65] Moortgat, 1944: 36.
[66] Wilcke, 1976–1980: 82.
[67] Seidl, 1976–1980: 88.
[68] Herbordt, 1992: 112.
[69] For the inscription, see Thureau-Dangin, 1907: 133.
[70] Asher-Greve / Westenholz, 2013: 292.
[71] For the identification of the person following the king, see Reade, 1987: 144–145.
[72] Klengel-Brandt, 2014: 85.
[73] For the Neo-Assyrian Maltai reliefs, see Boehmer, 1975: 40–84 and for Mullissu's image there (Boehmer calls her Ninlil in his article), see Boehmer, 1975: 48–50. For further discussion of the goddess in a nimbus and Mullissu, see below.
[74] Collon, 2001: 138. See also Klengel-Brandt, 2014: 85. On the increased role of eunuchs in Sargon II's reign, see May, 2015: 79–116, esp. 83–84, 110.
[75] Braun-Holzinger discusses five types of winged "Löwendrache", three of which have ornithoid hind legs. See Braun-Holzinger, 1987–1990: 97–99. The winged leonine hybrid animal with a bird tail is discussed on pp. 97–98. Wiggermann suggests that the lion-griffin standing on four legs is called *ūmu nā'iru* ("roaring day"), a hybrid creature associated with

the male deity mounted on the horned dragon, *Mušhuššu*, is depicted as if he is holding a stylus, it is most likely that he is Nabû, the god of scribal arts and son/vizier of Marduk. That is to say, the goddess in a nimbus on seals nos. 6 and 7 might not be Ištar as such, but someone else. We will return to the subject of the lion-griffin in the section discussing the spade and stylus as divine symbols of Marduk and Nabû, respectively.

4.3 Winged Solar Disk

In our sample, the winged solar disk appears on no. 1–3, 7–13, and 22, while the solar disk showing an interior humanoid image with a flaring, ornithoid tail is represented on seal no. 3, 6, and 13.[76] Collon, among others, interprets solar disks (winged or not) as the sun in its role as a celestial object—the fireball in the sky—and also the symbol of the sun god, Šamaš.[77] On the other hand, Parpola suggests that the image symbolises the god Aššur, the Assyrian national god,[78] which finds support in the fact that, as discussed below, Aššur was sometimes described in cuneiform texts as "the sun".[79] Because the Akkadian term *šamaš*/*šamšu* ("Šamaš / the sun") was also used in the titulary of human rulers,[80] one might speculate that, when levied as a divine title, it adduced specifically the god's heavenly kingship, and that this correspondence, in turn, benefited the human ruler, who could be viewed as an earthly reflection of the celestial exemplar. The best divine example is probably *Enūma Eliš* VI, 127, in which Marduk is described as ^{d}*šamši ša ilāni* ("the sun-god of the gods"),[81] while the most famous human example is Hammurapi's daring claim in the prologue of his law code that he was appointed by Anu and Enlil, "to rise like Šamaš (*kīma* ^{d}*šamaš*) over all the black-headed people, to illuminate the land".[82] In sum, in antiquity the solar disk could symbolise either the sun, the sun god himself, or "the sun" as a divine or royal title.

A few, very isolated, instances of male deities in nimbi are known, including, for example, (1) the small male figure emerging from a notched, beaded ring, visible between the standing figure of Nabû and the goddess in a nimbus who follows him on Morgan Library seal 691 (no. 6); (2) a male deity, his upper body encircled by a ring with nine triangular projections on Morgan Library seal 705 (fig. 35);[83] and (3) a winged, male deity posed as if aiming an arrow, encircled by a ring, which in turn is surrounded by drill holes on a cylinder seal from the British Museum (fig. 36).[84] Following the suggestion made earlier, the large ring probably represents the outline of the sun while the drilled dots represent its rays.

It seems, in fact, that the nimbi attested on these seals are all variations on the solar disk idea, which occurs frequently as a motif on Neo-Assyrian seals.[85] The second seal, Morgan Library 705 (fig. 35), nicely supports this proposal. From the earliest period, one of the most widely attested glyptic motifs was the so-

---

the storm god, Iškur/Adad. See Wiggermann, 1993–1997: 242–243. Wiggermann further argues that this mythical animal is identical to Anzû, Ninurta's enemy in the *Anzû* myth from the first millennium. Seidl (1998: 111), however, observes that only the lion-griffin standing on its hind legs should be identified as Anzû, and that this is the first-millennium version of the lion-headed eagle known already in the third millennium. For the lion-headed eagle as Anzû, see, e.g., Green, 1993–1997: 254. Seidl (1998: 100–113) observes that the lion-griffin with a scorpion tail lying under the striding Ninurta on various first-millennium seals (= Braun-Holzinger, 1987–1990: 98–99) should be identified as *abūbu* (literally, "flood"), a manifestation of the devastating power of a flood.

[76] Unlike the other two, the solar disk on no. 6 is not winged. Fig. 28, also with a winged disk, has been discussed by Van Dijk-Coombes (2016: 9–10).

[77] Cf. Seidl, 1957–1971: 485; Black / Green, 1992: 186; Collon, 2001: 79.

[78] Parpola, 1993: 167, 185.

[79] See below. Cf. Tallqvist, 1983: 227.

[80] See CAD 17, 337.

[81] Lambert, 2013: 116–117. For example, in acrostic prayers to Marduk and Nabû, Marduk is known as *šašši abbīšu* ("the sun of his fathers"). See Oshima, 2011: 312–313, line 1. See also Tallqvist, 1983: 227. Although it is difficult to know its significance, KAR 307, rev. 4–6 read as follows: "40 double hours is the disk of the sun. 60 double hours is the disk of the moon. The inside of the s[un is Ma]rduk. The inside of the moon is Nabû. Inside Sun there is *bašmu*-snake, [his] … Inside the m[oon] is his [mot]her. The dagger about the lion is of the hand [of …]". Does this text, too, see the solar disk as a manifestation of Marduk?

[82] CH I, 40, text and translation after Roth, 1997: 76–77.

[83] Porada, 1948: 87, pl. CV, no. 705.

[84] Collon, 2001: 86, pl. XII, no. 150. Collon observes that it was probably produced in Assyria or north-western Iran under Assyrian influence in the ninth century BCE. See Collon, 2001: 80. For the motif of the god in the winged solar disk aiming his arrow, see, e.g., fig. 38 (= BM 12450, Aššurnaṣirpal's Northwest Palace relief).

[85] For the various types of iconography of the god in a solar disk, see Collon, 2001: 80.

called sacred tree, well known in the Neo-Assyrian period as the central motif of scenes in which it is flanked by human worshippers or various divine beings, and sometimes a winged solar disk, with or without a male deity in it, hovering over the tree.[86] On Morgan Library seal 705, we observe all these elements except the winged solar disk; instead, a god surrounded by a nimbus hovers over a highly stylised tree. With the exception of the missing wings, it is almost identical to the more common motif. Indeed, the god in the nimbus even has an ornithoid tail, exactly like the countless examples of the god in a winged solar disk.[87]

In Neo-Assyrian seals we frequently encounter a winged solar disk alongside Venus, the Moon, and the Pleiades.[88] On Morgan Library seal 691 (no. 6), instead of the solar disk we again find, in the upper field in the centre of the composition, a god whose upper body is encircled by a notched ring, with the Pleiades and a small goddess in a nimbus to the right. As discussed above, the latter probably symbolises the planet Venus. If our interpretation of the iconography is correct, it seems that the notched nimbus here serves as a stand-in for the winged solar disk.

As Collon points out in her catalogue of the British Museum seal collections, the figure of the male deity in a nimbus on BM 135163 (fig. 36) is highly unusual.[89] Between his upper torso and bird-tail, the winged solar disk is so well integrated with the rest of the figure that it appears to be part of his body. It seems plausible, in fact, that this confusing motif resulted from a misinterpretation of the god in a winged solar disk as seen on ninth century Assyrian wall reliefs in the throne room of Aššurnaṣirpal II's Northwest Palace at Kalḫu (modern Nimrud; BM 124551 = fig. 37). Here, the figure simply holds the bow, rather than aiming an arrow, and the god's abdomen is set against a small disk, from which rays of light, represented by curving projections, attach to an outer ring. The small disk does not connect the god's upper torso to his ornithoid tail (that is, it is not part of his body, as on the seal in fig. 36), and the wings are not attached to the god's body, but rather to the outer ring. The same is true of fig. 38, also from Kalḫu, in which the god's pose exactly mirrors the strange figure in the seal (fig. 36), although the artisan has not rendered rays of light between the disk and outer ring.[90] The resemblance among the three, however, is undeniable. It therefore seems likely that the craftsman who produced the cylinder seal had misunderstood the standard iconographical scheme of the god in the winged solar disk, rendering the small disk as part of the god's abdomen and the rays of light in the solar disk as wings. If so, then the nimbus rendered with a ring surrounded by drill holes on fig. 36 should be interpreted as a winged solar disk.

4.4 Spade and Stylus

In contrast to the complex problems presented by the solar disk with and without wings, the clearer iconographic traditions of the spade and stylus appear promising for identifying the goddess in a nimbus. The spade, while appearing occasionally as the symbol of Marduk's vizier/son Nabû, is identified far more frequently with Marduk himself[91] and is evident on no. 1–4, 11, 13, and 14 in our sample. No established pattern appears to govern the orientation of the spade in relation to the goddess in a nimbus. It can appear either in front—as it does on no. 1, 3, and 13—or, behind her, as on seal no. 2, 4, 11, and 14.[92] The stylus, however, is the divine symbol of Nabû,[93] Marduk's vizier/son, and appears with the spade on no. 2, 3, and 11. On the seal from Al-Mina, Syria (no. 3), the spade and stylus are placed independently of one another, while on no. 2 and 11, they stand side by side. On VA 508 (no. 11), a cylinder seal now at the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin, the spade and stylus are mounted on the back of a horned dragon, commonly interpreted as *Mušhuššu*, the hybrid being closely associated with Marduk and Nabû.[94] An interesting arrangement appears

[86] See, e.g., Porada, 1948: no. 596; Collon, 2001: no. 151–152. In our samples, see no. 10 and 12.

[87] For a brief discussion of the god in a winged solar disk, see Cornelius, 2014: 148–150. He believes that the god could be Šamaš, Aššur, or Ninurta.

[88] In our sample, note no. 1, 3, 7, 9–11.

[89] Collon, 2001: 80.

[90] BM 12450 = fig. 38.

[91] Seidl, 1957–1971: 486. See also Seidl, 1989: 120. However, the spade could also be a symbol of Nabû, Marduk's son: the *marru* from Huga Zanbil, a piece of cultic ritual paraphernalia, bears an inscription reading *marru ša* ^{d}*Nabî* ("the spade of Nabû"). See Seidl, 1989: 118.

[92] On BM 89810 (no. 2 in our list), the spade and the stylus come between the goddess in a nimbus and a male deity, both of whom have their backs to these divine symbols.

[93] Seidl, 1957–1971: 486. For a stylus with a caption ^{d}Nabû (AG), see also Seidl, 1989: 124.

[94] Seidl, 1957–1971: 489.

on Morgan Seal 691 (no. 6 in our list), which includes one of the rare instances of a male god in the nimbus. Here, the stylus appears just over the god's right hand, apparently raised in blessing, but also as if holding the stylus. The arrangement indicates clearly that this male deity is Nabû, riding the *Mušhuššu*, his expected companion animal.

Taken together, these data suggest that the goddess in a nimbus belongs to Marduk's family circle. Perhaps, given her association with both the spade (which mainly represents Marduk) and stylus (Nabû), we might propose that she was Nabû's consort, as seems to be suggested by her similar size, posture, and proximity to Nabû on Morgan Seal 691 (no. 6, above). The best-known spouse of Nabû is Tašmētu, but as no known iconography exists for this goddess, definitive proof is lacking. However, because Tašmētu is not an Ištar figure, and because an Ištar figure seems indicated by most of the evidence, Tašmētu is probably not the goddess in a nimbus on these seals.

Another clue to the identity of the goddess in a nimbus who is associated with Nabû is found on VA 3031 (fig. 27 = VAS 1, no. 36),[95] a *kudurru* dated to the reign of Nabû-šuma-iškun (ca. 760–748 BCE), unearthed at Borsippa. On it, three anthropoid figures—two goddesses and a god—are arranged in a line, facing right, with the goddesses in the centre and on the right and the god on the left. The goddess on the right stands on a lion couchant, holding a ring in her left hand and a scimitar in her right. Herles, we believe correctly, identifies this figure as Ištar, mostly due to her representation as a warrior and her position atop the lion, a posture often assumed by Ištar.[96] The goddess behind her, to the viewer's left, initially appears devoid of characteristics that might assist us in determining her identity. Like Nanāya on the *kudurru* of Melišipak (fig. 31), she wears a headdress and long robe, and she stands with her hands raised frontward in a posture of blessing. Like the other two figures, she stands on a pedestal, though she alone is without a companion animal. The god to the viewer's left stands on a winged lion-griffin at the end of the procession, holding a bow in his left hand and arrows in his right. Because the inscription refers only to Nanāya and Mār-bīti,[97] Asher-Greve and Westenholz make the intriguing suggestion that the two female figures on this tablet are a double representation of Nanāya in different guises.[98] The somewhat anonymous depiction of the goddess in the centre presents no obstacles to their theory, while the lion-mounted figure must lead in a more decisive direction. Asher-Greve and Westenholz therefore propose that the goddess leading the procession may be interpreted as Nanāya syncretised with Ištar, who was worshipped at Euršaba in Borsippa.[99] They identify the image of the second goddess as Nanāya syncretised with Tašmētu.[100] Support for their proposal comes from the goddesses' identical platforms, each with a stylised mountain motif, whereas the male god on the left—the warlike god Mār-bīti, according to both the inscription and the proposal of Asher-Greve and Westenholz—has an undecorated pedestal.[101]

Based on the interpretation of the three divine images suggested first by Herles and developed by Asher-Greve and Westenholz, we suggest that the warrior-like image of the goddess in a nimbus, even when mounted on a lion-griffin rather than a lion as on seal no. 6, is also Ištar of Euršaba syncretised with Nanāya, accompanied by Nabû on *Mušhuššu*, holding a stylus. Moreover, despite the fact that the male divine figure

---

[95] See, e.g., Herles, 2006: table 46, no. 103.

[96] Herles, 2006: 25.

[97] For the edition, see Thureau-Dangin, 1919: 141–144. Mār-bīti could perhaps be identified with Nabû, although the name is often used for Marduk, as well. For Mār-bīti, see Krebernik, 1987–1990: 355–357. For Mār-bīti being Marduk, see Oshima, 2010: 145–161 and Lambert, 2013: 321–325.

[98] Asher-Greve / Westenholz, 2013: 281.

[99] For the reading of the temple *é-ur$_5$-šà-ba* instead of the previous reading *é-hur-šà-ba*, see George, 1992: 282.

[100] According to a Seleucid Babylonian ritual text, Nabû goes to Euršaba for his wedding with Nanāya on the second day of the month Ayyāru. See Cohen, 1993: 311; Linssen, 2004: 63, n. 269, and 68. It is not yet clear in which city the ceremony took place, since Euršaba is named as both Ištar's temple at Borsippa and Nanāya's chapel in Esagil at Babylon. See George, 1992: 324. The marriage of Nabû in Ayyāru was also performed earlier, in the Neo-Assyrian period. However, instead of Nanāya, Nabû's bride in that ceremony was Tašmētu (Cohen, 1993: 311). These facts demonstrate that Tašmētu and Nanāya shared identities and were almost indistinguishable from one another. However, as Waerzeggers shows, they still maintained their independent existence. For the two personae of Nanāya worshipped at Borsippa, see Waerzeggers, 2010: 22, 26–27.

[101] In this inscription, Nanāya is invoked first, followed by Mār-bīti. If indeed the two goddesses seen on this stone tablet are a double image of Nanāya, then the order of invocation in the text correlates exactly to the order in which the gods' images are positioned.

on seal no. 7 (AO 1510) is not mounted on *Mušhuššu*, as we expect for Nabû, but rather on a winged lion-griffin, as on the Borsippa *kudurru*, it seems reasonable to propose that the similarly mounted god and goddess on seal no. 7 (AO 1510) are Mār-bīti or Nabû and Ištar of Euršaba syncretised with Nanāya.

One might reasonably object to this proposal based on the fact that neither the goddess mounted on a lion on the Borsippa *kudurru* (fig. 27) nor the second goddess has a nimbus. However, among the details of both goddesses' robes are three stars, stacked vertically toward the front of the garment. It is likely that these are three representations of the planet Venus and identical in meaning to the nimbus. One may compare them with the stars decorating the high-backed throne seen on the Ashmolean seal (no. 13) or Sennacherib's rock reliefs at Maltai (fig. 33).[102]

4.5 Other Male Deities

In addition to the god in the solar disk, the goddess in a nimbus often appears with other divine beings, either a male deity or a *Mischwesen*. When accompanying a male deity, she normally stands behind him (no. 1; 6; 7) or behind the worshipper, facing the god (for example, no. 2).[103] Both arrangements suggest her position as secondary to the male deity.

Complicating our task, the male deity who appears with the goddess in a nimbus normally displays no features characteristic of a particular god. For example, on no. 1 and 2, the god in question is dressed with a star-topped, horned headdress and an open robe over a kilt. On no. 1, he carries a star-tipped bow on his shoulder, while on no. 2, the male deity on the left carries two quivers on each shoulder with protruding arrows. Both gods carry a sword strapped at the waist, both a mace in the left hand, and both bless the human with a raised right hand. Notable exceptions are Morgan Library seal no. 691 (no. 6) and Louvre Seal AO 1510 (no. 7). As discussed above, they most probably depict Ištar of Euršaba syncretised with Nanāya and Nabû or Mār-bīti.

Interestingly, when the goddess in a nimbus appears with the Anzû motif (no. 9)—that is, the god Ninurta on a lion-griffin, aiming his arrow at another lion-griffin—the worshipper stands in front of the goddess, face to face with her, rather than Ninurta. The viewer's gaze, following the worshipper's gaze on the seal, is likewise drawn to the goddess, who carries a sword at her waist, rather than at Ninurta. This suggests that, although the Anzû motif occupies more of the visual field, the goddess in a nimbus is its actual focal point. One observes the same arrangement on other cylinder seals on which the Anzû-motif is combined with the goddess Gula.[104] Just as on our no. 9, the worshipper turns toward the goddess, who holds her emblem—a healing scalpel—in her right hand and a ring in her left. Unlike the Williams seal (no. 9), however, Gula in these images is normally represented either as enthroned or standing on a high-backed dais, decorated with stars or globes, often mounted atop a reclining dog, her companion animal.[105] It might be possible, then, that the goddess in a nimbus on the Williams seal is based on alternative imagery of Gula, although Gula almost never carries a weapon and so the proposal seems unlikely.

4.6 Female Deities

A remarkable datum regarding the goddess in a nimbus is the fact that, while frequently found in the company of male deities or their non-anthropomorphic symbols, she rarely appears with another female deity. Exceptions are no. 6 (Morgan Library Seal 691) and no. 13 (1922.61 in the Ashmolean collections).[106]

On no. 6 (Morgan Library Seal 691), the goddess in a nimbus appears twice. Her smaller image is visible in mid-air between the human worshipper and Nabû, and her larger image follows Nabû and a god in a

[102] For the discussion of these images, see further below.

[103] For the latter motif, see also Delaporte, 1923: A. 680.

[104] See, e.g., Collon, 2001: 123, and pl. XIX, no. 232–233.

[105] For both the scalpel and the dog as Gula's symbols, see, e.g., Böck, 2014: 18–22 and 38–44, respectively.

[106] Another exception is IMJ 96.153.57, an unprovenanced carnelian cylinder seal housed at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem. See Ornan, 2004: 13–30. On this seal, we see the goddess in a notched double ring, dressed in a long open robe over a kilt, with a feather-topped headdress, following Gula, who stands on a long, star-backed stand, mounted on a dog. A worshipper standing between a spade and a stylus offers prayers to Gula. Unlike the seals discussed in this section, the image of the goddess in the nimbus is as large as both Gula and the worshipper. Ornan identifies the goddess in a nimbus on this seal as Ištar and interprets the scene as a depiction of Ištar's dominion over Gula's healing power. Ornan, 2004: 26.

nimbus. We suggested above that the smaller image represents the planet Venus, whereas the larger image is Ištar of Euršaba, syncretised with Nanāya.

In contrast, on the Ashmolean cylinder seal (no. 13), we observe a small image of the goddess in a nimbus in mid-air, and a goddess seated on a high backed throne, decorated with stars, mounted on the back of a lion couchant. Although it is roughly a hundred years older,[107] the image on this seal is reminiscent of those of Mullissu, the god Aššur's main consort, who is best-known visually from Sennacherib's rock reliefs at Maltai (fig. 33), which are of course dated to Sennacherib's reign in the seventh century.[108] Like the seated goddess on the Ashmolean seal, Mullissu sits on a high-backed throne, albeit more elaborately decorated than the Ashmolean seal (no. 13), and similarly, her throne rests on a lion, this time standing.[109] Given the fact that Mullissu was also known as Ištar of Nineveh or the Queen/Lady of Nineveh,[110] it seems reasonable that the larger image of the goddess on the star-backed throne on the Ashmolean seal (no. 13) is also Mullissu, that is, Ištar of Nineveh.[111]

4.7 Lesser Divine Beings

When the goddess in a nimbus appears with lesser divine beings, such as genii, or *Mischwesen* on which she is not standing, she is almost always located in front of them, facing the human worshipper directly. In our sample, on seal no. 11, a scorpion-man holding the winged solar disk stands behind her,[112] while a horned dragon bears the spade and stylus emblems of Marduk and Nabû on its back. On seal no. 12, a winged genie holds a pine cone in his right hand and a bucket in his left—often understood as the paraphernalia for ritual cleansing—following her.[113]

5. THE NIMBUS AGAIN

We return now to the nimbus itself. In this section, we explore the Akkadian terms that may have referred to it, thereby linking our iconographical study to textual evidence.

As noted earlier, modern scholars have suggested that *melammu* might have been the ancient term for the nimbus. A loanword derived from the Sumerian me.lám, *melammu* refers to: (1) radiance, supernatural awe-inspiring sheen (inherent in things divine and royal); and (2) the glow of good health.[114] Ištar was therefore by no means alone in her possession of *melammu*; instead, almost all divine beings, objects, as well as humans (most notably, kings) might possess a *melammu*.[115] But, with the exception of some isolated images of Šamaš or Aššur (fig. 6; 35; 36), we have no known example of other deities or kings depicted with a ring and emanating rays—that is, a nimbus—so the phenomenon is more limited than *melammu*. Additionally, we

---

[107] The seal bears an Akkadian inscription that reads: ^{na4}KIŠIB ^{m}PA-MAN-PAP ^{lú}SAG *šá* ^{m}10-ERIM.TÁḪ MAN KUR *aš-<šur>* ("the seal of Nabû-šarru-uṣur, the [royal] eunuch of Adad-nirāri [III, 811–783 BCE], the king of Assyria"). For the inscription, see Watanabe, 1992: 365. Incidentally, Nabû-šarru-uṣur's name appears as the Eponym of 786 BCE, but it must be a scribal error. See now Baker, 2001: 874. For the text and a possible interpretation of its historical background, see Niederreiter, 2015: 139.

[108] See n. 72.

[109] The lion as the base of her throne is best preserved on Relief III of Boehmer, although her image itself is not. See Boehmer, 1975: 72–73, fig. 65 and 67, as well as his discussions on the throne on pp. 48–50.

[110] Meinhold, 2009: 168–174, 191–207.

[111] Collon observes that there were two sets of imagery for Mullissu—with a nimbus, or seated on a high-backed throne decorated with stars or globes—because, during the reign of Sennacherib, her "iconography was not fully developed". Collon, 2001: 138.

[112] An interesting exception to this observation is the Stellenbosch seal (fig. 28). On it, the worshipper faces a winged genie holding the god in a winged solar disk. The goddess in a nimbus stands behind the genie. The genie on this seal was probably placed in front of her, not due to his own status, but by virtue of the god in the solar disk whom he is supporting. That is to say that the god in the solar disk is the centre of the worshipper's attention, just like other male deities appearing with the goddess in a nimbus discussed above. For further details on the Stellenbosch seal, see Van Dijk-Coombes, 2016: 9–10.

[113] The interpretation of the *apkallu*s, their paraphernalia, and their relation to the sacred tree with which they are often associated remains open to debate See, e.g., Ataç, 2010: 159–180.

[114] See CAD 10, 9. Cf. AHw, 643: "Schreckensglanz". For *melammu*, see also Ataç, 2007: 295–313.

[115] For the radiant appearance of kings, see, e.g., Machinist, 2011: 405–430.

noted earlier that the nimbus is often portrayed as if it possessed a kind of materiality, requiring it to rest on the goddess's shoulder for support, and making it possible for her to grasp it in her hand. This distinguishes all the images of the goddess in a nimbus from the few male exemplars.

We have argued above that the nimbus, whether surrounding the goddess's torso or her entire body, probably symbolises the planet Venus, more specifically, its outline and bright light. Indeed, the dazzling appearance of Venus as well as Ištar were frequent objects of praise in cuneiform literature. For example, a lengthy *Šuila* prayer to Ištar:[116]

attīma nannarat šamê u erṣeti mārat ^{d}*sîn qaritti*
You (Ištar) are the luminary of the heavens and earth, heroic daughter of Sîn.

Another example, from an incantation to Ištar:[117]

telītu ^{d}*ištar ša tuqunti ḫalpat*
bēltu (GAŠAN) *ša šalummatu ramât rašubbatu labšat*
Ištar, the very competent, who is donned with battle,
the lady who is enveloped in awesome radiance, clothed in terrifying splendour.

A final example from Nabonidus's inscription, the Emašdari-Cylinder, which commemorates his reconstruction of Emašdari, Ištar's temple in Babylon:[118]

bēlti ša melammūšu šamû katmū
namrīrrūšu erṣeti rapašti saḫpū
kāšidat ayyābi muḫalliqat zāmânû
The lady whose radiance covers the heavens,
whose splendour overwhelms the vast earth,
is she who captures the enemy and destroys the hostile.

These texts praise Ištar's gleaming appearance and, at the same time, her prowess in battle. In the iconography, these exaltations of Ištar's multifaceted personality best fit the images of her wearing an open robe over a kilt and carrying a sword or a bow and arrows (for example, no. 1; 2; 9; 11; 12).[119] Some scholars,[120] however, argue that Ištar's bellicose, androgynous nature was also represented by a "beard" (Akk. *ziqnu*), as portrayed in Aššurbanipal's hymn to Ištar of Nineveh, obv. 6:[121]

akī aššur (AN.ŠAR) *ziqnī zaqnat namrīrī ḫalpa*[*t* xxx]
Like Aššur, she (Ištar of Nineveh) wears *beards*, she is clothed in brilliance […]

Because the text compares Ištar of Nineveh to Aššur—obviously a male deity and so, according to Neo-Assyrian custom, bearded[122]—modern scholars frequently interpret this phrase literally, sometimes arguing that Ištar herself was imagined as wearing a beard. Ištar was not, however, the only "bearded" goddess in antiquity. The following example comes from the *Syncretistic Hymn to Nanāya*, in which Nanāya, another Ištar figure, praises herself as follows in line 4:[123]

[116] For a recent translation with a composite text and bibliographical references to previous works, see Zernecke, 2011: 257–290, here 261, line 5.
[117] Farber, 1977: 130, lines 39–40.
[118] Schaudig, 2001: 354, (IM 95335) I, 8–10.
[119] Describing her as "ambiguity incarnate", Harris (2000: 158–171, 161) is particularly eloquent on the subject of Ištar's boundary-defying character, including with respect to gender and sexuality. On weapons as a sign of male gender in Mesopotamia from infancy onward, see McCaffrey, 2002: 383.
[120] See n. 122 below.
[121] Livingstone, 1989: 18, no. 7.
[122] While facial hair may serve as a marker of biological maleness, the choice of whether to wear a beard or not is a matter of social custom and thus of gender as a social and not a biological category. Collon emphasises the diversity of ancient Near Eastern practice regarding beards and their style, including the Neo-Assyrian king's preference for lush, elaborately-styled beards and hair. Collon, 1995: 512.
[123] Reiner, 1974: 221–236; see now Oshima, 2020: 335–398.

ina bābili(KÁ.DINGIR.RA)^{ki} *ziqna zaqn*[*āku*]
In Babylon, I am *bearded*.[124]

Some seals, it is alleged, depict a bearded Inana/Ištar. According to Westenholz, for example, the seal of Lu-Igalim, now housed at the Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem (BLMJ 2526), preserves Inana/Ištar's image with a beard. Westenholz stated that the beard presented the goddess's "double character … as the goddess of love and war".[125] Similar iconography of Ištar, also showing what Westenholz interpreted as a beard, appears on an Old-Babylonian cylinder seal in the British Museum (BM 130694).[126]

We have no unambiguous, confirmed images of a bearded goddess, however,[127] and even the two examples advanced by Westenholz have been ruled out by Asher-Greve, who interprets the "beard" as two strands of hair.[128] Beuger likewise rejects Westenholz's suggestion in favour of a pearl necklace.[129]

Furthermore, a reading of the hymn to Ištar of Nineveh in wider literary context reveals that the term *ziqnu* ("beard") does not refer to Ištar's facial hair at all, but rather to the beams of light emitted by certain divine beings or their celestial manifestation—Ištar, and Venus, the bright planet. Consider, for example, an excerpt from the *Great Šamaš Hymn*:[130]

mušaḫmiṭ ziqnāt urri mēreš šēm napišti māti
šadî bētūti erimma šalummatka
namrīrūka imlû seḫip mātāti
(Šamaš,) who quickly sends *beards* of daylight (to) land cultivated with barley, the life of the land,
your splendour covers the distant mountains,
your lights fill the surface of the lands.

Since Šamaš is a male deity, a description of facial hair comes as no surprise, but note that here, the term *ziqnāt* (plural of *ziqnu*, that is, "beards") does not appear on Šamaš's face at all, but instead refers to the rays of light spread by the sun. The parallelism among *ziqnāt urri* ("*beards* of daylight"), *šalummatu* ("splendour"), and *namrīrū* ("lights"), confirms the interpretation.

We return to Aššurbanipal's hymn to Ištar of Nineveh, now considering this new context, obv. 6–8:[131]

akī aššur (AN.ŠAR) *ziqnī zaqnat namrīrī ḫalpa*[*t* xxx]
agû ina qaqqadīša akī kakkabī n[*abiṭ*]
šanšanāti ša iratīša ša kī [^{d}]*šamši napḫā*
Like Aššur, she (Ištar of Nineveh) wears *beards*, she is clothed in brilliance […]
The headdress on her head s[hines] like stars,
Luminescent disks on her chest spread light like the sun.

Here, too, *ziqna zaqānu* (literally, "to have a beard") parallels *namrīrī ḫalāpu* ("to clothe with brilliance"), followed by the description of Ištar's headdress, shining "like stars", and the gleaming disk decorations on her chest, emitting "light like the sun". Notably, not one of these lines refers to Ištar of Nineveh's warlike aspect. It seems likely, therefore, that *ziqnu*, as in the *Great Šamaš Hymn*, does *not* symbolise Ištar's vaunted manliness at all, and it does *not* refer to an androgenising feature such as a beard, but rather, *ziqnu* here refers to the goddess's brilliant brightness via the splendid rays of light she emits.

---

[124] A variant has *zik-r*[*a-*, probably to be read *zikr*[*āku*], "[I am] manly", instead. See LKA 37, 3. However, as this exemplar contains many irregularities, it is possible that it is a simple scribal error.
[125] Westenholz, 2002: 18. See also Matsushima, 2014: 3. Groneberg argues that Inana/Ištar, as a female deity, was praised for her masculinity—symbolised as a beard—to match the power of male gods. Groneberg, 1986: 25–46.
[126] See Westenholz, 2009: 337. Based on the teachings of Gnosticism and Syriac Christianity, Parpola understands the bearded Ištar not as a reference to virility or warfare but as a symbol of "sublime purity and perfection". The proposal has not met with widespread acceptance. See Parpola, 1997: XXIX and n. 97. For an interpretation similar to Parpola's, see Lapinkivi, 2004: 156–166.
[127] The perception of abnormality associated with women having a beard in the ancient Mesopotamian world might be reflected in *Šumma Ālu* I, 153: DIŠ *ina* URU MUMUS^{meš} SU$_6$ *zaq-na* KUR KI.KAL DIB^{bat} ("If women in a city have beards, hardship will afflict the land"). For this omen, see Freedman, 1998: 36–37.
[128] Asher-Greve / Westenholz, 2013: 208.
[129] Beuger, 2018: 222–223, n. 67.
[130] Lambert, 1960: 126–127, lines 18–20. A new edition by T. M. Oshima will be published in LAOS.
[131] Livingstone, 1989: 18, no. 7.

This interpretation of the expression *ziqna zaqānu* finds confirmation in a first-millennium astronomical omen and its commentary:[132]

šumma ^{d}MIN (= *dilbat*) *ina* ^{iti}*nisanni*(BÁR) *ziqna* (SU_6) *zaq-na-at* …
SU_6 *zaq-nu* SU_6 *na-ba-ṭu ba-ʾ-lat né-bat*
If Venus has *a beard* in Nisannu (i.e., Month I) …
"Having a beard": SU_6 = *nabāṭu*, "to shine"; she is very bright and shining

The omen explains the expression *ziqna zaqānu* explicitly: "to have a beard" means *nabāṭu* ("to shine") and hence *ziqna zaqnat* ("she has a beard") signifies *baʾlat nebât* ("she is very bright and gleaming").

The same conclusion can be drawn from another Venus omen:[133]

[*šumma* ^{mul}*dilbat*] *naphat u ziqna* (SU_6) *zaqnat meḫru* (GABA.RI) *sāmat* (SA_5)^{at} *u baʾlat*
[If Venus] is lit up and has a beard: same (interpretation)—she is red and very bright.

This also explains that *napḫat* ("she is lit up") means *sāmat* ("she is red"), while at the same time equating *ziqna zaqānu* ("to have a beard") with *baʾālu* ("to gleam"). Hence, as suggested already by Jastrow in 1911, the expression *ziqna zaqānu* should be translated something like, "to be donned with light" or "to be resplendent".[134]

Now, having established the meaning of the expression *ziqna zaqānu*, we have one further question: What was the basis for this particular expression? We return, therefore, to the Šamaš Tablet of Nabû-apla-iddina (fig. 32). On that tablet, a large solar disk with four triangular projections and four wavy rays is suspended between three humanoid figures on the left, and on the right, a larger, seated image of Šamaš with beard and horned headdress. Directly in front of Šamaš's headdress are three celestial symbols that employ the standard iconography of a crescent moon (for Sîn), a disk with eight triangular projections encircling a smaller ring (for Venus, that is, Ištar), and a second solar disk (for Šamaš). The identifications are confirmed by a caption over the symbols:

Sîn, Šamaš, and Ištar, depicted opposite the Apsû, between Niraḫ (and) the pillars.[135]

The same celestial symbols—a solar disk, crescent, and star in the shape of a pointed rosette—appear together on stone monuments such as the *kudurru* of Melišipak (fig. 31).[136] When observed alongside symbols for the moon and Pleiades, it is evident that the solar disk and star typically include triangular projections that are absent in other celestial symbols. It does not seem coincidental that the most prominent features in the sky—Venus (= Ištar) and the sun (= Šamaš)—are both described in the texts above as having "beards". We therefore suggest that the term *ziqnu* refers to the rays (represented variously as triangular projections, wavy lines, poles, or notches) that appear in star and sun symbols, as well as the nimbus that surrounds the goddess(es) discussed here. This interpretation also explains why ancient texts often speak of "beards", that is, the plural, thus designating specifically the *multiple* rays of bright light associated with Ištar and Šamaš, rather than simply an ordinary "beard" for these resplendent gods.

6. CONCLUSION

Given the human requirement for stability and meaning in a disorderly world, the multiplicity that characterises Mesopotamian religion comes into focus as a reasonable response to an ongoing struggle between "*nomos*" and "chaos".[137] The materiality of Mesopotamian religion and its embrace of the everyday—anthropomorphic gods, divine symbols drawn recognisably from nature, and cult statues that were fed, clothed, and

[132] Reiner / Pingree, 1998: 149, line 13.
[133] Reiner / Pingree, 1998: 215, line 25.
[134] Jastrow, 1911: 271–298.
[135] Woods, 2004: 83, caption II 1–2.
[136] For other examples of solar disks and star symbols, see, e.g., Seidl, 1957–1971: 485; 1989: 98–100; Kurmangaliev, 2009–2011: 618–619 for the former and Seidl, 1957–1971: 485; 1989: 100–101; Collon, 2001: 15 for the latter.
[137] The continual mutability of Mesopotamian religion is acutely emphasised in Asher-Greve / Westenholz, 2013: 29–39. Berger's classic study (1967) presents religion as a "humanly constructed universe of meaning", and, in practical terms, the orderly response to chaos by means of the sacred. See especially Berger, 1967: 1–28, 175.

had families in houses of their own—served as a counterweight to the realities of Mesopotamian life for more than three millennia. Biblical writers mocked these beliefs and practices, but scholarship of the past decades unambiguously reveals that Israelite monotheism was a chimera, too, until the sixth-century Babylonian exile, and that prior monotheising, aniconic reforms competed with the need for "*visible religion*"—most notably in the form of a goddess, Asherah, Yahweh's consort.[138]

In this contribution, we have attempted to trace a clear path through a labyrinthine world. We set out to discover the taxonomy of the nimbus, the goddess(es) associated with it, and the meaning of their combination. On the one hand, we were able to visualise a fairly lucid pattern that governed the design and ownership of the nimbus, while on the other hand, we were unable to identify absolutely a specific goddess who could be identified with it. Rather, we uncovered a *constellation* of goddesses—and two gods—who seemed qualified, according to the Mesopotamian worldview, to possess it. Thus, the notion of "goddess in a nimbus" needs emendation to both singular *and* plural: goddess(es) in a nimbus.

We observe that the nimbus was formed from a circular ring, often but not always surrounded by representations of light, a phenomenon as difficult to capture in material form as belief itself. Altogether, based on an analysis of the goddess, her clothing, her almost continual appearance with weaponry, her companion animal (usually the lion), and the gods, goddesses, and divine symbols with which she appeared, the "nimbus" seemed best understood as linked to a pair of *celestial phenomena*: the sun and the brightest planet, Venus. The identification of "goddess(es) in the nimbus" proceeded from the celestial to the religious: Venus to Ištar, Ištar figures, and goddesses who might readily associate or syncretise with Ištar. Male gods in nimbi were limited to Šamaš (the sun) and Aššur (also associated with the sun). The goddesses included Ištars of Arbela, Nineveh, and Borsippa, and Nanāya, often associated with and sometimes indistinguishable from Ištar. Although consistently shown with nimbi, they could manifest different appearances because they *were*—somewhat—different goddesses.[139]

Finally, we considered the puzzling datum of the "bearded" Ištar and (re)discovered that *ziqnu* ("beard"), referred to light. This was especially apt for the sun—sometimes envisioned with nimbi as the gods Aššur and Šamaš—but most importantly, the "beard" served as a representation of Ištar/Venus's powerful light, which not only dominated the night sky (along with the moon god Sîn, Ištar's father) but was visible in the morning, as well. It bears repeating that, when Ištar was viewed in celestial form, the nimbus made her most prominent features manifest: the circle of the planet's outline, and the bright sparkles of its spectacular light. This image then became associated with a range of goddesses with whom Ištar had a natural kinship, and the goddesses' mutual representation with the nimbus served to highlight not only the quality of light with which they were associated but their mutual relationships, as well.

Izak Cornelius has contributed widely to the textual and iconographic study of Egypt, the Levant, Mesopotamia, and their interactions.[140] It is rare that biblical scholarship can contribute to elucidating Mesopotamian religion, but here the figure of Moses is apposite. Biblical tradition held that when Moses was born he was simply *ṭôv*, "good", (Exod 2:2), but later tradition explored the meaning of this "goodness" in combination with his role as divine mediator: the Samaritan *Molad Mosheh* (II, 8–10) maintained that the infant Moses was so luminous as to rival the sun; Philo and Josephus conferred superhuman beauty on him;[141] and rabbinic tradition held that, at the moment of his birth "the whole house was filled with light" (*b.Sotah* 12a).[142] Yet, in his adult role as religious mediator—one frequently assumed by Mesopotamian goddesses, including Ištar—Moses's portrait assumes a darker hue. After forty days and nights on Mount Sinai with the deity, his appearance is recounted via an obscure Hebrew verb used only in this scene: the skin of Moses's face is *qaran*, which shares its root letters with the common noun *qeren* ("horns"), and thus was interpreted in the Vulgate and medieval art (for example, Michelangelo's painting in St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican) as a *horned* Moses (Exod 34:29–30, 35). Modern interpreters struggle to determine whether *qaran* represents physical disfigurement—as blackened or hardened skin from contact with the deity's light, or horns, on the

[138] See Smith, 2002: 108–147 on the evolution of the relationship between Israel's national deity, Yahweh, and the goddess Asherah and 2002: 182–199 on the development of monotheistic Yahwism. Additionally, with a focus on the interface among Israelite history and the textual development of the Hebrew Bible, Schmid, 2018: 277–304.
[139] Porter, 2000: 246–247 on the Ištar goddesses and the planet Venus.
[140] Cornelius, 2017.
[141] Feldman, 2007: 41–42, 55–57.
[142] Cohen, 1993: 128.

model of ancient near Eastern divine images—or resplendence, like a Mesopotamian *melammu.*[143] We noted in this contribution, however, that the nimbus appears both more substantial than a *melammu* and less widely distributed; and similarly, Moses is the only person in the Hebrew Bible described by *qaran.* In sum, it seems that in both Israel and Mesopotamia, when faced with the impossibility of encompassing the divine, the ancients sought images—nimbus, beard, or horn of light—that were tangible, everyday, and a *visible* bridge to the world of the gods on whom they depended.

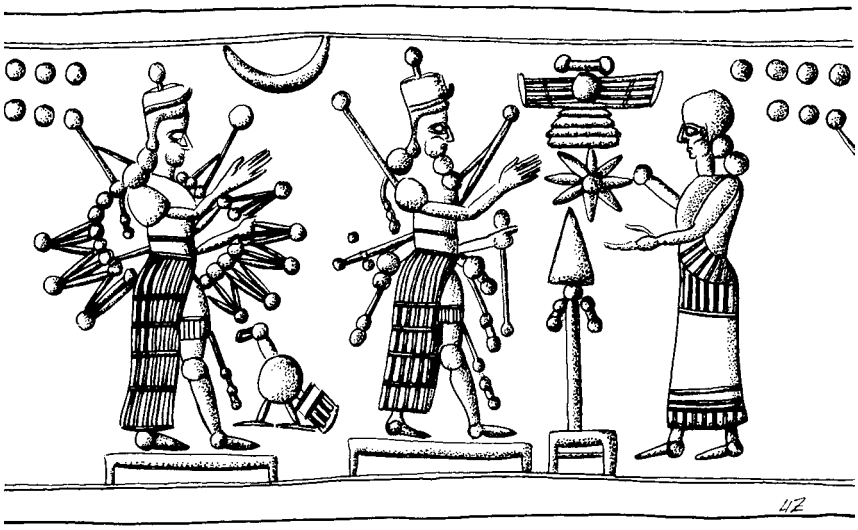


Fig. 1: Cylinder seal, BM 89164. © Stiftung BIBEL+ORIENT Freiburg CH.

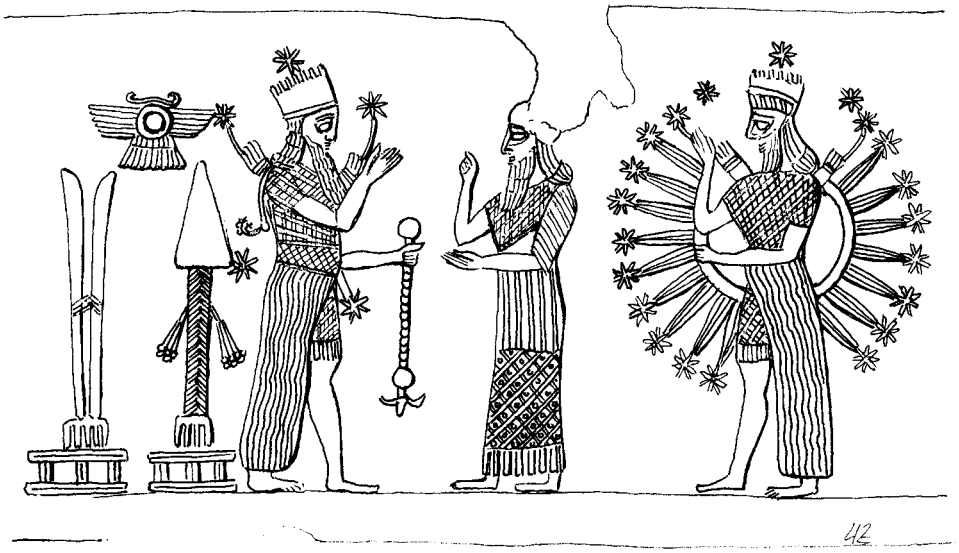


Fig. 2: Cylinder seal, BM 89810. © Stiftung BIBEL+ORIENT Freiburg CH.

[143] For reviews of the range of positions, see, e.g., Van Seters, 1994: 356–360; Propp, 2006: 620–623; Alter, 2019: 351–352.

Fig. 3: Cylinder seal, BM 126064. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

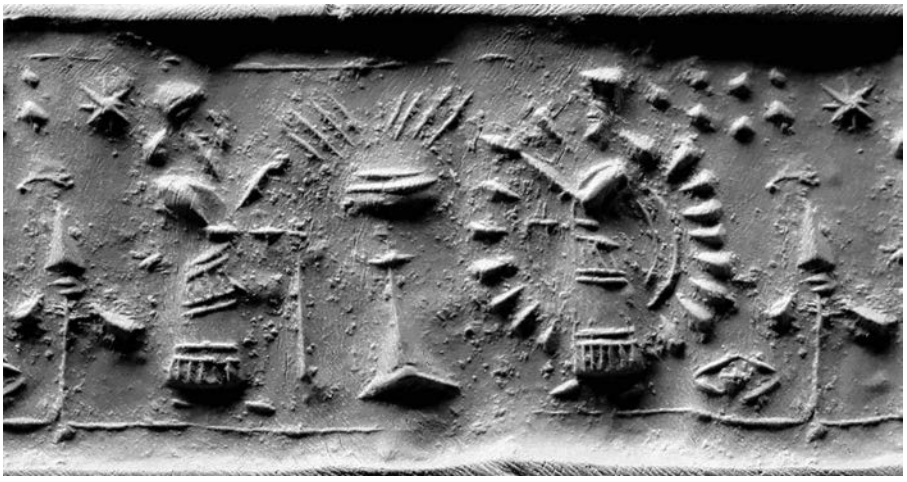


Fig. 4: Cylinder seal, Morgan Seal 680. © The Morgan Library & Museum, New York.

Fig. 5: Cylinder seal, Morgan Seal 685. © The Morgan Library & Museum, New York.

Fig. 6: Cylinder seal, Morgan Seal 691. © The Morgan Library & Museum, New York.

Fig. 7: Cylinder seal, AO 1510. © Stiftung BIBEL+ORIENT Freiburg CH.

Fig. 8: Cylinder seal, AO 2063. Source: Delaporte, 1923: 198, A. 958.

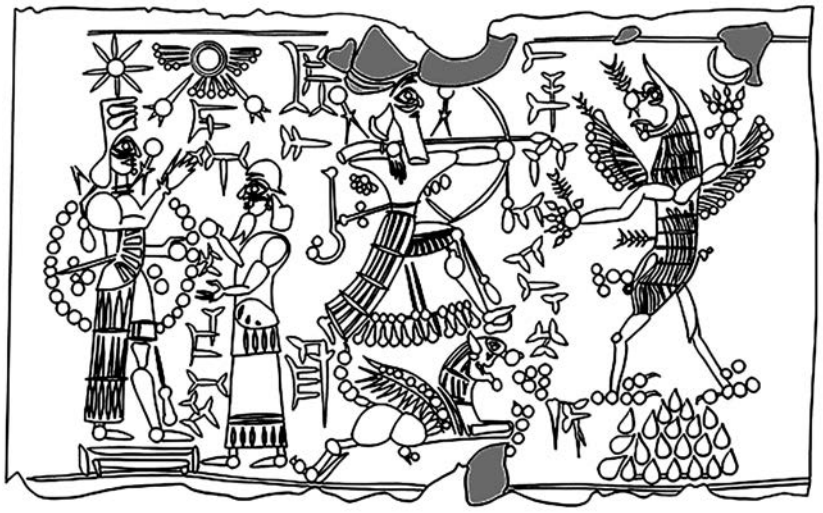


Fig. 9: Cylinder seal, Williams Collection. © A. Klein.

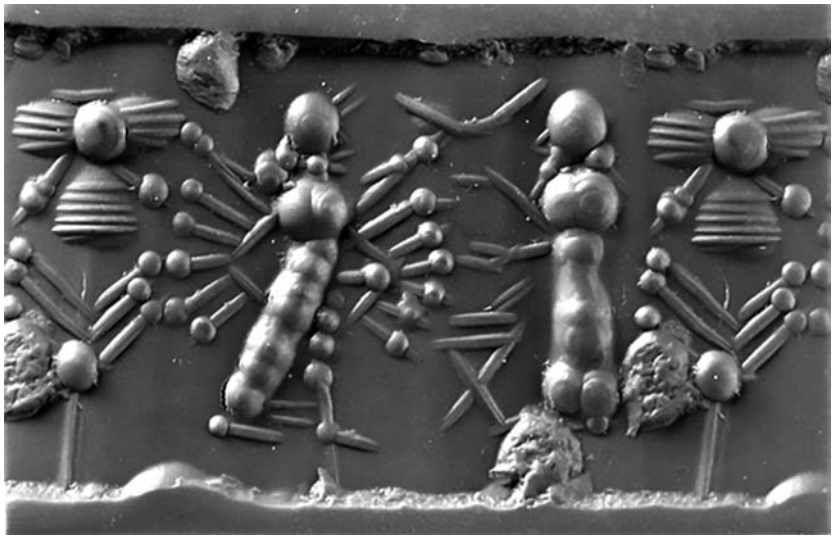


Fig. 10: Cylinder seal, VA 130. © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Vorderasiatisches Museum. Photo: O. M. Teßmer.

Fig. 11: Cylinder seal, VA 508. © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Vorderasiatisches Museum. Photo: O. M. Teßmer.

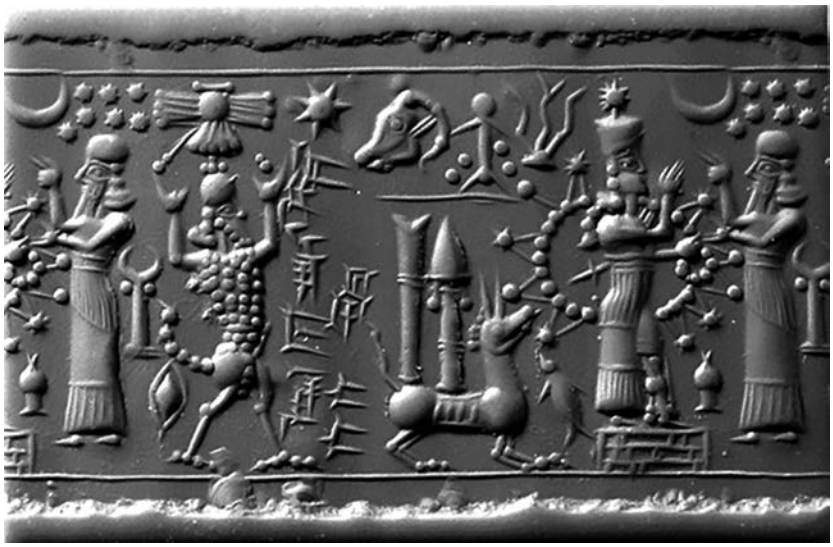


Fig. 12: Cylinder seal, VA 2048. © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Vorderasiatisches Museum. Photo: O. M. Teßmer

Fig. 13: Cylinder seal, Ash 1922.61. Source: Buchanan, 1966: 114, 633.

Fig. 14: Cylinder seal, IAA I.744. Source: Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: 333, no. 287.

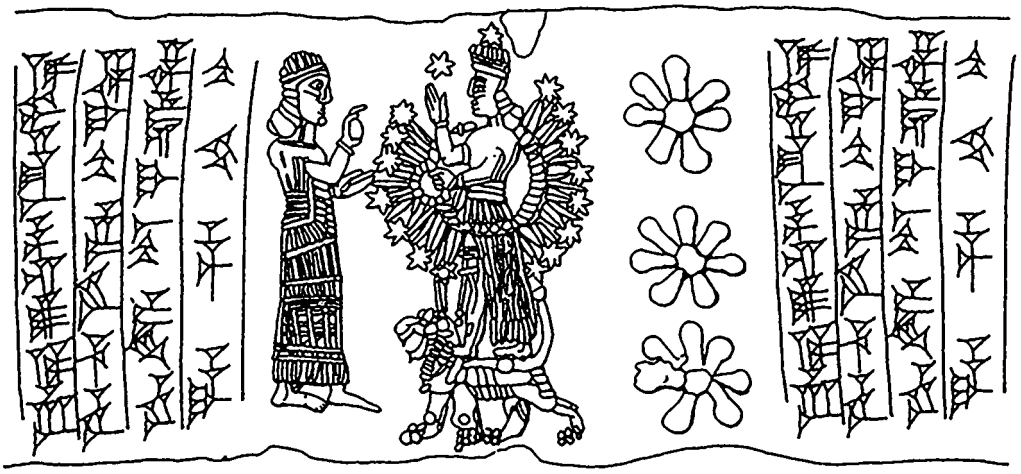


Fig. 15: Cylinder seal, private collection. Source: Watanabe, 1992: 357.

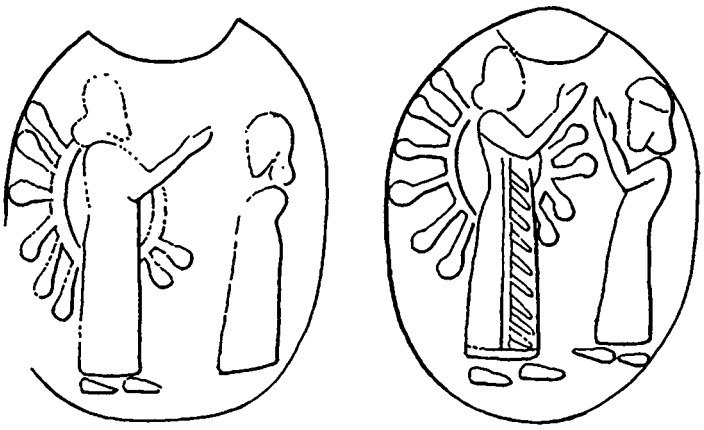


Fig. 16: Clay bullae, BM 84840. Source: Mitchell / Searight, 2008: 37–38, 13d.

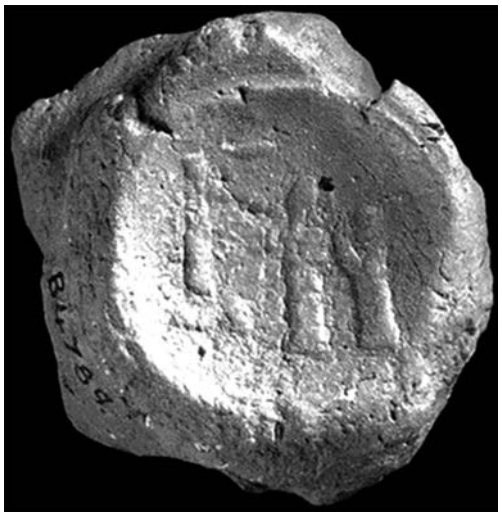


Fig. 17: Clay bulla, BM 84789.
© The Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 18: Impression on tablet, VA Ass 4276.
© Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Vorderasiatisches Museum. Photo: O. M. Teßmer.

Fig. 19: Impression on a tablet, Ist Ass 13319d. Source: Klengel-Brandt, 2014: 55–56.

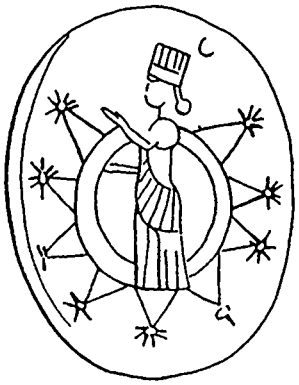


Fig. 20: Stamp seal, H. E. Clark Collection. Source: Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: fig. 288a.

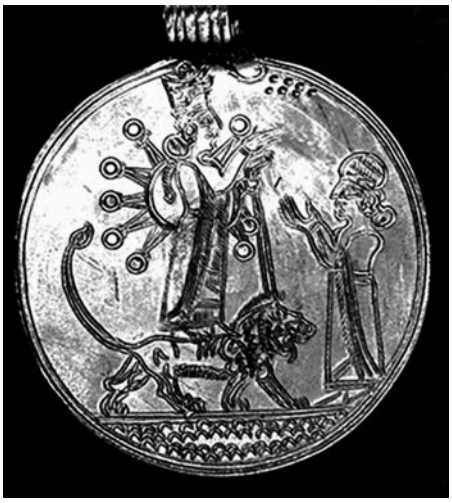


Fig. 21: Silver pendant, S 3692. © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Vorderasiatisches Museum. Photo: O. M. Teßmer.

Fig. 22: Silver pendant, IAA 2009-1533. Source: Ornan, 2001: 238, fig. 9.7.

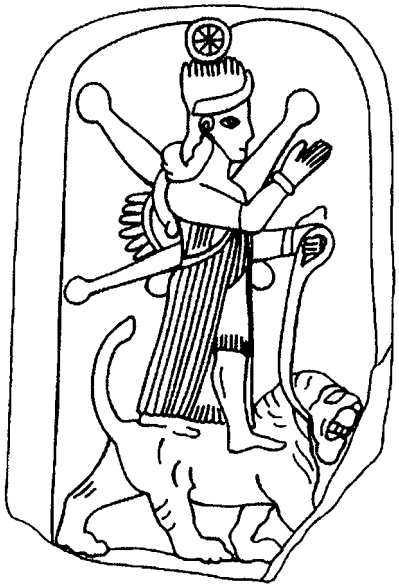


Fig. 23: Stone stela, AO 11503. Source: Ornan, 2001: 241, fig. 9.10.

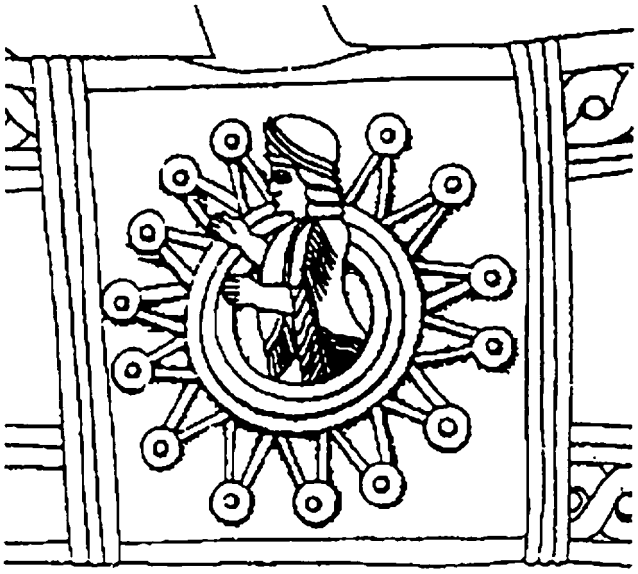


Fig. 24: Wall relief, BM 124866. Source: Ornan, 2001: 240, fig. 9.9.

Fig. 25: Cylinder seal, BM 89435. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 26: Cylinder seal, BM 89769. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

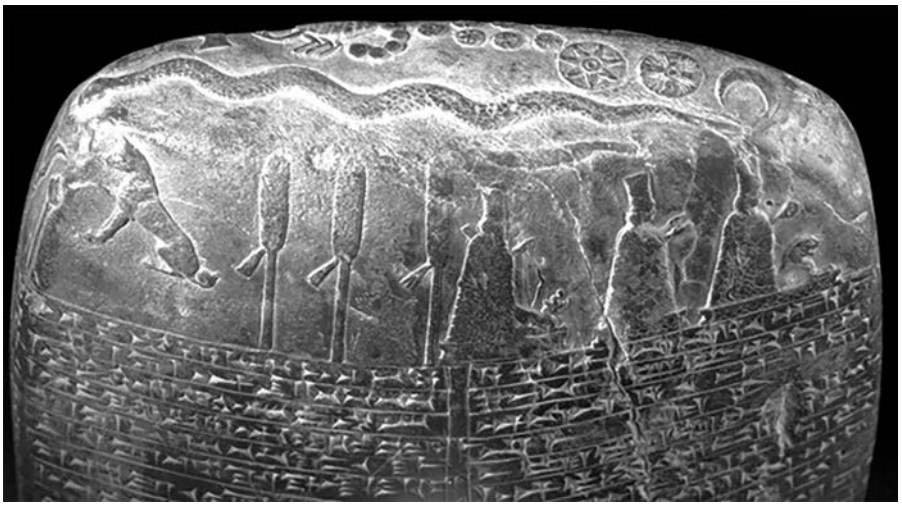


Fig. 27: *Kudurru*, VA 3031. © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Vorderasiatisches Museum. Photo: O. M. Teßmer.

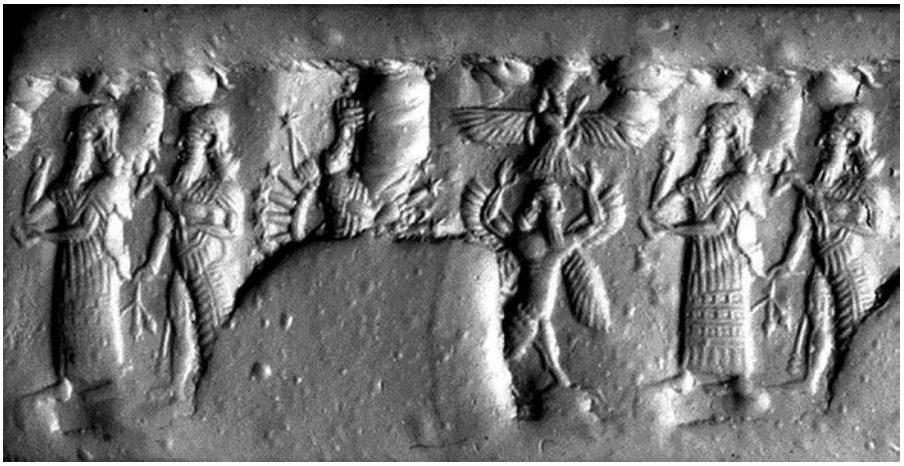


Fig. 28: Cylinder seal, KG/VN/2. © Renate van Dijk-Coombes.

Fig. 29: VAT 9673. © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Vorderasiatisches Museum. Photo: O. M. Teßmer.

Fig. 30: Cylinder seal, BM 89590. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 31: *Kudurru* of Melišipak. Source: Westenholz, 2014: 169.

Fig. 32: Tablet of Shamash, BM 91000. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 33: Sennacherib's rock reliefs from Maltai. Photo: T. M. Oshima.

Fig. 34: Print of the Madonna on a Moon Crescent. Photo: T. M. Oshima.

Fig. 35: Cylinder seal, Morgan Seal 705. © The Morgan Library & Museum, New York.

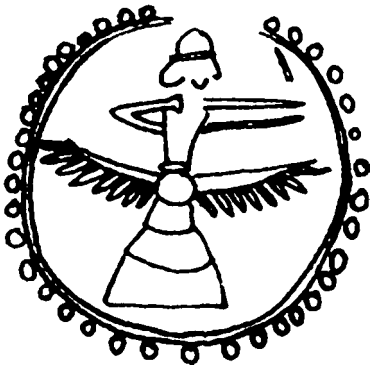


Fig. 36: Cylinder seal, BM 135163. Source: Collon, 2001: 80.

Fig. 37: Wall relief, Assurnaṣirpal II, Northwest Palace, Kalḫu (Nimrud), BM 124551. Source: Layard, 1853: pl. 21.

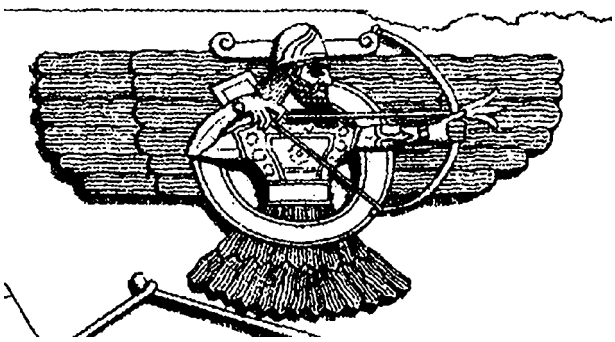


Fig. 38: Wall relief, Assurnaṣirpal II, Northwest Palace, Kalḫu (Nimrud), BM 124550. Source: Layard, 1853: pl. 13.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Allen, S. L., 2015: *The Splintered Divine: A Study of Ištar*, *Baal*, *and Yahweh Divine Names and Divine Multiplicity in the Ancient Near East*. SANER 5. Boston/Berlin/Munich.

Alter, R., 2019: *The Hebrew Bible*. Vol. 1. New York.

Asher-Greve, J. M. / Westenholz, J. G., 2013: *Goddesses in Context: On Divine Powers*, *Roles*, *Relationships and Gender in Mesopotamian Textual and Visual Sources*. OBO 259. Fribourg/Göttingen.

Ataç, M-A., 2007: "The *Melammu* as Divine Epiphany and Usurped Entity". In J. Cheng / M. H. Feldman (eds.): *Ancient Near Eastern Art in Context: Studies in Honor of Irene J. Winter by Her Students*. CHANE 26. Leiden/Boston. Pp. 295–313.

— 2010: "'Time and Eternity' in the Northwest Palace of Ashurnasirpal II at Nimrud". In A. Cohen / S. E. Kangas (eds.): *Assyrian Reliefs from the Palace of Ashurnasirpal II: A Cultural Biography*. Hanover. Pp. 159–180

Baker, H. D. (ed.), 2001: *The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire*. Vol. 2/II. Helsinki.

Berger, P. L., 1967: *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. Garden City.

Beuger, C., 2018: "Maskerade im 1. Jt. v. Chr. in Mesopotamien". In A. Berlejung / J. Filitz (eds.): *The Physicality of the Other: Masks from the Ancient Near East and the Eastern Mediterranean*. ORA 27. Tübingen. Pp. 211–230.

Black, J. A. / Green, A., 1992: *Gods*, *Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia: An Illustrated Dictionary*. London.

Böck, B., 2014: *The Healing Goddess Gula: Towards an Understanding of Ancient Babylonian Medicine*. CHANE 67. London/Leiden.

Boehmer, R. M., 1975: "Die neuassyrischen Felsreliefs von Maltai (Nord-Irak)". Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts und Archäologischer Anzeiger 90, 40–84.

Braun-Holzinger, E. A., 1987–1990: "Löwendrache". RlA 7, 97–99.

Buchanan, B., 1966: *Catalogue of Ancient Near Eastern Seals in the Ashmolean Museum*. *Vol. 1: Cylinder Seals*. Oxford.

Cohen, J., 1993: *The Origins and Evolution of the Moses Nativity Story*. Leiden.

Cohen, M. E., 1993: *The Cultic Calendars of the Ancient Near East*. Bethesda.

Collon, D., 1995: "Clothing and Grooming in Ancient Western Asia". In J. M. Sasson (ed.): *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*. Vol. 1. Peabody. Pp. 503–515.

— 2001: *Catalogue of the Western Asiatic Seals in the British Museum: Cylinder Seals V*, *Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian Periods*. London.

— 2005: *First Impressions*: *Cylinder Seals in the Ancient Near East*. London.

Cornelius, I., 1989: "The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East: A Study of Selected Motifs". JNSL 15, 53–85.

— 2004: *The Many Faces of the Goddess: The Iconography of the Syro-Palestinian Goddesses Anat*, *Astarte*, *Qedeshet*, *and Asherah c. 1500–1000 BCE*. OBO 204. Fribourg/Göttingen.

— 2009: "Aspects of the Iconography of the Warrior Goddess Ištar and Ancient Near Eastern Prophecies". In M. Nissinen / C. E. Carter (eds.): *Images and Prophecy in the Ancient Eastern Mediterranean*. FRLANT 233. Göttingen. Pp. 15–40.

— 2014: "'Trading Religions' and 'Visible Religion' in the Ancient Near East". In V. Rabens / P. Wick (eds.): *Religions and Trade*: *Religious Formation*, *Transformation and Cross-Cultural Exchange Between East and West*. DHR 5. Leiden/Boston. Pp. 141–165.

— 2017: "From Bes to Baal: Religious Interconnections between Egypt and the East". In P. P. Creasman / R. H. Wilkinson (eds.): *Pharaoh's Land and Beyond*: *Ancient Egypt and Its Neighbours*. Oxford. Pp. 209–217.

Delaporte, L., 1923: *Musée du Louvre Catalogue des cylindres cachets et pierres gravées de style oriental II. acquisitions*. Paris.

Dezsö, T. / Curtis, J., 1991: "Assyrian Iron Helmets from Nimrud now in the British Museum". Iraq 53, 105–126.

Díaz-Andreu, M., 2005: "Gender Identity". In M. Díaz-Andreu et al. (eds.): *The Archaeology of Identity: Approaches to Gender, Age, Status, Ethnicity and Religion*. London. Pp. 13–42.

Ebeling, E., 1932: "Annunitu". RlA 1, 110–111.

Farber, W., 1977: *Beschwörungsrituale an Ištar und Dumuzi: Attī Ištar ša harmaša Dumuzi*. Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur Veröffentlichungen der Orientalischen Kommission XXX. Wiesbaden.
Feldman, L. H., 2007: *Philo's Portrayal of Moses in the Context of Ancient Judaism*. Notre Dame.
Frechette, C. G., 2012: *Mesopotamian Ritual-Prayers of* "*Hand-lifting*" (*Akkadian Šuillas*)*: An Investigation of Function in Light of the Idiomatic Meaning of the Rubric*. AOAT 379. Münster.
Freedman, S. M., 1998: *If a City is Set on a Height: The Akkadian Omen Series Šumma Alu ina Mēlê Šakin*. Vol. 1. Occasional Publications of the Samuel Noah Kramer Fund 17. Philadelphia.
George, A. R., 1992: *Babylonian Topographical Texts*. OLA 40. Leuven.
— 2003: *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic: Introduction*, *Critical Edition and Cuneiform Texts*. 2 Vols. Oxford.
Green, A., 1993–1997: "Mischwesen. B. Archäologie. Mesopotamien". RlA 8, 246–264.
Groneberg, B. R. M., 1986: "Die sumerisch-akkadische Inanna/Ištar: Hermaphroditos?" WO 17, 25–46.
Harris, R., 2000: *Gender and Aging in Mesopotamia: The Gilgamesh Epic and Other Ancient Literature*. Norman.
Herbordt, S., 1992: *Neuassyrische Glyptik des 8.–7. Jh. v.Chr. unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Siegelungen auf Tafeln und Tonverschlüssen*. SAAS 1. Helsinki.
Herles, M., 2006: *Götterdarstellungen Mesopotamiens in der 2. Hälfte des 2. Jahrtausends v. Chr. Das anthropomorphe Bild im Verhältnis zum Symbol*. AOAT 329. Münster.
Jastrow, M., 1911: "The 'Bearded' Venus". RAr 17, 271–298.
Keel, O. / Uehlinger, C., 1992: *Göttinnen*, *Götter und Gottessymbole: Neue Erkenntnisse zur Religionsgeschichte Kanaans und Israels aufgrund bislang unerschlossener ikonographischer Quellen*. QD 134. Freiburg/Basel/Vienna.
Klengel-Brandt, E., 2014: *Die neuassyrische Glyptik aus Assur*. WVDOG 140. Wiesbaden.
Krebernik, M., 1987–1990: "Mār-bīti". RlA 7, 355–357.
Kurmangaliev, A., 2009–2011: "Sonnengott. B. I. In Mesoptoamien. Archäologisch". RlA 12, 616–620.
Lambert, W. G., 1960: *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*. Oxford.
— 2013: *Babylonian Creation Myths*. Mesopotamian Civilizations 16. Winona Lake.
Lapinkivi, P., 2004: *The Sumerian Sacred Marriage in Light of Comparative Evidence*. SAAS 15. Helsinki.
Layard, A. H., 1853: *The Monuments of Nineveh*. London.
Linssen, M. J. H., 2004: *The Cults of Uruk and Babylon: The Temple Ritual Texts as Evidence for Hellenistic Cult Practice*. CM 25. Leiden/Boston.
Livingstone, A., 1989: *Court Poetry and Literary Miscellanea*. SAA 3. Helsinki.
Machinist, P., 2011: "Kingship and Divinity in Imperial Assyria". In J. Renger (ed.): *Assur—Gott*, *Stadt und Land: 5. Internationales Colloquium der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 18.–21. Februar 2004 in Berlin*. CDOG 5. Wiesbaden. Pp. 405–430.
Marcus, D., 1977: "Animal Similes in Assyrian Royal Inscriptions". Or 46, 86–106.
Matsushima, E., 2014: "Ištar and Other Goddesses of the So-Called 'Sacred Marriage' in Ancient Mesopotamia". In D. T. Sugimoto (ed.): *Transformation of a Goddess*: *Ishtar—Astarte—Aphrodite*. OBO 263. Fribourg/Göttingen. Pp. 1–14.
May, N. N., 2015: "Administrative and Other Reforms of Sargon II and Tiglath-Pilesser III". SAAB 21, 79–116.
McCaffrey, K., 2002: "Reconsidering Gender Ambiguity in Mesopotamia: Is a Beard Just a Beard?" In S. Parpola / R. M. Whiting (eds.): *Sex and Gender in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the XLVII^e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale*, *Helsinki*, *July 2–6*, *2001*. Vol. 2. Helsinki. Pp. 37–92.
Meinhold, W., 2009: *Ištar in Aššur: Untersuchung eines Lokalkultes von ca. 2500 bis 614 v.Chr*. AOAT 367. Münster.
Ménant, J., 1886: "Oriental Cylinders of the Williams Collection". AJA 3/2, 247–260.
Mitchell, T. C. / Searight, A., 2008: *Catalogue of the Western Asiatic Seals in the British Museum: Stamp Seals III*: *Impressions of Stamp Seals on Cuneiform Tablets*, *Clay Bullae*, *and Jar Handles*. Leiden/Boston.
Moorey, P. R. S., 1999: *Ancient Mesopotamian Materials and Industries: The Archaeological Evidence*. Winona Lake.
Moortgat, A., 1944: "Assyrische Glyptik des 12. Jahrhunderts". ZA 48, 23–44.
— 1988: *Vorderasiatische Rollsiegel: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Steinschneidekunst*. 3rd ed. Berlin.

Niederreiter, Z., 2015: "Cylinder Seals of Eleven Eunuchs (*Ša Rēši* Officials): A Study on Glyptics Dated to the Reign of Adad-nērārī III". SAAB 21, 117–156.

Ornan, T., 2001: "Ištar as Depicted on Finds from Israel". In A. Mazar / G. Mathias (eds.): *Studies in the Archaeology of the Iron Age in Israel and Jordan*. JSOTSup 331. Sheffield. Pp. 235–256.

— 2004: "The Goddess Gula and her Dog". Israel Museum Studies in Archaeology 3, 13–30.

Oshima, T. M., 2010: "'Damkianna Shall Not Bring Back her *Burden* in the Future!': A New Mythological Text of Marduk, Enlil and Damkianna". In W. Horowitz / U. Gabbay / F. Vukosavović (eds.): *A Woman of Valor: Jerusalem Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honor of Joan Goodnick-Westenholz*. BPOA 8. Madrid. Pp. 145–161.

— 2011: *Babylonian Prayers to Marduk*. ORA 7. Tübingen.

— 2020: "The Bilingual Syncretistic Hymn to Nanāya: 'One-God(dess)'—Theism in Mesopotamia?" In U. Gabbay / J. J. Perennes (eds.): *Des polythéismes aux monothéismes: Mélanges d'assyriologie offerts à Marcel Sigrist*. EB NS 82. Leuven. Pp. 335–398.

Otto, A., 2019: "Glyptic". In A. C. Gunter (ed.): *A Companion to Ancient Near Eastern Art*. Hoboken. Pp. 411–432.

Parpola, S., 1993: "The Assyrian Tree of Life: Tracing the Origins of Jewish Monotheism and Greek Philosophy". JNES 52, 161–208.

— 1997: *Assyrian Prophecies*. SAA 9. Helsinki.

Pongratz-Leisten, B., 2011: "Comments on the Translatability of Divinity: Cultic and Theological Responses". In B. Bonnet / A. Declercq / I. Slobodzianek (eds.): *Les représentations des dieux des autres: Colloque de Toulouse*, *9–11 Décembre 2010*. Supplemento a Mythos 2. Caltanissetta. Pp. 83–111.

Porada, E., 1948: *The Collection of the Pierpont Morgan Library*. New York.

Porter, B. N., 2000: "The Anxiety of Multiplicity: Concepts of Divinity as One and Many in Ancient Assyria". In B. N. Porter (ed.): *One God or Many? Concepts of Divinity in the Ancient World*. Transactions of the Casco Bay Assyriological Institute 1. Chebeague. Pp. 211–271.

— 2003: "Assyrian Propaganda for the West: Esarhaddon's Steles for Til Barsip and Sam'al". *Trees*, *Kings*, *and Politics*: *Studies on Assyrian Iconography*. OBO 197. Fribourg/Göttingen. Pp. 59–80.

Propp, W. H. C., 2006: *Exodus 19–40*. AB 19. New York.

Reade, J. E., 1987: "Was Sennacherib a Feminist?" In J-M. Durand (ed.): *La femme dans le Proche-Orient antique*, *compte rendu de la XXXIII^eme^ rencontre Assyriologique internationale* (*Paris 7–10 Juillet*, *1986*). Paris. Pp. 139–145.

Reiner, E., 1974: "A Sumero-Akkadian Hymn of Nanâ". JNES 33, 221–236.

Reiner, E. / Pingree, D., 1998: *Babylonian Planetary Omens*. Part Three. CM 11. Groningen.

Roth, M. T., 1997: *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor*. 2nd ed. SBLWAW 6. Atlanta.

Schaudig, H., 2001: *Die Inschriften Nabonids von Babylon und Kyros' des Großen samt den in ihrem Umfeld entstandenen Tendenzschriften*: *Textausgabe und Grammatik*. AOAT 256. Münster.

Schmid, K., 2018: *A Historical Theology of the Hebrew Bible*. Grand Rapids.

Schroer, S., 1987: *In Israel gab es Bilder: Nachrichten von darstellender Kunst im Alten Testament*. OBO 74. Fribourg/Göttingen.

Seidl, U., 1957–1971: "Göttersymbole und -attribute. Archäologisch. I. Mesopotamien". RlA 3, 484–490.

— 1976–1980: "Inanna/Ištar (Mesopotamien)". RlA 5, 87–89.

— 1989: *Die Babylonischen Kudurru-Reliefs: Symbole mesopotamischer Gottheiten*. OBO 87. Freiburg/Göttingen.

— 1998: "Das Flut-Ungeheuer *abūbu*". ZA 88, 110–113.

Smith, M. S., 2002: *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the other Deities in Ancient Israel*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids.

Steinkeller, P., 2013: "How Did Šulgi and Išbi-Erra Ascend to Heaven?" In D. S. Vanderhooft / A. Winitzer (eds.): *Literature as Politics*, *Politics as Literature: Essays on the Ancient Near East in Honor of Peter Machinist*. Winona Lake. Pp. 459–478.

Strawn, B. A., 2005: *What Is Stronger than a Lion*? *Leonine Image and Metaphor in the Bible and the Ancient Near East*. OBO 212. Fribourg/Göttingen.

Tallqvist, K. L., 1983: *Akkadische Götterepitheta mit einem Götterverzeichnis und einer Liste der prädikativen Elemente der sumerischen Götternamen*. Studia Orientalia VII. Helsinki.

Teissier, B., 1984: *Ancient Near Eastern Cylinder Seals from the Marcopoli Collection*. Berkeley.

Thureau-Dangin, F., 1907: “Inscriptions diverses du Louvre”. RA 6, 133–138.
— 1919: “Un acte de donation de Marduk-zâkir-šumi”. RA 16, 117–156.
Van Buren, E. D., 1939–1941: “The Seven Dots in Mesopotamian Art and their Meaning”. AfO 13, 277–289.
Van Dijk-Coombes, R. M., 2016: “Cylinder Seals in the Collections of Iziko Museums of South Africa in Cape Town and the Department of Ancient Studies of Stellenbosch University”. Akroterion 61, 1–23.
Van Seters, J., 1994: *The Life of Moses: The Yahwist as Historian in Exodus—Numbers*. Louisville.
Waerzeggers, C., 2010: *The Ezida Temple of Borsippa: Priesthood*, *Cult*, *Archives*. Leiden.
Watanabe, C. E., 2002: *Animal Symbolism in Mesopotamia: A Contextual Approach*. WOO 1. Vienna.
Watanabe, K., 1992: “Nabû-uṣalla, Statthalter Sargons II. in Tam(a)nūna”. BaghM 23, 357–369, table 70–71.
Westenholz, J. G., 2002: “Great Goddesses in Mesopotamia: The Female Aspects of Divinity”. Bulletin of the Canadian Society for Mesopotamian Studies 37, 13–26.
— 2009: “Inanna and Ishtar: The Dimorphic Venus Goddesses”. In G. Leick (ed.): *The Babylonian World*. New York/London. Pp. 332–347.
Wiggermann, F. A. M., 1993–1997: “Mischwesen. A. Philologisch. Mesopotamien”. RlA 8, 222–246.
Wilcke, C., 1976–1980: “Inanna/Ištar (Mesopotamien). A. Philologisch”. RlA 5, 74–87.
Winter, U., 1983: *Frau und Göttin: Exegetische und ikonographische Studien zum weiblichen Gottesbild im Alten Israel und in dessen Umwelt*. OBO 53. Freiburg/Göttingen.
Woods, C. W., 2004: “The Sun-God Tablet of Nabû-apla-iddina Revisited”. JCS 56, 23–103.
Yadin, Y., 1963: *The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands in the Light of Archaeological Study*. Jerusalem.
Zernecke, A. E., 2011: “A Shuilla: Ishtar 2”. In A. Lenzi (ed.): *Reading Akkadian Prayers and Hymns*. SBLANEM 3. Atlanta. Pp. 257–290.

THE MANY FACES OF THE GODDESS: SEKHMET

Christian Frevel[1]

Sachmet steigt auf, sie erscheint,
ihre Machterweise erscheinen.[2]

My starting point is a short remark in Izak (Sakkie) Cornelius's[3] famous *The Many Faces of the Goddess*. In the chapter on iconographic types, he describes the sub-category "Without animal pedestal (Cat 5.26–5.62)" within the Qedeshet group, "Naked woman holding objects". There he lists a lesser known fragment of a plaque from Tel Ḥarasim near Beth Shemesh (fig. 1) on which a naked woman with Hathor hairdo is holding plants in her angled arms (no. 6271).[4]

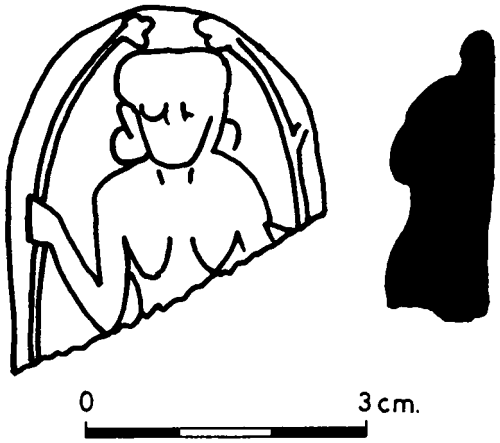


Fig. 1: Fragment of a terracotta plaque from Tel Ḥarasim. Source: Giv'on, 2012: 29*, fig. 4.2. Courtesy of S. Giv'on, Tel Aviv.

The fragment was discovered during the sixth season of excavation in 1995 and is attributed to the LB IIA destruction layer, stratum V. The "clay figurine of a nude woman with the head (or mask) of a lioness"[5] was pre-published by Giv'on in 1999 in the *Excavations and Surveys in Israel*, and then a second time in Hebrew in the *Aharon Kempinski Memorial Volume* in 2002.[6] That it is not well-known is already indicated by the

[1] Special thanks go to Amihai Mazar, Shmuel Giv'on, David Ben-Shlomo, Christian Herrmann, Daphna Tsoran, Paulette M. Michèle Daviau, Marta Guzowska, Andrea Angela Gropp, and Régine Hunziker-Rodewald.

[2] Assmann, 1999: 455.

[3] It is a great pleasure to dedicate this contribution in the field of iconography to Sakkie. The two joint aspects "lions" and "figurines" are both especially close to his heart. In 2009, when he was a fellow at the Bochumer Käte Hamburger Kolleg "Dynamics in the History of Religions between Asia and Europe", he uttered the unforgettable sentence with his unmistakable sense of humour: "I am from South Africa, I know lions". This sentence has remained a winged word in the Bochum context.

[4] The catalogue entry reads "Cat 5.55b (54) Harasim 2. tp from Tel Harasim found near 'oven' in locus 825, area D (no. 6271), width 50, LB. Giv'on 1999, 2002:30, fig. 4:2 [D]. Upper body of naked woman with Hathor hairdress holding plants". Cornelius, 2008: 140.

[5] Giv'on, 1999: 74*, 106.

[6] Giv'on, 2002: 29*, 32*. See further Debby Hershman, in אלילות מקומיות / *Local Goddesses—from Ancient Deities to*

helpful synopsis in Cornelius's work, which lists the catalogue numbers of "'Woman with plants' terracottas from Israel/Palestine" in the previous studies of Pilz, Pritchard, Holland, Kamlah, and Kletter, where the fragment from Tel Ḥarasim is not yet mentioned.[7]

1. FROM QUDSHU TO SEKHMET: THE PLAQUE FRAGMENT FROM TEL ḤARASIM

Only the upper half of the mould pressed clay plaque from Tel Ḥarasim (fig. 1) has survived. It depicts a naked standing woman with shoulder-length hair. Her forearms (only the right one is preserved) are bent up at an angle of around ten degrees, holding two long petioles in her closed hands that end above her head in blossoms. While the posture—holding stalks with flowers—is a common feature of this type, the particular length of the pedicels is exceptional. Although almost framing the standing figure, the (lotus) blossoms are usually placed at a height somewhere between the head and shoulders and not above. They only sometimes end above the head, thereby forming a kind of *naos* or mandorla. Two different types can be mentioned: The first type, the naked goddess supporting her breasts with her hands and framed by plants, is listed with at least five specimens by Kamlah as type V.[8]

One famous example of this type is a 12cm high light terracotta plaque figurine from Gezer, today stored in the Ashmolean Museum (fig. 2),[9] which depicts a nude woman with Hathor wig curls supporting her breasts. She is framed by two pairs of long stalks, each ending in lotus petals. Two of those, which are framing the lower body, start out from under her feet and end in flowers at the level of her (slightly elevated) pubic area. The other two start from there and are bent over her head. A very similar specimen is from the Ustinov Collection which is now kept in the Museum of Cultural History, Oslo (fig. 3).[10]

Another example with a Qudshu holding her breasts and framed by lotus flowers that meet above her head is the fragment from the Jaffa excavations republished in 2017 (fig. 4).[11] The plaque figurine wears a tripartite collar on which the locks of the Hathor wig rest. The large ears are clearly marked and she is presenting her breasts in a very special way. Her arms are bent upwards so that her hands meet between the breasts while her thumbs rest below her breasts, and the nipples are highlighted by a small pierced hole. Two blossomed long stalks frame the figure and the lotus flowers meet almost above her head. The attitude of hands and arms is exactly the same as in the Gezer example above.

Mythical Women of Today. Catalogue at the Tower of David Museum, Jerusalem 1994. Notwithstanding the help of R. Giv'on and D. Hershman, I was unable to retrieve a photo from this object. Following Galit Litani (IAA), the terracotta plaque is currently untraceable and allegedly stolen from the Shephelah Museum.

[7] Cornelius, 2008: 194–195. To the catalogue in 2008 and also the more recent catalogue in Lahn, 2014: 328–375, the following Qudshu-plaques have to be added: (1) the tiny LB II plaque from Tell Jemmeh (Reg. no. 628, SI Cat. no. 602), published in Ben-Shlomo / Van Beek, 2014: 172, 806–807; Ben-Shlomo, 2018: 385; (2) a LB plaque fragment from Yesodot/Khirbet Umm el-Kalkh (New Israel Grid: 187032–635295) in the Sorek valley, published in Ben-Ari, 2006: 61, fig. 5.1; (3) three fragments of the renewed Lachish excavations, which most probably belong to the group, including a very fragmentary pear-shaped silver pendant with a Qudshu holding plants, see Weissbein et al., 2016: 41–55; Weissbein et al., 2020: 10. Furthermore, one has to discuss the exceptional male figure or female ruler with comparable iconography on a terracotta plaque from Beth Shemesh, published by Ziffer et al., 2009: 333–341.

[8] Kamlah, 1993: 126 (Lachish, Aphek, Jaffa, Ustinov Collection, one of unknown origin, and two from Gezer). Perhaps Macalister, 1912: pl. CCXX:21 can be added to CCXXI:4, 5, but the example from Tadmor, 1982b: frontispiece should be withdrawn from this group since there are no signs of framing plants. In contrast, it has a *different* characteristic headgear with vertical lines (sometimes called a "tiara", but quite different to the feather crown of Qudshu in Lachish or Tell Beit Mirsim, cf. Cornelius, 2007: 273; 2008: 72) and two side-locks which should rather be compared to the plaques of Gezer (Macalister, 1912: fig. 497, pl. CCXX:2, 16, 17, 19 and CCXXI:1), or the famous Megiddo plaque (May, 1935: pl. XXX [without side-locks]). For discussion see also Guzowska / Yasur-Landau, 2009: 388–389.

[9] Ashmolean Museum no. AN1912.621 (http://collections.ashmolean.org/object/460714); Moorey, 2003: pl. 10 and frontispiece (see a drawing in Budin, 2015: 227, fig. 19). A second fragment (perhaps even from the same mould) is published by Macalister, 1912: vol. III, pl. CCXX:21; cf. Winter, 1983: fig. 54.

[10] Kulturhistorisk museums etnografiske samling no. C40327, Museum of Ethnography no. 39792, UT 1, Skupinska-Løvset, 1978: 18–20.

[11] MHA 5135 (Level IVA: LB III/Iron I). Burke et al., 2017: fig. 12. It was first published by Kaplan, 1972: 81, fig. 9.

Fig. 2: Terracotta plaque from Gezer. Photo by Ashmolean Museum, inventory no. AN1912.621. © Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford.

Fig. 3: Terracotta plaque from the Ustinov Collection. Courtesy of the Museum of Cultural History, Oslo.

Fig. 4: Terracotta plaque fragment from Jaffa Excavations. Courtesy of Jaffa Cultural Heritage Project, M. Peilstöcker and A. Burke.

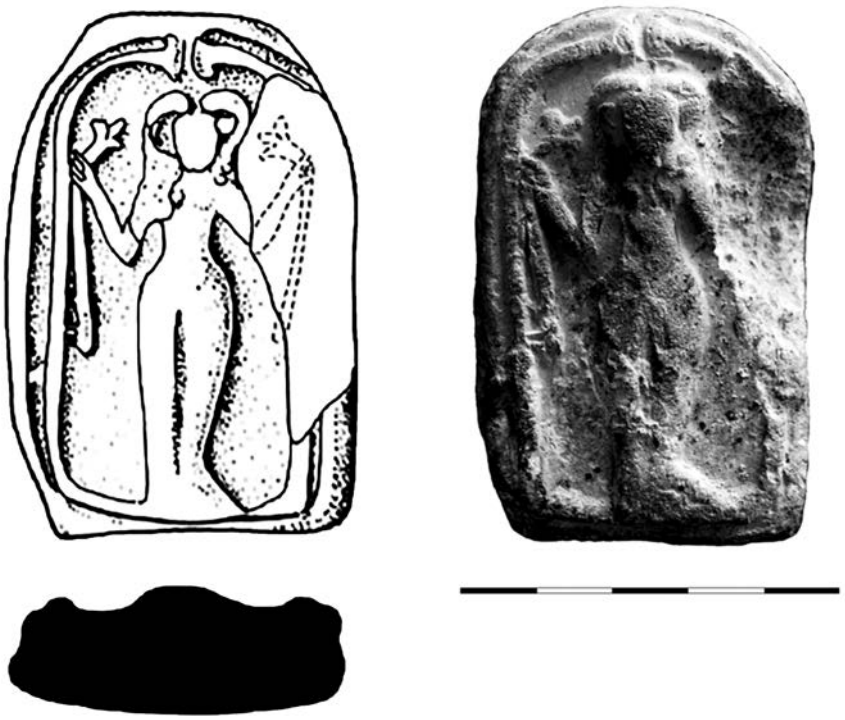


Fig. 5: Terracotta plaque from Aphek.
Source: Guzowska / Yasur-Landau, 2009: 390–391, fig. 11.6.
Courtesy of A. Yasur-Landau and M. Guzowska.

The second type features the naked goddess holding plants in her hands and is likewise framed by two *additional* lotus plants, which meet over the head of the standing figure. It is listed by Kamlah as type IV.[12] He mentions three plaques from Gath, Beth Shemesh, and one from Aphek (fig. 5).[13] In none of these examples in the wide spectrum of Qudshu plaque-varieties do the plants held by the goddess end above the head. Thus, the plaque from Tel Ḥarasim is more or less exceptional in the style of the flowers.

Another detail, which is striking compared to the other specimens of the group, is the hairdo, which is neither the "spiral type" nor the "Hathor type". Most of the Qudshu figurines have a more or less marked Hathor wig, where the curls fall on the forepart of the shoulder, the chest, or even the breasts. Here, the hair seems to fall on the back part of the shoulders. However, the state of preservation and the drawing of the plaque are not good enough to build an interpretation on that detail. A third feature, which makes this plaque exceptional, is the face, which features a triangular expression. Cornelius comments on it as follows:

> Cat 5.55b is described as "lion faced" by Givʾon (2002: *30). Is this "accidental and due to technical difficulties when pulling the figurine out of the mold" (Tadmor 1982: 157n15) as with the "lion faced figurine from Bet-Shean" published by Rachmani (1959)?[14]

The presumed contingency of the somewhat leonine expression is the feature to be discussed in the present contribution. I will relate this feature to the Egyptian goddess and trace her evidence in the archaeological record of Israel/Palestine. Apart from a short note on the possible amalgamation of Astarte and Sekhmet in the Ptolemaic Horus temple at Edfu[15] and on the identification of Astarte and Sekhmet in Memphis,[16] Sekhmet does not play a major role in Cornelius's "many faces". It may therefore be appropriate to make some additional comments here.

[12] Kamlah, 1993: 124.
[13] For Aphek (Reg. no. 8337/1), see Guzowska / Yasur-Landau, 2009: 390–391, fig. 11.6; Lahn, 2014: no. 48. Cf. further the even more exceptional plaque (5509 PT) now kept in the Istanbul Museum. Cornelius, 2008: 78–79, pl. C. The naked goddess is standing with her arms slightly bent outwards, touching the "frame". Two caprids are above the frame. Whether they are flanking a lotus flower above the stalks is not clearly visible.
[14] Cornelius, 2008: 54–55.
[15] Cornelius, 2008: 43, fig. 32 (cf. also p. 85).
[16] Cornelius, 2008: 93.

2. THE PRESENCE OF SEKHMET IN THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD OF ISRAEL/PALESTINE

There are only a few examples from Israel/Palestine, which all point to an Egyptian influence. Feline features particularly characterise the goddesses Sekhmet and Bastet. Sekhmet (i.e., *Sḫmt*, "the mighty one") in particular is mostly depicted as an anthropomorphic female with the face of a lioness. In Egypt, mainly from the time of the New Kingdom onwards, she wears the solar disk as a crown, often with a uraeus, holding an ankh symbol in her hand.[17] However, in Palestine she often lacks these features. Sometimes she is depicted as standing in a *naos.* Identifying Sekhmet in the iconographical record is complicated by the fact that a large number of Egyptian goddesses from various cities are depicted as leonine, or as anthropomorphic with a lioness's head. The most important goddess is indeed Sekhmet (Memphis). Her appearance, however, is similar to Bastet (Bubastis), and also Matit (Deir el Gebrawi), Mentit (Leontopolis), Mehit (This), Tefnut (Heliopolis), or Pachet (Speos Artemidos), who are also depicted in the shape of a lioness. The hybrid, which is attested in Egyptian inscriptions as Sekhmet-Mut, who is the deity symbolising the unity of Upper and Lower Egypt, may also be depicted as a lioness.[18] In addition, there is a link to the so-called Qedeshet or (better) Qudshu, who is always depicted standing on a lion, but addressed in Memphis, the hometown of Sekhmet, as the beloved of Ptah (*mrrt n*[*t*] *Ptḥ* in the stela of Takaret).[19] While most of the goddesses mentioned above did *not* have a great impact on Palestine, the two most important ones, the lion headed Sekhmet and the feline Bastet, remain hard to differentiate,[20] particularly in the tiny faience amulets (fig. 6). Often it is better to speak of feline-like or at best leonine amulets. Sometimes indicative features, like the solar disk, a uraeus, or an inscription, allow the attribution to Sekhmet or Bastet,[21] but often it remains uncertain.

That being said, the presence of Sekhmet in imported amulets is outstanding (for the distribution see fig. 9): 4.4% of all amulets in Israel/Palestine are feline,[22] and although only a very few of them carry inscriptions,[23] most of them are allegedly representations of Sekhmet. About 20 feline-like amulets in total bear the so-called aegis, a broad neck collar decorated with two rows of rod-shaped beads.[24] Among the anthropomorphic amulets (1250), the feline-like amulets (Sekhmet, Bastet, Mahes, etc.) form by far the third largest group (121) after Pataikos (323) and Bes (200); however, it must be kept in mind that anthropomorphic amulets comprise less than a third of the total amulets discovered (3239).[25] There is a clear tendency of growth in the popularity of feline-like amulets, starting in the LB IIB and reaching its peak in the Iron IIA and Iron IIB.[26] Hence, in many places Sekhmet amulets, aegis, or pendants have been found.[27]

---

[17] Sternberg, 1984: 324.

[18] Hays, 2012: 304.

[19] Cf. Lahn, 2014: 195, 201, no. 3.

[20] Sternberg, 1984: 323–326; Herrmann, 2006: 19.

[21] Three amulets carry the Egyptian inscription *ḏd mdw in bꜣstt* ("words spoken by Bastet"). See Hays, 2012: 304.

[22] Petrie, 1972: 41; Herrmann et al., 2010: 39.

[23] See Hölbl, 1986: 24; Herrmann, 2006: 40; Eggler / Gubel, 2010: 1; Hays, 2012: 304. An Iron IIB pataikos from Lachish reads: "Ptah and Sekhmet, Lady of heaven".

[24] See examples in Herrmann, 2016: 14–15. For Sekhmet, see, for instance, the specimen from Tell en-Naṣbe in Petrie, 1972: 42, no. 195 with pl. XXXV, the surface find from Tel Ara in Herrmann, 2006: no. 63, and in an early-Islamic context from Amman in Koutsoukou et al., 1997: 148–149, fig. 98, the various aegis from Megiddo in Lamon et al., 1939: 146, pl. 74:25, or the two aegis from the excavations of Sarepta in Pritchard, 1988: 76, no. 19–20, 272, fig. 17:19, 273, fig. 18:20. Cf. the aegis-like scarab in Sass, 1993: 235, fig. 138, and the seal Amman no. 68, showing only several times the non-indicative aegis, in Eggler / Keel, 2006: 48–49.

[25] For the figures, see Herrmann, 2016; cf. Hermann, 2006: 25, 43–44.

[26] Herrmann lists nine amulets in the LB IIB, 29 specimens in LB IIB/Iron I, and 37 examples in the Iron IIA and Iron IIB, and some scattered specimens in the Babylonian and Persian period; see Herrmann, 2002: 102–104. Only one exemplar from Maresha is Hellenistic.

[27] For a catalogue, see Herrmann, 2002: 102–104. Sekhmet amulets have been found not only in the Southern Levant, but also in Phoenicia, Cyprus, Crete, Sardinia, etc. from the LB to the Persian Period. For an overview, see Hölbl, 1986: 80, 108–109, 121, 192, 311–313.

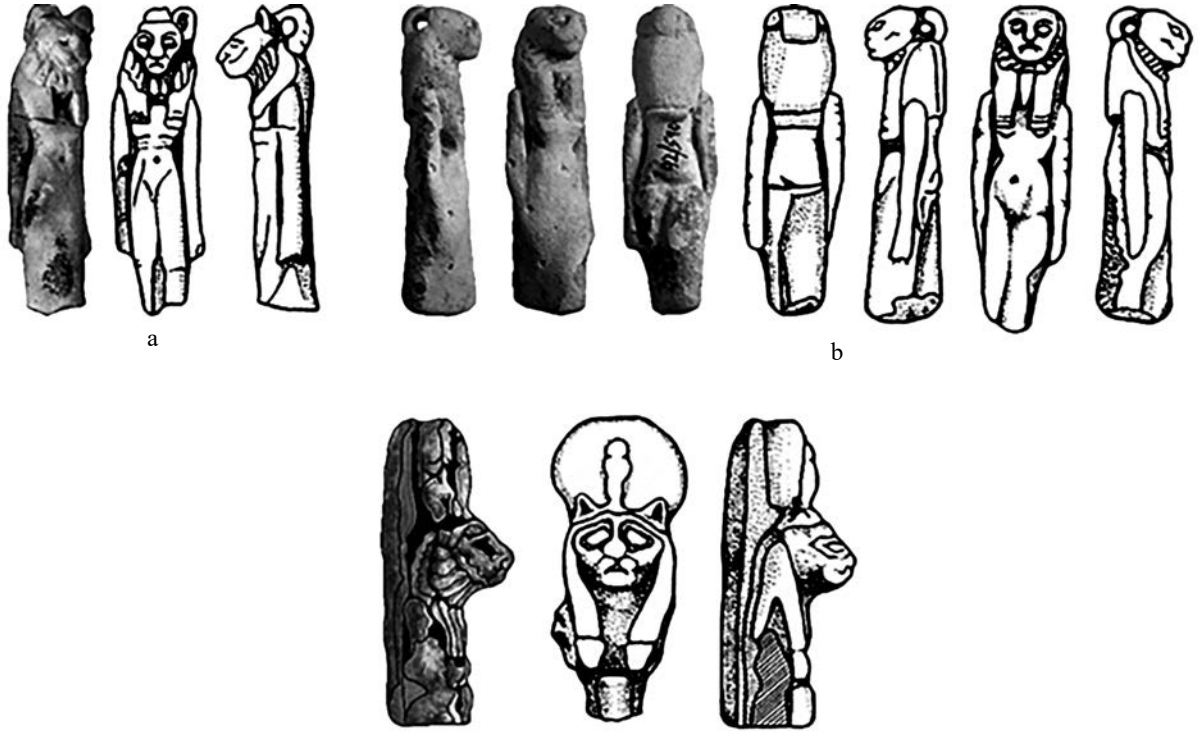


Fig. 6: Feline amulets from Lachish (Iron IIB).[28] Source: Herrmann, 1994: 152, no. 69; 153, no. 71; 186, no. 128. Courtesy of C. Herrmann.

Fig. 7: Sekhmet scarabs and seal amulets from Kibbutz Ḥanita (Iron II C).[29] Source: Keel, 1997: 33, no. 30; Keel, 2010a: 501, no. 23; Keel, 2013: 551, no. 2. Courtesy of O. Keel.

[28] Cambridge University Reg. no. 61D.138a (a); Jerusalem (Iron II), Ophel Area C, BLM Reg. no. 92.590 (b); Beth Shemesh (Iron IIA-B) Tomb XXII, Rockefeller Museum Reg. no. J179 (c).

[29] IAA 94.5221 (a); Dothan (Sekhmet and Ptah, LB IIB) JAM 9983 (b); Achzib (Iron IIC) IAA 48-387 (c).

Fig. 8: Sekhmet finger ring from Ekron (Stratum IVA, Iron IB) (a). Source: Keel, 2010a: 519, no. 8; aegis from Lachish (Iron IIB) (b)[30] and Megiddo (Iron IIC) (c).[31] Source: Herrmann, 1994: 189, no. 132, 194, no. 143. Courtesy of O. Keel and C. Herrmann.

Beside the faience amulets, Sekhmet is also quite well represented in stamp seals and seal amulets, where the identification is often more reliable because of the accompanying symbols (sun disk, sceptre) and the Memphite constellation with Ptah, or even Ptah and Nefertem. In contrast to the amulets, these artefacts were not all imported from Egypt; at least some were locally produced. More than 30 Sekhmet seals from controlled excavations are known in addition to those known from the antiquities market.[32] The excavated scarabs and seals come mostly from the coastal area, but also from other places throughout the land: Achziv (3, see fig. 7a), Ashkelon (2), Akko (4, including a small inscribed plate and a bulla), Tell el-Farah (South) (2), and one each from Ekron, Beth Shemesh, Dan, Megiddo, Dothan (fig. 7b), Tel Azor, ʿEn Nashab, Gezer, Jericho, Kefar Ruppin, Khirbet Qeiyafa, Kibbutz Ḥanita (fig. 7c), and Tell Jemmeh.[33] A handful of faience and gold finger rings with oval engravings, which come from the excavations in Ekron (fig. 8a), Der al-Balaḥ, and Tell el-Farah (South), should also be mentioned.[34] They show a standing Sekhmet with a sceptre in her anthropomorphic hand, clothed with a neat long robe, and a uraeus emerging from (or above) the leonine forehead. These rings date from the LB II or Iron I period, while the seals and seal impressions start in the LB II, they have their peak mostly in the Iron IIC. This is striking compared to the amulets, which—although being also largely present in the LB IIB / Iron I period—have their greatest number in the Iron IIA and Iron IIB periods.[35]

In sum, Sekhmet is present in the iconography of miniature art of the Southern Levant in the first millennium in considerable numbers. Some of the items were imported, others were made locally. So, it would not be at all unreasonable to think of the Tel Ḥarasim figurine as a local variant of the goddess Sekhmet. This can be corroborated by other figurines from the archaeological record of the first millennium, to which we now turn.

---

[30] Tomb 1002, Reg. no. 33.2075.

[31] Reg. no. A19171.

[32] Keel et al., 1985: 302, fig. 69, 306, fig. 91, 95; Deutsch / Lemaire, 2000: no. 2, 4.

[33] Guy, 1938: pl. 131:1 (Megiddo M3095); Bloch-Smith, 1992: 157 (Tel Azor); Keel, 1997: Achziv no. 30, 52, 53, Ashkelon no. 76, 88, Akko no. 6, 71, 194, Beth Shemesh no. 73; Keel, 2010a: Dan no. 73, Dothan no. 23, Ekron no. 48, ʿEn Nashab no. 62, Gezer no. 100; Keel, 2010b: Tell el-Farʿah (South) no. 296, 504, Tell Jemmeh no. 38; Keel, 2013: Jericho no. 571, Kibbutz Ḥanita no. 2; Keel, 2017: Kefar Ruppin no. 5; Schroer / Wyssmann, 2012: 158, 62–63 (Khirbet Qeiyafa).

[34] Keel, 2010a: Tell el-Farʿah (South) no. 296, 838; Keel, 2010b: Ekron no. 8, Der al-Balaḥ no. 2, 122, 123; Brandl, 2016.

[35] See above n. 26 and for an overview Eggler / Gubel, 2010; cf. further Strawn, 2005: 99–100.

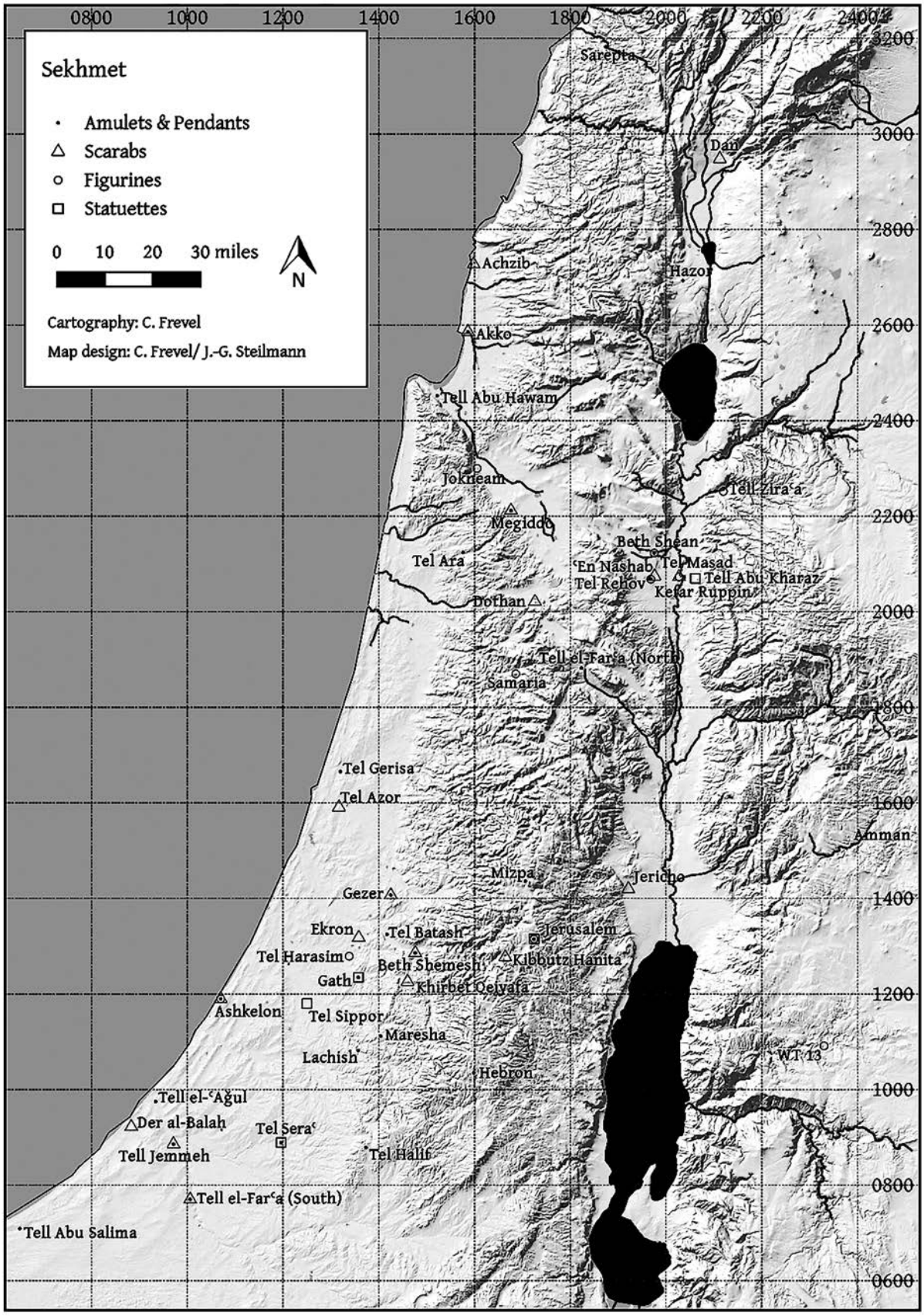


Fig. 9: Map detailing the distribution of Sekhmet artefacts in Israel/Palestine.

3. SEKHMET IN TERRACOTTA FIGURINES AND PLAQUES

To explain the more or less leonine appearance of the figurine from Tel Ḥarasim, Cornelius pointed to "technical difficulties when pulling the figurine out of the mold". In fact, such difficulties sometimes led to the figurines being reworked, which could also make changes to their appearance.[36] To refer to the figurine from Tel Masad el-Jisl/Khirbet El-Hajj Mahmud (fig. 10) may be misleading in this context, but it might also point in the right direction, as will be seen below.

The standing figurine of a naked woman was found in 1952 by a boy in the neighbourhood of Kefar Ruppin in the Beth Shean valley on Tel Masad and published by the late chief director of the Israel Antiquities Authority, Levi Yitzhak Rahmani, in 1959.[37]

Fig. 10: Plaque figurine from Tel Masad. Photo L. Padrul, Eretz Israel Museum Tel Aviv, Collection of the Israel Antiquities Authority. Inventory no. B-203633, B-203635, B-203637.

The figurine (H: 9,8cm, W: 3,1cm, D: 2,6cm) was pressed in a mould using a great amount of clay (average depth 26mm), so that the figurine looks like the Egyptianised plaques of the coastal plain, which show a naked "concubine" on a bed with arms attached.[38] Her hair lies behind the strikingly large ears and falls on the shoulders curling slightly outwards. From the front, however, the protrusion and the imprint of the form give the impression of a *naos*, the protruding ears and the Hathor hairstyle point in a similar direction. However, the face is unusual because it seems to have been attached or manually adapted after the figurine was released from the mould. This is the detail that caused the comparison with the Tel Ḥarasim fragment (fig. 1). Tadmor suggested "that the disfiguration of the face and the resemblance to a lion are accidental", because "no other Canaanite plaque figurine is lion-faced".[39] However, this assessment must now be regarded as outdated as we will see below. The face of the Tel Masad figurine rather seems to be "deformed" intentionally by adding a small lump of clay as forehead and nose. It is even possible that the model was more suitable for another type of figure, as Rahmani already suggested: "The face appears to have been cast separately and attached to the figurine before firing in the kiln; this may have been done for technical reasons, perhaps so as to enable the craftsman to give the figurine the face of a lioness instead of the usual face of a

[36] This is often noted in publications on figurines and sometimes reported in experimental archaeology, e.g., Hunziker-Rodewald, 2015: 1–3.
[37] IDAM 52-706, Rahmani, 1959. Cf. Tsori, 1958; Tadmor, 1982a: pl. 8 and 8a.
[38] See Tadmor, 1982a: pl. 2a–4, 6–7.
[39] Tadmor, 1982a: 157.

woman (which may have been the original mould)".[40] The suggestion of a different shape of the original mould cannot be proven although similar figurines with arms tightly attached but without lioness-shaped face belong to the simplest and most commonly found figurines.[41] Be that as it may, the superimposed face is obviously also a production technique to create or underline the leonine impression that is created when looking from the side. At least that is what the figurines of the Ophel (fig. 16, see below) or the figurine from Tel Reḥov (fig. 11) suggest. Another technique to invoke a lioness face is an incision behind the protruding chin, which can only be seen from the side-view but not from the front. This technique was applied to the figurine of Tell Ziraʿa (fig. 19, see below) and perhaps also Tell Jemmeh (fig. 20). The leonine impression of the Tel Masad figurine becomes obvious if one looks at the figurine from the side. It looks like a lioness's head with a slightly opened mouth.

Fig. 11: LB II figurine from Tel Reḥov. Photo by G. Laron. Courtesy of A. Mazar.

A very similar example is the recently published LB IIB figurine from Tel Reḥov (fig. 11, Stratum D-8).[42] The female figurine is 8cm high, but the lowest part of the knees downwards is missing. It is made from a yellowish-orange clay (Mansell ≈ A7.5YR7/8). The upper body is slightly bent forward at the (very narrow) waist, which gives the body of the figurine an Egyptianised expression. As with the figurine from Tel Masad, lots of clay was used so that the front gives the impression of a *naos* and the back protrudes significantly. No traces of clothing are visible. The palms of her outstretched arms are resting on her thighs. The woman's hair is parted in the middle and reaches to her shoulders; it is tucked behind the ears and rests in inwardly turned curls on her shoulders. Looking from the front, the figurine has—as with the Tel Masad figurine—strikingly protruding ears and a remarkably bulbous nose, but seen from the side, a leonine impression emerges.

[40] Rahmani, 1959: 184.

[41] Holland, 1975: Type C.IV.a, 219–220. See, e.g., Tel Aphek (Reg. no. 39371/1) in Guzowska / Yasur-Landau, 2009: 388, 411, fig. 11.2 with many parallels. Cf. further Tadmor, 1982a: pl. 6–7. Some of the plaques of this type are more leonine, see below.

[42] Mazar / Davidovich, 2019: 181–182, fig. 21, for the dating of Stratum D-8, see Mazar et al., 2005: 197.

Fig. 12: Terracotta from Beth Shean. Source: Rowe, 1940:
pl. LXVIIIA no. 3. Courtesy of the Penn Museum.

Fig. 13: Terracotta from Jokneam. Photo by L. Padrul, Eretz Israel Museum Tel Aviv,
Collection of the Israel Antiquities Authority. Inventory no. B-17255, B-17256.

Fig. 14: Terracotta from Tell Zira'a. Drawing by E. Brückelmann, inventory no. TZ 015312.

The face of the Tel Ḥarasim figurine, however, is quite different. At first sight, nothing was added to the front; it is much flatter than the Tel Reḥov (fig. 11) and Tel Masad (fig. 10) examples. But this feature is sometimes hard to identify, especially since the transition to the "normal" figurines' faces is fluid. For example, specific plaque figurines from Beth Shean (fig. 12), Jokneam (fig. 13), or Tell Zira'a (fig. 14), and others may also be read as leonine examples.[43] The mentioned examples belong to the type of a standing naked female with outstretched arms and hands pressed on her thighs. They differ in many details, but they are all characterised by relatively big ears, behind which the shoulder-length hair is placed. The more the chin is protruding in these examples, the more leonine the appearance becomes. However, the excavators usually identify these plaques as representations of Astarte or Hathor, not Sekhmet. While it does not provide absolute certainty, the side view is *almost* indicative, although this view is often not available in the archaeological reports. Hence, it seems probable that not all leonine faces are recorded appropriately, particularly in older excavation reports. Thus, only an autopsy of the figurines (or more exact 3D scans and photos) can enhance the knowledge of the leonine character of Southern Levantine figurines.[44] Some of them *may be* local variants of Sekhmet, as it is assumed for the following figurines.

Fig. 15: Figurine fragment from Samaria. Source: Tsoran, 2015: no. 1. Inventory no. HUJI 3439.

[43] The "Ashtoret no. 3" from Beth Shean (Rowe, 1940: pl. LXVIIIA) is very similar to TZ 015312-001 from Tell Zira'a (Gropp, 2013: 406 [LB II or Iron I]). Both are perhaps made in the same mould. This might be indicated by the specific hairdo. Gropp mentions another similar figurine from Megiddo (Gropp, 2013: 407–408, fig. 1860), but with the published photo it remains difficult to decide. Also, the similar Gezer plaque cannot be decided from the really bad drawing in Macalister, 1912: pl. CCXX:13. The LB II plaque figurine from Jokneam in Ben-Tor et al., 2005: 164 shows a female with slender waist and uneven breasts and with a relatively long and protruding face. Lots of clay at the two sides broadens the bordure. As with other plaque figurines (such as the specimen from Tell Abu Hawam Stratum IV, Hamilton, 1935, 31 no. 176 today hosted in Haifa's National Maritime Museum, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Israeli_National_Maritime_Museum-_Astarte_from_Tell_Abu_Hawam.jpg?uselang=de), a leonine character can only be determined after a thorough further investigation.

[44] See further the worn head of a female plaque figurine from Tel Maḥalta no. 4 (Kletter, 2015: 548). It may well belong to a drummer, but the face is different and a line below the chin is visible. Difficult to decide without scrutinised autopsy is Megiddo M2884 from Tomb 989, which shows a female with bent arms standing in a *naos*-like mandorla; see May, 1935: pl. XXX. That the face is protruding in a leonine manner can be seen in the side view. But the figurine is too worn to be clear. See also the Iron IIA figurine C40328 from the Ustinov collection in the Kulturhistorisk Museum Oslo, which gives the impression of a leonine character (https://unimus.no/portal/#/search/things/freetext?value=C40328&requirePhoto=true). In contrast to the figurines mentioned above, it is a standing figurine (perhaps in the state of early pregnancy) that does not wear a Hathor wig, but has a coiffure with straight shoulder-length hair. She supports her right breast with her right bent arm, but the left is pressed on the hip (cf. the broken figurine from Ashdod in Dothan et al., 2005: fig. 3.96:5). The inverted parallel from Ashdod (Dothan, 1964: 86, pl. 22 C [a headless fragment]) advises against the identification of this figurine with Sekhmet as long as the "leonine character" is not demonstrated to be intentional.

The first figurine comes from the Crowfoot/Kenyon Samaria excavations (fig. 15) and is presently kept in the collection of the Institute of Archaeology in Jerusalem.[45] It was extensively discussed by Tsoran in her MA thesis.[46] The fragmented figurine (H: 7cm, W: 5,7cm), whose lower part of the body is missing, is made of a buff clay with a thin reddish slip showing a female with a veil, which is completely unusual for a Sekhmet figurine. However, Crowfoot and Sukenik already argued that the presence of Egyptian goddesses in Samaria would not be unexpected.[47] But they suggested an association with Isis and Horus due to the unusual hand position. The left hand is put on the right shoulder, which perhaps indicates that the upwards bent arms (the right is completely missing) were crossed over the chest. The suggestion that she is nursing a child could be corroborated by the breakage on the surface directly under the arm. However, the mother-breastfeeding-child terracottas almost always have the child on their left side.[48] While the face from the front gives the impression of a regular Israelite moulded figurine, it shows a horizontal incision underneath the chin, which gives the face a clear leonine impression viewed from the side. This feature would rather suggest a local Sekhmet variant.

Fig. 16: Three heads of terracotta figurines with more or less leonine appearance from the Ophel excavations (a–c). Below two fragmentary female terracotta plaques with a leonine face from the City of David excavations (d) and the Ophel excavations (e). Source: Mazar, 2015: 472, fig. III.1.5. Courtesy of E. Mazar.

[45] C1026b, Crowfoot / Sukenik, 1957: 76, 80, pl. XI:10.

[46] Tsoran, 2015. I thank Daphna Tsoran for providing me with the details and a colour photograph.

[47] Crowfoot / Sukenik, 1957: 79.

[48] See examples in Keel, 2010c; Budin, 2011; Nakhai, 2014. This holds particularly true for the Isis terracotta from Lachish Iron II (Tomb 1002, Tufnell, 1953: pl. 36:51 = Keel / Uehlinger, 2010: fig. 328), the veiled mother and child terracotta from Tel Reḥov, or the mother and child terracotta plaques from Samaria, Sarepta, Tell el Wawiyat, Beth Shean, or from Southern Mesopotamia, e.g., Sammlung Bibel+Orient, Fribourg VFig 2005.16, etc.

Mazar published some figurines from Jerusalem, which can perhaps be identified as Sekhmet (fig. 16). The City of David and the Ophel excavations revealed several fragments of a plaque figurine made perhaps in the same mould. The first one was a 6,5cm high and 3,8cm wide fragment in the 2007 City of David excavations found within the earth fill of the large stone structure, thus attributed to the LB II or Iron I (fig. 16d).[49] The female has her hands crossed on the sternum, the right palm lying on the left hand, whose fingers stick out from under the upper hand. Her hair falls on her shoulders in great curls, which gives the impression of two big drops. While the hairstyle is reminiscent of the Hathor wig, the position of the hands is quite unusual. If the hands do not rest against the side, or support the breasts, or hold a disk, they usually lie on the upper abdomen or lead to the pubic area. The fact that the arms with crossed hands are passed between the breasts as if they were putting on a necklace is exceptional.[50] Compared to the figurines discussed above, her ears are smaller and the breasts less accentuated. Her navel is marked by a circular incision. While other figurines often bear two or three arm rings, no jewellery is visible on the arms of this figurine. Seen from the side, the figurine clearly gives the impression of a lioness face. Her head, particularly the lower face, is protruding and the upper region of the head is rounded to the back so that the impression of an animal head is even stronger. Two incisions mark the region of mouth and chin making the impression more leonine.

The second figurine of this type from the Ophel is even more fragmentary (fig. 16e). Only the two elbows, parts of the arms, and the torso down to the hips are preserved. The preserved height is only 3cm and its greatest width is about 5mm larger than the plaque from the City of David. The navel is not marked in the same way, but according to Winderbaum, it is visible on the belly. This plaque, made of brown-beige clay from the Jerusalem area, was found in the Ophel excavations.[51] It seems probable that the two plaque figurines from Jerusalem were made with the same mould. Following Mazar, they represent "a local version of Sekhmet".[52]

Fig. 17: Figurine from the Ustinov Collection, inventory no. 39790b, UT 2.
Courtesy of the Museum of Cultural History, Oslo.

[49] First published in Mazar, 2009: 39–40. See further Mazar, 2015: 472, fig. III.1.5.
[50] This gesture is not listed in the varieties of arm positions in Cornelius, 2004: 26; 2007: 239.
[51] B13-4127, see Winderbaum, 2015: 539–540, fig. III.3.11.
[52] Mazar, 2015: 472, fig. III.1.5.

While the position of hands and arms is exceptional within the plaque figurines ensemble from the Southern Levant, a very similar figurine of this type comes from the Ustinov collection (fig. 17).[53] The moulded figurine is characterised by large eyes and ears. Following Skupinska-Løvset, "the lower jaw and the nose are broken off".[54] Thus, the face gives a worn expression, but the hairstyle is strikingly similar to the Jerusalem figurine whose face has been preserved. The same is true for the extra-long fingers of the right hand placed upon the left hand on the chest. The small circle indicating the navel is especially striking. These shared details almost give the impression that they may even have come from the same mould. Skupinska-Løvset suggests that this is "the model in the goddess Bastet"[55], but in view of the parallels, Sekhmet is also a possible candidate.

While the plaque figurines from Jerusalem are clearly leonine, Mazar adds three small terracotta heads from the Ophel excavation (figs. 16a–c)[56] in the same line of interpretation. The heads are mould-made and two of them stem from Iron IIA contexts. They differ in many details, but two of them in particular have the appearance of a lioness. The first is the tiny head of a flat terracotta figurine which is only 2,9cm high (fig. 16c). Either the hair is bound up in horizontal spirals or the figurine is wearing a sort of cap or a headscarf.[57] Winderbaum describes the characteristic form of the head as follows: "Both eyes and the protruding ears can be distinguished. The lower part of the face protrudes, thus displaying a profile of the lioness's jaw line".[58] The second example is even more leonine in its profile (fig. 16b). The head is 3,6cm in height and has a broken back. Whether it is Iron IIA like the previous figurine, cannot be said with certainty, because the context was disturbed by Iron Age IIB and Herodian material. The nose and the lower face of the figurine's head is protruding and "beneath the hairline is possibly an eroded Uraeus (*Wadjet*) symbol that decorated the forehead", which would be typical for Sekhmet. Winderbaum compares this feature to a similar figurine's head from Ashkelon with a protruding face and a flat(tened) back,[59] which he also attributes to Sekhmet, but this remains open for discussion.[60] Although it cannot be excluded that they are also local variants of Sekhmet, the two small lioness heads from the Ophel differ somewhat from all other terracotta figurines of the Southern Levant with leonine faces.

Regarding the Jerusalem evidence, few other specimens can be added to the group of figurines for which the influence of the Egyptian goddess Sekhmet may perhaps be postulated. Two of them are from different places in Transjordan and one is from Tell Jemmeh. The first is the head of a heavily worn moulded figurine from the wayside shrine WT-13 in the Wadi ath-Thamad in Moab (fig. 18). The back is rounded, perhaps to enhance the side view, which is leonine. Both ears are visible, but unlike most of the Hathor-like faces, the hair is not placed behind the ears. In contrast, the hair is "somewhat different from both the local style and the Egyptian hairdo … In this case, the hair is not gathered into a lock but is shown in detail all around the head in wavy vertical lines".[61] A horizontal groove for a peg of the separate body indicates that the torso was attached to a "body".[62] Again, the style of this figurine is unusual and cannot be identified clearly with Sekhmet. However, the leonine character seems to be beyond question.[63]

---

[53] Kulturhistorisk museums etnografiske samling no. 39790b, UT 2; Skupinska-Løvset, 1978: 20.

[54] Skupinska-Løvset, 1978: 20.

[55] Skupinska-Løvset, 1978: 20.

[56] L09-240, B2430, L12-045a, B10145, and L12-782, B13-3000; see Winderbaum, 2015: 537–539.

[57] The "stylised hairdo" resembles figurines from Tel Reḥov (Ziffer et al., 2016: 78–79) and particularly the limestone figure IAA 2014-1366, p. 82; more examples from various contexts are presented in Winter, 1983: fig. 16, 20, 29. Cf. also the drummer from a private collection in Hunziker-Rodewald, 2017: 72. Judging from the famous Beth Shean figurine of a mother with a child (Rowe, 1940: pl. LXIVA:26), in which the child wears a headgear with horizontal stripes or folds, the feature is to be understood as a headscarf or cap rather than a coiffure.

[58] Winderbaum, 2015: 538.

[59] See Stager et al., 2011: 450, no. 27.

[60] Winderbaum, 2015: 538. Winderbaum is now much more reluctant in attributing the figurines to Sekhmet (personal communication).

[61] Daviau / Steiner, 2017: 104. See also Daviau, 2015: 244, 261, 271.

[62] However, it is also possible that the torso, which is similar to the Tell Zira'a example, belonged to a plaque like comparable Sekhmet representations.

[63] This impression of the excavator holds true even if the drawing is exaggerating the protruding face and even if the indication of a muzzle is lacking (due to erosion?) even in the side-view. See Daviau / Steiner, 2017: 104: "Although WT 92-2/592 is extremely worn on the front outer surface, it appeared initially to represent an animal (lion), rather than a human figure". However, in 2001 the same author wrote: "The head of Figurine WT/092=#17 is so worn that it is

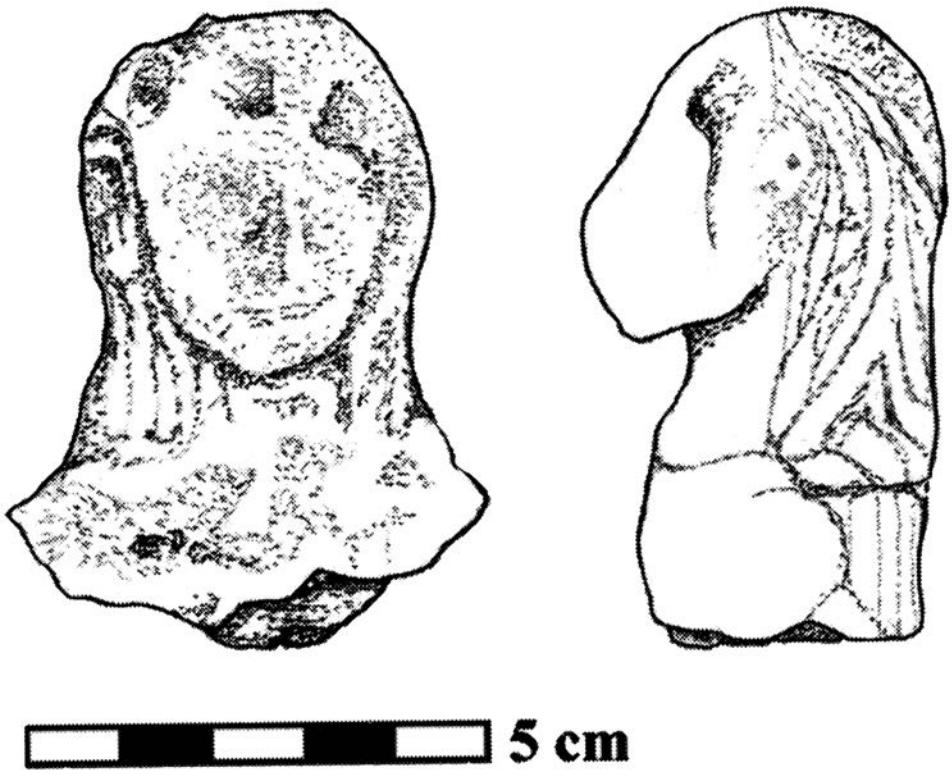


Fig. 18: Moulded head of a figurine from WT-13.
Source: Daviau / Steiner, 2017: 104. Courtesy of M. Daviau.

The same is true for the Iron IIA/B figurine fragment from Tell Zira'a (fig. 19, Stratum XII).[64] The width and height of the preserved part of the Iron IIA terracotta plaque, which is broken directly below the shoulders, is about 5cm each. The female is wearing a Hathor wig and the locks, which are perhaps tied at the bottom with ribbons, lie behind the very large ears. The face from the front is clearly feminine, but an incision below the protruding chin makes the appearance leonine if one looks at it from the side.

Alongside the figurine from WT-13 and Tell Zira'a, a plaque figurine from Tell Jemmeh (fig. 20) should be mentioned.[65] The unstratified figurine fragment is covered with a red slip. In the preserved height of 5,8cm a slender figurine can be seen from the head to the breasts. The model was pressed deeply into the clay, which now protrudes broadly to the sides to a width of 4,4cm. Much of the clay forms the rounded back (D: 3,3cm) as with the Tel Masad figurine mentioned above. The appearance from the front is clearly leonine, accentuated by the triangular shape of the face. Particularly the line under the chin is characteristic of leonine features.[66] Although the border-site of Tell Jemmeh did not reveal exceptional Egyptian influence, it may be quite probable that a lioness Sekhmet representation has survived in the figurines assemblage.[67]

In sum, the interpretation of some figurines as local representations of the goddess Sekhmet becomes less speculative and far-fetched, once all the tentative cases are taken into consideration. The amulets indicate that Sekhmet was a foreigner but not unknown. This can be at last corroborated by further evidence beyond the anthropomorphic terracotta figurines.

practically impossible to determine whether it was male, female, or animal" (Daviau, 2001: 318). Thus, one can agree with Michèle Daviau's cautious interpretation of the special features of this figurine, which *may* have been a Sekhmet.

[64] TZ 008349-001. See Häser / Vieweger, 2007: 28; Soennecken / Gropp, 2012: 197–198; Gropp, 2013: 556.

[65] Reg. no. 1240 (SI Cat. no. 623). See Ben-Shlomo / Van Beek, 2014: 191, fig. 4.42a, 808, fig. 17.2h. The parallels date the fragment either to the late LB II or somewhat later.

[66] While the drawing from the side does not give the impression of a leonine character, one should wait for new photographs. I am grateful to David Ben-Shlomo for discussing the issue.

[67] For discussion of the general character of the figurine assemblage of Tell Jemmeh, see Ben-Shlomo, 2018: 387–389, who also mentions a Nefertem amulet within the small number of amulets from Tell Jemmeh.

Fig. 19: Figurine from Tell Zira'a. Drawing by E. Brückelmann, inventory no. TZ 008349.

Fig. 20: Figurine from Tell Jemmeh. Source: Ben-Shlomo / Van Beek, 2014: 191, fig. 4.42a. Courtesy of D. Ben-Shlomo.

4. FURTHER EVIDENCE FOR SEKHMET IN THE ICONOGRAPHIC RECORD

Besides the amulets, seals, figurines, and plaques there are some further clues of Sekhmet in the iconographic record, which shall briefly be mentioned here. The first is a serpentine statuette fragment, which was found by chance in the rose garden of the École biblique et archéologique française de Jérusalem by Jaqueline Balensi in 1975.[68] It is debated whether the seated figure depicts a male or female because only the part below the navel is preserved in the 7,3cm high statuette. While Barkay tended to see a representation of Ptah or Amun, Van der Veen recently identified this statuette as a seated Sekhmet, which would then clearly have a lioness head.[69]

[68] Barkay, 1996: 36–37, who mentions a neat parallel from the City of David, Area 17 of the Crowfoot/Fitzgerald excavations of 1927.

[69] Van der Veen, 2013: 45–46, with reference to Christoffer Theis.

The second much clearer example is the figurine fragment (H: 7,5cm, W: 5,5cm) from the burnt Assyrian fortress of Tel Seraʿ/Tell esh-Shariʿa. The (imported?) faience figurine, which was found together with an Aramaic ostracon of Arabic names, belongs to Stratum V and is dated to the seventh century BCE.[70] The leonine character of the slender-waisted standing figurine is clearly indicated by a protruding muzzle. It wears a Hathor wig and the two locks, which are indicated by vertical strokes, end on the breasts.

A less clear but even more exciting find is a possible Sekhmet figurine that comes from Tell Abu Kharaz. The bronze figurine (N901) was found above a pit with burned straw, ashes, and pottery sherds and it was covered by flat stones (Stratum VI–VII, LB).[71] The standing figurine, 10cm high, was produced locally using the lost-wax technique. It was perhaps used as a votive. The face is that of a lion or lioness, which led the excavator first to the identification with Sekhmet.[72] The papyrus-sceptre or scroll in the left hand and a uraeus at the forehead also hinted in this direction. However, the figurine is more likely male, wearing an Atef-crown and a weapon (a scimitar or sabre) in its raised right hand. The naked upper body and the waist-high short skirt with waistband might also point to a male figure. Thus, the excavator noted in his report: "It seems clear that our figurine represents a male deity in view of the number of divine and royal attributes, some of which are often connected with the 'local' Reshef".[73] The identification remains difficult. Due to the leonine character (the left leg is human, the right a lion's paw) it is possible that it is the non-violent *nfr-tm* (Nefertem), the son of Ptah and Sekhmet.[74] There are some Mahes representations with Atef-crown on amulets from Israel/Palestine.[75] By contrast, Münger suggested a link to the unresolved term "Ariel" (*ʾryh ʾl* understood as "the lion is god" or "lion figure"), which is connected particularly with Transjordan in the Mesha-inscription and, for example, in Num 26:17.[76] However, it is unclear whether Ariel can be seen as a deity or a divine epithet. Considering the Egyptianised features and attributes, it seems more probable to look for an Egyptian deity. Be it Nefertem or Mahes, a connection to Sekhmet, and thus indirect evidence for her importance, therefore seems at least not improbable.

Among the more than 200 terracottas found in the pit north of Tel Sippor/Tell eṭ-Ṭuyūr, which was probably a favissa, some limestone statuettes were also found. All were made of white limestone and have parallels in the Southern Levant and particularly in Cyprus. Most of the figurines date to the Persian period (530–350 BCE), although there may be some earlier ones. The lioness figurine fragment has a height of about 6cm and was part of a larger statuette.[77] Whether it belonged to a Sekhmet statuette or simply a theriomorph statuette of a lioness, as Negbi suggests, cannot be decided with certainty.[78]

Finally, let me mention the feline terracotta from Ashkelon phase VII (Iron IIC, 700–609 BCE). The upright sitting animal with large rounded ears and circular impressions for eyes is 7,3cm high and 3,5cm wide.[79] The face is feline rather than ursine.[80] The chest of the figurine is bulging out and a small hole is placed between the legs, which perhaps indicate the female character of the worn figurine. This time an anthropomorphic character is more pronounced in the side view. Although it remains mere speculation, even this figurine may represent a local variant of Bastet or Sekhmet in Ashkelon, where a couple of amulets have also been found.[81]

In sum, even besides amulets and figurines there is evidence of Sekhmet's presence in the Southern Levant with the main concentration from the thirteenth to the sixth century BCE. It is hardly surprising that

[70] Oren / Netzer, 1974: 266, pl. 57:E; NEAEHL 4, 1333. The figurine is kept in the Israel Museum and can be accessed online: https://www.imj.org.il/en/collections/372024. See also Herrmann, 1994: no. 88.
[71] Fischer, 2006: 203, 205, 354–355, fig. 245.
[72] Fischer, 1995: 3.
[73] Fischer, 2006: 355.
[74] Gropp, 2013: 306.
[75] Herrmann, 2006: 79; 2016: 79–80.
[76] Münger, 1997: 88.
[77] Negbi, 1966: 22, no. 118, pl. XVI. Negbi points to a statuette from Phoenicia kept in the New York Museum. Cf. Perrot/Chipiez, 1885: vol. II, 196–197, fig. 32.
[78] A list of Iron Age lion figurines is given by Bürge, 2014: 526–527.
[79] Reg. no. 45138. Press, 2012: 128, no. 76.
[80] For a terracotta of a seated bear from Ashkelon (Reg. no. 46603) and parallels, see Stager et al., 2011: 460, no. 62.
[81] The combined lion-human figurine (PM. 36.1828) and the very worn Persian period head and torso (PM. 35.2936) from the Lachish excavations (Tufnell, 1953: pl. XXIX:19 and 33:6), and the lion heads from Tell el-Umayri and Tell es-Safi will not be discussed in this context.

the appearance is parallel to phases of Egyptian political influence and intensive multiform contact relations with Egypt. Even if only half of the presented figurines and statuettes were attributed to this goddess, her role cannot be ignored. The evidence of the locally made figurines in particular reveals an adapted local variant, blended with other Levantine goddesses like Astarte, Qudshu, et al. It is particularly significant that the feline figurines identified as Sekhmet (or as argued above possibly also Bastet) are the only representations of goddesses in Israel/Palestine that are not purely anthropomorphic, but a hybrid mixed form with a lioness's face and a female body. The find contexts of the figurines were quite diverse, so it does not seem possible to narrow their meaning to a heterodox or syncretistic private religious context. The local adaptation also demonstrates that worship was not limited to Egyptian immigrants or representatives. This, in the end, raises the question of interpretation.

5. SEKHMET AS GODDESS OF WARFARE, FERTILITY, OR PROTECTION?

Sekhmet (*Sḫmt*), "the mighty one",[82] as she is called, is the partner of the city god in Memphis, where she has her main cult centre. When she replaced Hathor as wife of Ptah in Memphite theology is not quite clear. In Memphis, she comes to be called the beloved of Ptah and also becomes the mother of Nefertem. The triad of Ptah, Sekhmet, and Nefertem, however, is not attested before the New Kingdom.[83] In Egypt, Sekhmet was also associated with power, struggle, and war as well as with royalty, and the king's protection. He is like Sekhmet and he fires the arrow as Sekhmet does. Her associations with the king and his dominion, the protective role, and the motherly aspect as well as the papyrus-roll as attribute are already attested in the Old Kingdom. She stands by the king and fights against the ungodly powers. Her weapons are fierce arrows, which are shot through the hearts. The arrows brought sickness, epidemics, and inescapable plague. The same holds true for her second weapon, the devastating fire embers with which she scorched her victims. Sekhmet is a violent goddess and a goddess of war. In Egypt, her great variety of epithets include "the woman who marshals the army" (*St-ḥmt-irt-mšʿ*) and "the one who shoots her arrows against the enemies of Re" (*Wdt-šsr.s-r-ḫftyw-nw-Rʿ*).[84]

Sekhmet was often associated with both Hathor and Bastet; in both instances, she acted as the violent and destructive manifestation of those goddesses' powers. Sekhmet was powerful and she was able to bring death into the mortal world by diseases and epidemics.[85] Since infection and epidemics were major threats for the people, Sekhmet as the "Lady of the disease" enjoyed great popularity, especially in the New Kingdom in Egypt. She was also connected with the defence against epidemics, because just as she brought the diseases, she could also ward them off. Thus, physicians in Egypt have been priests of the healing goddess Sekhmet and she had—as Bonnet puts it—the "patronage over the healing arts".[86] Her constant worship aimed to protect against the aforementioned threats, because Sekhmet also controlled the demonic powers of plagues and sickness. Thus, to represent her by figurines or to wear Sekhmet amulets was meant to invoke her protective power to ward off the threat of illness and disease.[87] Thus, it was always necessary to appease her. Although we do not know much about the use of the figurines in everyday life, it is reasonable to assume that they were employed to reduce or withhold the damaging influence of the mighty goddess.

Facing this wide spectrum of capacities and competencies, it comes as no surprise that Sekhmet was also popular in the Southern Levant. But which aspect was particularly appreciated? The martial one of the lion goddess or the one related to epidemics and diseases? There is no direct evidence for the connection with illness and diseases in the archaeological record listed above. It therefore seems logical to keep a wide range open as Mazar does in general. For her, the figurines "apparently represent a goddess of war who maintained peace and health, and less so, if at all, a fertility goddess".[88]

[82] Leitz, 2002: 46.
[83] Cf. Sternberg, 1984: 324.
[84] Leitz, 2002: 654–659.
[85] Hoenes, 1976: 35–53.
[86] Bonnet, 2000: 645–646.
[87] See also Hoenes, 1976; Germond, 1982; Engelmann / Hallof, 1996.
[88] Mazar, 2015: 472. See also Mazar, 1963: 312.

The relation of Sekhmet to war and protection can clearly be seen in ivory blinkers from Nimrud, where the head of the goddess is shown in an aegis.[89] Although other contexts are not indicative in the same way, scholars often associate the Sekhmet record with warfare by pointing at her destructive power in Egypt (see above). Interestingly, this aspect is then linked to arrowheads, which were found in El Khadr in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem. Already Rahmani noted: "The identification of Sekhmet the lioness with Astarte is further confirmed by the inscriptions *ʿbdlbʾt* on javelin-heads of the Early Israelite (Iron) Age. The functions of Astarte and Sekhmet are similar to such an extent that in many circumstances they are assimilated".[90] Eilat Mazar follows a similar line of interpretation and refers to a suggestion of her grandfather, Benjamin Mazar: "Supporting evidence comes from the discovery of Proto-Canaanite inscriptions incised on arrowheads at El-Ḥader, near Bethlehem. Dated to the second half of the 11th century BCE, they read *ʿbdlbʾt*, meaning 'the arrow of the servant of the lioness goddess'. Benjamin Mazar suggested that these arrowheads belonged to a group of professional archers called Levaim, whose emblem was the lioness goddess. David, being forced to supplement his troops with foreign warriors after fleeing from Saul, engaged these archers '*whose teeth are spears and arrows, whose tongue is a sharp sword*' (Psalms 57:4)".[91] However, leaving aside the rich bouquet of further speculations, which cannot be discussed here, the link to *ʿbdlbʾt* ("the servant of the lioness") is worthwhile to dwell upon some more. The five el-Khadr arrowheads mentioned above belong to a group of more than fifty inscribed arrowheads or javelin heads from the Levant, most of which contain the word *ḥṣ* followed by a personal name and a patronymic, sometimes also with a "title". Since the arrowheads from el-Khadr in the Judean hill country have no archaeological context (they turned up on the Jerusalem antiquities market) and all other parallels come from Southern Lebanon, their origin from the region of Bethlehem is questioned.[92] There is much discussion on these items in which the two standard assumptions, their "dating in the 11th/10th century" and that these objects "functioned as instruments for belomancy", are questioned.[93] The alternative, which cannot be discussed here, is to lower the date to the Iron IIA and to read the inscriptions as an indication of belonging and remembrance. Sass suggests that the arrows can perhaps be attributed to "the rising role of the military in the first West Semitic political formations founded in the Levant since the collapse of the Late Bronze Age system some two centuries before".[94] Thus, they may indeed be related to military professionals, but are they also related to Sekhmet? Five arrowheads from el-Khadr bear the inscription *ʿbd lbʾt* (strikingly el-Khadr no. II *lbt* instead of *lbʾt*, and el-Khadr no. IV *lʾt* instead of *lbʾt*). However, only el-Khadr V is inscribed with *ʿbd lbʾt bn ʿnt* ("the servant of the lioness, the son of Anat"). This links the arrow paradoxically to Anat and to a lioness-deity at the same time, and up to now there is no evidence for associating Anat with a lioness (or an archer's guild). This conundrum was always "solved" by attributing the lioness part to Astarte or a Sekhmet-Astarte. "As there is no particular evidence for Anat as leonine and Asherah is not presented as a warrior, the best candidate for *lbtʾit* in the inscribed arrowheads is ʿAshtart".[95] *Even if* there was a particular association of warriors with Sekhmet or Astarte-Sekhmet and *even if* this would connect the arrowheads to this deity (which, in my understanding, is not the most natural interpretation), nothing indicates that the figurines discussed above were attributed to or associated with a military context.

Whatever explanatory power this thesis might have, a relation to war and protection cannot account for all the evidence; it is especially unsuitable for the interpretation of the seals and amulets. In general there is a tendency in the iconographic record not to put too much emphasis on aspects of kingship. Deities such as Hathor, Isis, Bes, Ptah, and Sekhmet rather play a role in the realm of private life.[96] Thus, the other focus of

[89] Gubel, 2005: 127–129, 132; Eggler / Gubel, 2010: fig. 110. See Eggler / Gubel, 2010 for the many references to a feline deity from Nimrud.
[90] Rahmani, 1959: 185.
[91] Mazar, 2015: 472.
[92] Sass, 2010: 61–62.
[93] See Deutsch / Heltzer, 1997; COS 2.84; Cross, 2003: 195–212; Sass, 2010: 61–72; Finkelstein / Sass, 2013: 163, 210–211.
[94] Sass, 2010: 66.
[95] Smith, 2014: 206.
[96] "Das Interesse am realen ägyptischen Königtum, an der ägyptischen Götterwelt oder osmologischen Vorstellungen ist allerdings selektiv und konzentriert sich auf wenige Themen. Dazu gehören die königlichen Namen, der (königliche) Bogenschütze, der Name Amuns und die Verehrung des falkenköpfigen Sonnengottes. Ägyptische Göttinnen wie Sachmet, Hathor und Isis spielen im Verein mit Bes und dem Pätaken wohl vor allem eine Rolle im Bereich des privaten

Sekhmet comes into play, that is, the protection against diseases and epidemics. If Sekhmet was indeed made responsible for bringing plagues and diseases, the figurines, along with the amulets, may have had an apotropaic function. Her power and extraordinary competence in medicine may have promoted her acceptance in the local pantheon. The attractiveness of the foreign divine power may have led to the local adaptation to Astarte and her iconographic appearance. By adding the leonine character to the face, it was easy to include Sekhmet in the representation. Thus, the lioness became one of the many faces of the goddess.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Assmann, J., 1999: *Ägyptische Hymnen und Gebete.* 2nd ed. OBO 167. Fribourg/Göttingen.

Barkay, G., 1996: "A Late Bronze Age Egyptian Temple in Jerusalem?" IEJ 46/1–2, 23–43.

Ben-Ari, N., 2006: "The Female Plaque Figurine". In Y. Govrin et al. (eds.): *Salvage Excavations at Yesodot (Khirbet Umm el-Kalkha): The Middle and Late Bronze Age Settlement*. Jerusalem. Pp. 60–62.

Ben-Shlomo, D., 2018: "Tell Jemmeh: Assessment of a Border Site According to Its Figurative Assemblage". In B. Horejs et al. (eds.): *Proceedings of the 10th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East*. Vol. 1. Wiesbaden. Pp. 383–396.

Ben-Shlomo, D. / Van Beek, G. W., 2014: *The Smithsonian Institution Excavation at Tell Jemmeh, Israel, 1970–1990.* Smithsonian Contributions to Anthropology 50. Washington.

Ben-Tor, A. et al., 2005: *Yoqneʿam. Vol. III: The Middle and Late Bronze Ages. Final Report of the Archaeological Excavations (1977–1988). Archaeological Investigations in the Jezreel Valley, the Yoqneʿam Regional Project.* Qedem Reports 7. Jerusalem.

Bloch-Smith, E., 1992: *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead.* JSOTSup 123. Sheffield.

Bonnet, H., 2000: *Reallexikon der ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte.* 3rd ed. Berlin.

Brandl, B., 2016: "Two Scarabs and Two Finger-Rings from Iron Age I Contexts". In S. Gitin (ed.): *Tel Miqne-Ekron Excavations 1985–1988, 1990, 1992–1995: Field IV Lower. The Elite Zone, Part 1: The Iron Age I Early Philistine City*. Harvard Semitic Museum Publications: Final Reports of the Tel Miqne Excavations 9/1. Winona Lake. Pp. 503–509, 595.

Budin, S. L., 2011: *Images of Woman and Child from the Bronze Age: Reconsidering Fertility, Maternity, and Gender in the Ancient World.* New York.

— 2015: "The Nude Female in the Southern Levant: A Mixing of Syro-Mesopotamian and Egyptian Iconographies". Baal Hors-Série X, 315–335.

Bürge, T., 2014: "Figurines". In P. M. Fischer (ed.): *Tell Abu al-Kharaz in the Jordan Valley. Vol. III: The Iron Age*. Contributions to the Chronology of the Eastern Mediterranean 34. Vienna. Pp. 519–532.

Burke, A. A. et al., 2017: "Excavations of the New Kingdom Fortress in Jaffa, 2011–2014: Traces of Resistance to Egyptian Rule in Canaan". AJA 121, 85–133.

Cornelius, I., 2004: "A Preliminary Typology for the Female Plaque Figurines and Their Value for the Religion of Ancient Palestine and Jordan". JNSL 30/1, 21–39.

— 2007: "The Headgear and Hairstyles of Pre-Persian Palestinian Female Plaque Figurines". In S. Bickel et al. (eds.): *Bilder als Quellen / Images as Sources: Studies on Ancient Near Eastern Artefacts and the Bible Inspired by the Work of Othmar Keel.* OBO Special Volume. Fribourg/Göttingen. Pp. 237–252.

— 2008: *The Many Faces of the Goddess: The Iconography of the Syro-Palestinian Goddesses Anat, Astarte, Qedeshet, and Asherah c. 1500–1000 BCE.* 2nd ed. OBO 204. Fribourg/Göttingen.

Cross, F. M., 2003: *Leaves from an Epigrapher's Notebook: Collected Papers in Hebrew and West Semitic Palaeography and Epigraphy.* HSS 51. Winona Lake.

Crowfoot, G. M. / Sukenik, E. L., 1957: "Chapter V. Figurines". In J. W. Crowfoot et al. (eds.): *The Objects from Samaria*. Samaria-Sebaste 3. London. Pp. 76–84, pl. XI–XIV.

Daviau, P. M. M., 2001: "New Light on Iron Age Religious Iconography: The Evidence from Moab". Studies in the Archaeology and History of Jordan 7, 317–326.

Lebens, wo sie als HelferInnen geschätzt wurden, jedoch nicht mehr in ihrer Verbindung mit dem Königtum" (Schroer, 2018: 62).

— 2015: “In the Shadow of a Giant: Egyptian Influence in Transjordan during the Iron Age”. In T. P. Harrison et al. (eds.): *Walls of the Prince: Egyptian Interactions with Southwest Asia in Antiquity*. CHANE 77. Leiden/Boston. Pp. 234–273.

Daviau, P. M. M. / Steiner, M. L., 2017: *A Wayside Shrine in Northern Moab: Excavations in Wadi ath-Thamad.* Wadi ath-Thamad Project 1. Oxford.

Deutsch, R. / Heltzer, M., 1997: *Windows to the Past.* Jerusalem.

Deutsch, R. / Lemaire, A., 2000: *Biblical Period Personal Seals in the Shlomo Moussaieff Collection.* Tel Aviv.

Dothan, M., 1964: “Ashdod: Preliminary Report on the Excavations in Seasons 1962/1963”. IEJ 14/1–2, 79–95, pl. 17–22.

Dothan, M. et al., 2005: *Ashdod VI.* IAA Reports 24. Jerusalem.

Eggler, J. / Gubel, E., 2010: “Bastet/Sekhmet (Levant, Phoenician Colonies)”. Iconography of Deities and Demons, http://www.religionswissenschaft.uzh.ch/idd/prepublications/e_idd_bastet_sekhmet_levant_phoenician_colonies.pdf.

Eggler, J. / Keel, O., 2006: *Corpus der Siegel-Amulette aus Jordanien: Vom Neolithikum bis zur Perserzeit.* OBO SA 25. Fribourg/Göttingen.

Engelmann, H. / Hallof, J., 1996: “Der Sachmetpriester, ein früher Repräsentant der Hygiene und des Seuchenschutzes”. Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur 23, 103–146.

Finkelstein, I. / Sass, B., 2013: “The West Semitic Alphabetic Inscriptions, Late Bronze II to Iron IIA: Archeological Context, Distribution and Chronology”. HeBAI 2/2, 149–220.

Fischer, P. M., 1995: “Silver Statuette of Egyptian Goddess Sekhmet found in Jordan”. Minerva: The International Review of Ancient Art and Archaeology 6, 3.

— 2006: *Tell Abu al-Kharaz in the Jordan Valley. Vol II: The Middle and Late Bronze Ages.* Contributions to Chronology of the Eastern Mediterranean 11. Vienna.

Germond, P., 1981: *Sekhmet et la protection du monde.* Aegyptiaca Helvetica 9. Geneva.

Givʾon, S., 1999: “Naḥal Barqai/1995 נחל ברקאי”. Excavations and Surveys in Israel 13, 74*, 105–106.

— 2002: “Six Female Figurines from the Late Bronze Age from Tel Ḥarasim”. In E. D. Oren / S. Ahituv (eds.): *Aharon Kempinski Memorial Volume: Studies in Archaeology and Related Disciplines*. Beersheva 15. Beer-Sheva. Pp. 24*–37*.

Gropp, A. A., 2013: *Die religionsgeschichtliche Entwicklung Nordpalästinas von der Frühen Bronzezeit bis zum Ende der Eisenzeit am Beispiel des Tall Zirāʿa*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Bergische Universität Wuppertal.

Gubel, E., 2005: “Phoenician and Aramean Bridle-Harness Decoration: Examples of Cultural Contact and Innovation in the Eastern Mediterranean”. In C. E. Suter / C. Uehlinger (eds.): *Crafts and Images in Contact*. OBO 210. Fribourg/Göttingen. Pp. 111–148.

Guy, P. L., 1938: *Megiddo Tombs.* OIP 33. Chicago.

Guzowska, M. / Yasur-Landau, A., 2009: “Anthropomorphic Figurines”. In Y. Gadot et al. (eds.): *Aphek-Antipatris II: The Remains on the Acropolis. The Moshe Kochavi and Pirhiya Beck Excavations*. Tel Aviv University Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology Monograph Series 27. Tel Aviv. Pp. 387–395.

Hamilton, R. W., 1935: “Excavations at Tell Abu Hawām”. Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine 4, 1–69.

Häser, J. / Vieweger, D., 2007: “The ‘Gadara Region Project’ in Northern Jordan: The Spring Campaign 2006 on Tall Zarʿa”. Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan 51, 21–34.

Hays, C. M., 2012: “The Egyptian Goddess Mut in Iron Age Palestine: Further Data from Amulets and Onomastics”. JNES 71/2, 299–314.

Herrmann, C., 1994: *Ägyptische Amulette aus Palästina/Israel.* OBO 138. Fribourg/Göttingen.

— 2002: *Ägyptische Amulette aus Palästina/Israel. Band II.* OBO 184. Fribourg/Göttingen.

— 2006: *Ägyptische Amulette aus Palästina/Israel. Band III.* OBO SA 24. Fribourg/Göttingen.

— 2016: *Ägyptische Amulette aus Palästina/Israel. Band IV.* OBO SA 38. Fribourg/Göttingen.

Herrmann, C. et al., 2010: *1001 Amulett: Altägyptischer Zauber, monotheisierte Talismane, säkulare Magie.* Fribourg.

Hoenes, S-E., 1976: *Untersuchungen zu Wesen und Kult der Göttin Sachmet.* Bonn.

Hölbl, G., 1986: *Ägyptisches Kulturgut im phönikischen und punischen Sardinien.* 2 Vols. Études Préliminaires aux Religions Orientales dans l'Empire Romain 102. Leiden.

Holland, T. A., 1975: *A Typological and Archaeological Study of Human and Animal Representations in the Plastic Art of Palestine during the Iron Age*. Oxford.

Hunziker-Rodewald, R., 2015: "Experimental Archaeology Workshop Terracotta Female Figurines from the Ancient Near East (The Levant and Mesopotamia, II–I Millenium B.C.E.)". Les Carnets de l'ACoSt 14, 1–3.

— 2017: "Tonfigurinen als Marker von Kulturkontakt: ein Fallbeispiel". WO 47/1, 66–105.

Kamlah, J., 1993: "'Tell el-Fuḫḫār (Zarqu?)' und die pflanzenhaltende Göttin in Palästina: Ergebnisse des 'Zeraqon'-Surveys 1989". ZDPV 109, 101–127.

Kaplan, Y., 1972: "The Archaeology and History of Tel Aviv-Jaffa". BA 35/3, 65–95.

Keel, O., 1997: *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel: Von den Anfängen bis zur Perserzeit. Band I: Von Tell Abu Farağ bis ʾAtlit.* OBO SA 13. Fribourg/Göttingen.

— 2010a: *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel: Von den Anfängen bis zur Perserzeit. Band II: Von Bahan bis Tell Eton.* OBO SA 29. Fribourg/Göttingen.

— 2010b: *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel: Von den Anfängen bis zur Perserzeit. Band III: Von Tell el-Farʿa Nord bis Tell el-Fir.* OBO SA 31. Fribourg/Göttingen.

— 2010c: *Gott weiblich: Eine verborgene Seite des biblischen Gottes.* 2nd ed. Gütersloh.

— 2013: *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel: Von den Anfängen bis zur Perserzeit. Band IV: Von Tel Gamma bis Chirbet Husche.* OBO SA 33. Fribourg/Göttingen.

— 2017: *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel: Von den Anfängen bis zur Perserzeit. Band V: Von Tel el-Idham bis Tel Kitan.* OBO SA 35. Fribourg/Göttingen.

Keel, O. / Uehlinger, C., 2010: *Göttinnen, Götter und Gottessymbole. Neue Erkenntnisse zur Religionsgeschichte Kanaans und Israels aufgrund bislang unerschlossener ikonographischer Quellen*. Fribourg.

Keel, O. et al., 1985: *Studien zu den Stempelsiegeln aus Palästina/Israel.* 4 Vols. OBO 67, 88, 100, 135. Fribourg/Göttingen.

Kletter, R., 2015: "Iron Age Figurines". In L. Freud / I. Beit-Arieh (eds.): *Tel Malḥalta: A Central City in the Negev II*. Tel Aviv. Pp. 545–578.

Koutsoukou, A. et al., 1997: *The Great Temple of Amman: The Excavations.* Amman.

Lahn, M. K., 2014: *Die Göttin Qedeschet: Genese einer Hybridgottheit.* Hamburg.

Lamon, R. S. et al., 1939: *Megiddo.* OIP 42. Chicago.

Leitz, C. (ed.), 2002: *Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen.* Vol. 3. OLA 112. Leuven.

Macalister, R. A. S., 1912: *The Excavation of Gezer: 1902–1905 and 1907–1909.* London.

May, H. G., 1935: *Material Remains of the Megiddo Cult.* OIP 26. Chicago.

Mazar, A. / Davidovich, U., 2019: "Canaanite Reḥob: Tel Reḥov in the Late Bronze Age". BASOR 381/1, 163–191.

Mazar, A. et al., 2005: "Ladder of Time at Tel Rehov: Stratigraphy, Archaeological Context, Pottery and Radiocarbon Dates". In T. E. Levy / T. Higham (eds.): *The Bible and Radiocarbon Dating: Archaeology, Text and Science*. London. Pp. 193–255.

Mazar, B., 1963: "The Military Élite of King David". VT 13/1, 310–320.

Mazar, E., 2009: *The Palace of King David: Excavations at the Summit of the City of David. Preliminary Report of Seasons 2005–2007.* Jerusalem/New York.

— 2015: *The Ophel Excavations to the South of the Temple Mount 2009–2013: Final Reports.* Vol. 1. Jerusalem.

Moorey, P. R. S., 2003: *Idols of the People: Miniature Images of Clay in the Ancient Near East.* Oxford.

Münger, S., 1997: "Ariel". In K. van der Toorn et al. (eds.): *Dictionary of Deities and Demons*. Rev. ed. Leiden. Pp. 86–87.

Nakhai, B. A., 2014: "Mother-and-child Figurines in the Levant from the Late Bronze Age through the Persian Period". In J. Spencer et al. (eds.): *Material Culture Matters: Essays on the Archaeology of the Southern Levant in Honor of Seymour Gitin*. Winona Lake. Pp. 165–198.

Negbi, O., 1966: "A Deposit of Terracottas and Statuettes from Tel Sippor". Atiqot 6, 1–27, no. 33.

Oren, E. D. / Netzer, E., 1974: "Tel Seraʿ (Tell esh-Shariaʿ): News and Notes". IEJ 24, 264–266, pl. 57E.

Perrot, G. / Chipiez, C., 1885: *History of Art in Phœnicia and Its Dependencies.* 2 Vols. London.

Petrie, W. M. F., 1972: *Amulets.* Warminster.

Press, M. D., 2012: *Final Reports of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon. Vol. 4: The Iron Age Figurines of Ashkelon and Philistia.* Winona Lake.

Pritchard, J. B., 1988: *Sarepta IV: The Objects from Area II, X: The University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania Excavations at Sarafand, Lebanon.* Beirut.

Rahmani, L. Y., 1959: "A Lion-Faced Figurine from Bet Sheʾan". Atiqot 2, 184–185, pl. XXIV:1–3.

Rowe, A., 1940: *The Four Canaanite Temples of Beth-Shan. Vol. I: The Temples and Cult Objects.* Philadelphia.

Sass, B., 1993: "The Pre-Exilic Hebrew Seals: Iconism vs. Aniconism". In B. Sass / C. Uehlinger (eds.): *Studies in the Iconography of Northwest Semitic Inscribed Seals*. OBO 125. Fribourg/Göttingen. Pp. 194–256.

— 2010: "Arrowheads with Phoenician Inscriptions: If not Instruments of Belomancy, What?" In J-M. Durand / A. Jacquet (eds.): *Magie et divination dans les cultures de l'Orient*. Paris. Pp. 61–72.

Schroer, S., 2018: *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels und der Alte Orient: Eine Religionsgeschichte in Bildern. Band 4: Die Eisenzeit bis zum Beginn der achämenidischen Herrschaft*. Basel.

Schroer, S. / Wyssmann, P., 2012: "Eine Göttin auf dem Löwen aus Ḫirbet Qēyafa". ZDPV 128/2, 158–169, pl. 21.

Skupinska-Løvset, I., 1978: *The Ustinov Collection: Terracottas.* Oslo.

Smith, M. S., 2014: *Poetic Heroes: Literary Commemorations of Warriors and Warrior Culture in the Early Biblical World.* Grand Rapids.

Soennecken, K. / Gropp, A. A., 2012: "Stadt und Kult zur Zeit des Alten Testaments: Eine archäologische Perspektive". In A. Schart / J. Krispenz (eds.): *Die Stadt im Zwölfprophetenbuch*. BZAW 428. Berlin. Pp. 147–204.

Stager, L. E. et al., 2011: *Final Reports of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon. Vol. 3: The Seventh Century B.C.* Winona Lake.

Sternberg, H., 1984: "Sachmet". LÄ 5, 323–326.

Strawn, B. A., 2005: *What is Stronger Than a Lion? Leonine Image and Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East.* OBO 212. Fribourg/Göttingen.

Tadmor, M., 1982a: "Female Cult Figurines in Late Canaan and Early Israel: Archaeological Evidence". In T. Ishida (ed.): *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays*. Tokyo. Pp. 139–173.

— 1982b: "Female Figurines in Canaan in the Late Bronze Age". Qadmoniot 15/1, 2–10.

Tsoran, D., 2015: *Putting the Pieces Together: The Anthropomorphic and Zoomorphic Figurines and Vessels from the Samaria Excavations. A Test Case: The Corpus from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem Collections (9th–8th Centuries BCE)*. Jerusalem.

Tsori, N., 1958: "Cult Figurines in the Eastern Plain of Esdraelon and Beth-Shean". ErIsr 5, 52–55, pl. 7:1.

Tufnell, O., 1953: *Lachish III (Tell ed-Duweir): The Iron Age.* London.

Van der Veen, P. G., 2013: "When Pharaohs Ruled Jerusalem". BAR 39/2, 42–48, 67.

Weissbein, I. et al., 2016: "Goddesses from Canaanite Lachish". Strata: Bulletin of the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society 34, 41–55.

Weissbein, I. et al., 2020: "The Level VI North-East Temple at Tel Lachish". Levant 51/2, 1–29.

Winderbaum, A., 2015: "The Iron Age IIA Figurines and Amulets from the Ophel". In E. Mazar (ed.): *The Ophel Excavations to the South of the Temple Mount 2009–2013: Final Reports.* Vol. 1. Jerusalem. Pp. 531–358.

Winter, U., 1983: *Frau und Göttin: Exegetische und ikonographische Studien zum weiblichen Gottesbild im Alten Israel und in dessen Umwelt.* OBO 53. Freiburg/Göttingen.

Ziffer, I. et al., 2009: "Divine or Human? An Intriguing Late Bronze Age Plaque Figurine from Tel Beth-Shemesh". Ägypten und Levante 19, 333–341.

— 2016: *It is the Land of Honey: Discoveries from Tel Reḥov, the Early Days of the Israelite Monarchy.* Tel Aviv.

ANOTHER FACE OF THE GODDESS: A TERRACOTTA PLAQUE FROM QUBUR AL-WALAYDAH

Angelika Berlejung

I am very happy to dedicate this article to my dear friend and colleague, Sakkie Cornelius, on a subject I am sure he will appreciate: the publication of a new female terracotta plaque, perhaps a goddess, which he can include in his ever growing collection in *The Many Faces of the Goddess: The Iconography of the Syro-Palestinian Goddesses Anat, Astarte, Qedeshet, and Asherah c. 1500–1000 BCE*.[1] The plaque has been found in the joint excavation of the Universities of Beersheva, Leipzig, and Rostock 2010 in Qubur al-Walaydah/ Israel.[2]

1. THE SITE

Qubur al-Walaydah is a small archaeological site in south-west Israel with a total size of about 2ha. It is located on the right bank of the Nahal Beśor (Wādi Ġazze) between Tell Jemmeh and Tell el-Farah South (coordinates 1011.0827). After only one season of excavation by Cohen in 1977,[3] the site was re-investigated during an archaeological survey conducted by Lehmann on behalf of Ben-Gurion University in 2000. According to his very first analysis, the site consisted of two separated areas, Field 1 and Field 2, and the later excavations confirmed this (see below). Excavations began in 2007 as a joint project of Ben-Gurion University (Israel), the University of Leipzig, and the University of Rostock (both Germany), under the direction of Lehmann and Rosen, as well as the co-directors, Berlejung and Niemann. The excavations were funded by Ben-Gurion University as part of its annual study excavation program. Since 2008, the Field 2 excavations were also funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (German Research Foundation) as a case study in the framework of the SFB 586 project "Difference and Integration" and its project group "Space and Mobility in Syria and Palestine at the time of the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian Empire" under the project direction of Berlejung in cooperation with Lehmann. Field 1 and Field 2 became sub-projects of the main project that was concerned with the explication and definition of farming communities and nomads during the Bronze and Iron Ages, as reflected in the remains of the material culture in a rural village located in a region marked by the transition from the settled coastal plain in the west to the steppe and desert.

The four seasons of archaeological excavations between 2007 and 2011 exposed the remains of a rural site occupied during the Late Bronze Age IIB through the Iron Age IIC. The site was abandoned at the end of the 7th century BCE and was never resettled again. The excavations focused on two distinct areas. In the southern Field 1, two phases dated to the Late Bronze Age (LB IIB, LB III) and the beginning of the Iron Age (IA I) have been found.[4] Located ca. 250m north of Field 1 is Field 2, where the excavations exposed, on a limited area of about 240m^2, some modest architectural remains with strata and materials dated to the Iron Age I and II.[5] The area was severely disturbed by a lime kiln and several pits cutting into the layers.

---

[1] Cornelius, 2008.

[2] I thank Prof. Dr. Gunnar Lehmann for the permission to publish it here.

[3] Cohen, 1978: 194–195.

[4] For the stratigraphy of Field 1, compare Table 1 in Asscher et al., 2015: 77–97.

[5] Lehmann et al., 2010: 151–157.

The results of the first season in 2007 (including survey and geometric prospection of 2008) were published in a preliminary report,[6] while the second season in 2009 (including results from 2007–2009) was published in a special issue of Welt des Orients.[7] During the 2010 season, two hieratic inscriptions were found in Field 1 which were published by Wimmer and Lehmann.[8] The ^{14}C samples of Field 1 (= LBA and IA I Levels) were analysed by Asscher et al.[9] and the lithic assemblages of the four seasons were studied by Manclossi et al.[10]

2. THE PLAQUE

The plaque fragment (qubur 23.016-01-S01) was found during the season of the year 2010 in Field 2 in Locus 23.016. This Locus is a pit which was probably dug in the quadrants u410 in Field 2 during the time of the lime kiln (in square T411) which was dated to the 19th or 20th century (CE). The pit cuts into the Iron Age IIA or IIB layer. Thus the plaque comes from a disturbed context.[11]

Only the upper part of a solid plaque figurine is preserved (figs. 1–6).[12] It was made in a single mould and some facial details were incised or modelled later. The plaque is broken just below the shoulders. In front a female head is visible. The measurements are: 3,4cm high, 4,1cm wide at the widest point and ca. 2,2cm thick at the thickest point, 1cm at the thinnest point. The face rises approx. 1,2cm above the plaque background. The female head does not fill the entire modelled area but seems to be framed by it all around. The plaque background is visible on both sides of the figure and both sides have clearly formed edges. The excess clay on the back of the plaque is nicely rounded on the sides and smoothed almost flat on the back by hand.

The female face in frontal perspective is typical for Palestinian plaques and therefore our fragment is similar to other pieces that have been found in the Levant.

The hairdress is peculiar and seems to be structured in a kind of scroll pattern. It surrounds the head on all sides and ends smoothly with a straight cut at the shoulders. The scroll pattern seems to indicate a curly hairdo, braided plaits or a wig. A hairband or diadem runs over the forehead and lifts the hair/wig upwards. The eyebrows and the open eyes are slightly modelled, the prominent nose as well. The tip of the latter is eroded. The mouth is engraved in the clay, with no special attention paid to the lips.

The narrow cheeks are only hinted at and merge harmoniously into the narrow lower jaw. The chin is strongly worked out and pointed. The face stands out clearly from the surrounding plaque background, as well as from the hair/wig and the ears. The two ears are directed forward and not covered by the hair/wig. Traces of earrings are visible.

Below the chin is a pendant, a round piece of jewellery whose inner surface is divided into four equal sectors by two lines intersecting at right angles. Below the pendant and hair the lower body of the female figurine looks quite flat (except some "major scratch" [?] at her right shoulder) and no indications of breasts or arms are clearly recognisable.

3. DISCUSSION

As Cornelius has pointed out: "*Terracotta* plaques or moulds are peculiar to Palestine in the LB period, but they disappear around 1000 BCE, and reappear in the 8–7th century. The motif of the naked goddess is typical in this medium".[13] The plaques are made of shallow, rectangular (or somewhat oval) lumps of clay, usually moulded in the front with a shallow mould.[14] During the Iron Age II, they are restricted to a few types, which are very different in size and type from their Late Bronze Age predecessors. Even if Cornelius was quite

[6] Lehmann et al., 2009: 1–32.
[7] Berlejung / Lehmann, 2010: 137–284.
[8] Lehmann / Wimmer, 2014: 343–348, with Faigenbaum et al., 2014: 349–353.
[9] Asscher et al., 2015: 77–97.
[10] Manclossi et al., 2018: 93–124.
[11] I wish to thank Prof. Dr. Lehmann for providing me with the context information.
[12] Figs. 1–6 are courtesy Prof. Dr. Lehmann.
[13] Cornelius, 2008: 62.
[14] Kletter, 1996: 34–36.

optimistic about their interpretation as depictions of female deities, this view is not shared by all scholars. Associated with the problem of whether gods or humans are represented, is the question whether the Iron Age plaques should be considered as the direct continuation of the LBA plaques or not.[15] Another debated topic is whether and how the plaques could be related to the contemporary anthropomorphic figurines in the round depicting females.

While Holland[16] and Cornelius[17] propose a typology of the female terracotta plaques based on the position of the arms and the hands (see below), Kletter classifies the plaque figurines of Iron Age Palestine mainly by the shapes of the heads, consistent with the classification of the Judean Pillar Figurines. Because in our case only the head survived, we rely on his typology:[18]

(1) Female plaque figurines, holding a disk (with different hairdos). The motif is also known from pillar examples.
(2) Female plaque figurines with "Hathor hairdress". The position of the arms can vary: both arms can hold flowers, or the breasts; one hand can hold the breast while the other one lies along the body, both hands can be uplifted to the side, or both hands are placed on the belly or run along the body.
(3) Plaque figurines with "feathers" above the forehead and "Hathor" side-locks. The hands can be placed on the chest, or the left is on the belly, and the right one on the chest.
(4) Plaque figurines with "crescent" hairdresses. Both hands can be placed on the belly, hold breasts, or (in majority of cases) run parallel along the body.
(5) Plaque figurines with "feather hats", without clay backgrounds. Breast holding.
(6) Plaque figurines with "uraeus symbol", without clay backgrounds. Breast holding.
(7) Plaque figurines with unique features; they can play the flute, hold a child, hold their breasts, the hands can be placed on the chest. The woman can be naked or dressed.
(8) Body fragments of plaque figurines with clay background (of Types 5.II–5.VII).
(9) Plaque figurines of pregnant women in high moulding.
(10–11) Miscellaneous body fragments.

Regarding the hairdo of the plaque from Qubur al-Walaydah, all the types with Hathor hairdress or Hathor side-locks, as well as with feathers or a uraeus symbol or crescent style hairdress can be excluded (Kletter's types 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6). Even if our piece is a plaque, the detailed face with the pendant (without a peg) shows some similarity to Kletter's category of "'Finely Moulded Heads' with Neck Pendants from the Coastal Plain",[19] even if he only included into this category hollow bodied figures and heads with a peg.

As already mentioned, the plaque fragment from Qubur al-Walaydah has a clearly visible clay background and a quite unique hairdo.[20] It therefore relates to Kletter's types 7 and 8. Nothing can be said about any state of pregnancy, nakedness, or clothing of the woman.[21] Regarding the position of her arms, it seems as if it can be excluded that they were raised and extended in the typical V-shaped form and holding objects (animals or plants—no disks), which is well known from goddesses of the Qudshu-type.[22] This type is a fully nude female figure facing the front, who can stand on an animal pedestal, however also without. The "Qudshu" most frequently wears a Hathor hairdo, sometimes with horns or a disk or the *naos* or the Egyptian anedjty crown.

[15] Interestingly, Darby (2014: 332) proposes that the cult stands and model shrines of the 10–9th century BCE attested in Israel and Philistia "served as a bridge between Late Bronze and Iron IIB figurine traditions", while free standing anthropomorphic figures were less common.
[16] Holland, 1975, partly published in Holland, 1977: 121–155. His typology is based on the Iron Age material (given as from ca. 1200 BCE until the middle of the 4th century BCE); female plaque figurines are his category C.I–XV. In I–VII, they are differentiated according to the position of the hands. VIII–XV are fragments. Regarding the Qubur al-Walaydah plaque, note C.VIII "Head Fragments on Plain Clay 'Tablet' Background".
[17] Cornelius, 2007: 238f (using LBA and Iron Age material).
[18] Kletter, 1996: Appendix 5.V. For examples from Transjordan, see Kletter, 1996: Appendix 4.VII–X.
[19] Kletter, 1996: Appendix 5.III.2. See esp. 5.III.2.8 and 9 = fig. 7.3 and 4 (Tel Sera Level VI, 7th century BCE).
[20] No parallel can be found in Sugimoto, 2008: 18f; and Cornelius, 2007.
[21] Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age "Astarte Plaques" depict standing nude females with different hand positions, different hairdos, and usually without jewellery, crown, hairband, or diadem; they are often interpreted as representations of goddesses, see, e.g., Keel / Uehlinger, 1998: 97–108. The plaque from Qubur al-Walaydah differs in various aspects.
[22] Cornelius, 2008: 62–64 with the catalogue numbers and figures; Cornelius, 2010.

Aside from the fact that the width of the plaque from Qubur al-Walaydah at the height of the shoulders seems too narrow to accommodate extended raised arms in V-shaped form, and that there are no remains of an object at shoulder level that the hands could have held up, the figure's hairdo also rules this out. Thus, while Cornelius's type 1 (as well as Holland's type C.V) is excluded for the position of the hands of our plaque, his types 2–7 (as well as Holland's types C.I–IV and VI–VII) are still possible:[23]

([1] Arms extended)
(2) Hand(s) holding breast(s)
(3) Arms folded below the breasts
(4) Arms hanging down the sides[24]
(5) Hands on lower body
(6) Holding child
(7) Holding objects—mostly a disk.

Considering the Iron Age II context of the plaque in Field 2, the best option for a possible reconstruction of the Qubur al-Walaydah plaque's lower part and the female's body would be to assign her to Kletter's type 1, which is Cornelius's type 7 (and Holland's type C.VI). These Iron Age female plaques holding a round object can have different hairdresses and were discovered in coastal and Northern ("Israelite") areas,[25] as well as in Transjordan.[26] Finds from Tel Malhata and Tel ʿIra point to the Negev and the 8–7th century BCE.[27] Some scholars prefer to disconnect them from Judah and label them as "Edomite",[28] stressing the point that Judean sites prefer pillar figurines to solid plaques in general and also regarding the motif of females holding a round object.[29] Because free standing figurines with this motif are widespread in Syria, Phoenicia, including the Punic world,[30] Cyprus, and are also attested in Northern ("Israelite") areas (few items), Philistian sites (few items), and Transjordan,[31] any ethnic labelling seems to be futile. The motif "female holding a round object" obviously generated several regional interpretations which were realised with different techniques. For the Coast, Northern Palestine, and Transjordan, as well as for some Negevite sites, the preferred medium was the solid plaque. The latter therefore is the closer regional context of the plaque from Qubur al-Walaydah.

Regarding the questions whether the female figure on the plaque is human or divine, and what round object she is holding in her hands, there are—as is often the case in the interpretation of coroplastic art of the ancient Near East—two "schools" of thought: those who argue that the anthropomorphic female represents a deity (holding, therefore, divine or cultic attributes in her hands, such as a solar disk or a shield), while others believe that a mortal human being is shown, a worshipper or a priest (holding cultic attributes and/or offerings).[32] In the latter case, the round object would be a bowl, a bread, a tambourine, or a drum.

Paz, who has dedicated a whole monograph to the topic, adopts the latter position. Paz interprets the round object in all three sub-types, that is, the plaque figurines, the hollow conical figurines, and a "hybrid

[23] The following list is from Cornelius, 2007: 239. The list is more or less identical with Holland's classification (Holland, 1975: C.I–VII), however the numbering is different.
[24] For the type, see Holland, 1975: C.IV, "Arms Hang Straight Down"; a recent example is Uhlenbrock, 2016 (said to come as a surface find from Tel Rehov).
[25] Kletter, 1996: Appendix 5.V.1 (Transjordan, Negev, North Palestine); Paz, 2007: A.1–A.41, 45f; Sugimoto, 2008: 20f, N1–31 and pl. 1 and 2 (Gezer). For Late Iron Age/Persian period plaques from Syria, see Nunn, 2000: 41f (Neirab, Tell Daynit). Nunn summarises them under "die syrische Gruppe", and describes them as plaques of females holding a tambourine.
[26] Paz, 2007: A.47–A.63 (Transjordan); Sugimoto, 2008: 21, T1–21.
[27] Paz, 2007: A.42 (Tel ʿIra, Stratum VII, 7th century BCE) and A.43f (Tel Malhata, Stratum IV, 8th century BCE). For Tel ʿIra, see also Sugimoto, 2008: 21, E1. For Tel Malhata, see also Kletter, 2015: no. 3–5 (8/7th century BCE; single mould), 572f.
[28] Sugimoto, 2008: 21, E1 (Tel ʿIra); Kletter / Saarelainen, 2011: 18f; Kletter, 2015: 572f.
[29] Kletter, 2015: 572f.
[30] Kletter, 1996: 35f and Appendix 5.VI.2. For female hollow pillar figurines with tambourine from Late Iron Age/Persian period Syria and Phoenicia, see Nunn, 2000: 51f (summarised under "Phönizisch mit Ägypten-Bezug").
[31] Kletter / Saarelainen, 2011: 16–19; for Philistia see Ben-Shlomo, 2010: 75–78 (plaques and free standing figurines).
[32] For a summary of the previous debate until 2004, see Paz, 2007: 74–78. The debate until 2010 is sketched by Kletter / Saarelainen, 2011: 25.

character",[33] as a drum in the hands of a human female.[34] Kletter and Saarelainen also treat the figurines in the round/pillars and the plaques together and argue that the free standing figurines of the Iron Age II in Judah do not depict deities, but a local version (within the Phoenician, Transjordanian, Israelite/Northern, and Cypriote context) of a human musician playing a drum.[35] The unrealistic position of the "drum" is usually explained by the technical limitations of pottery and conventions.[36]

By contrast, Meyers, in her recent study, goes back to the idea that the plaques represent a deity. She disconnected the Iron Age disk holding plaques from figurines in the round/pillar figurines and argues that the pillars are humans (with drums) while the plaques are goddesses because of their crowns, turbans, and jewellery. Consequently, regarding the discussion on the interpretation of the round object in the hands of the female figures, she argues against the "drum" proposal; however, she does not argue in favour of the interpretation of the round object as either a solar disk or shield. In her opinion, the divine female figures on the plaques (not the free standing figurines) hold a disk shaped sacrificial bread or cake against their chests.[37]

The identity of the female figure on the plaque of Qubur al-Walaydah cannot be determined. It remains an open question whether she is human or divine. The only hint to her identity could be the pendant at her neck. In other contexts, similar iconographic features with four equal quadrants have been interpreted as representation of the four phases of the moon.[38] However, the pendant at her neck is an isolated iconographic detail that possibly has a purely decorative function. Far reaching conclusions regarding the interpretation of the lady as a moon goddess would therefore be exaggerated. Perhaps we do have another face of the goddess who was in the Iron Age II in charge of protecting a small rural site and its harvest. Regardless of whether she is a goddess, an intermediate being, or a priestess/worshipper, the plaque points the beholder to the cultic and religious sphere and opened a communication horizon. It is doubtful whether, in antiquity, this (function) really needed a name (Anat, Asherah, Astarte) or clear and sharp borderlines.

Fig. 1: Female terracotta plaque, Qubur al-Walaydah (Iron Age II). View from above.

Fig. 2: Female terracotta plaque, Qubur al-Walaydah (Iron Age II). Frontal view.

[33] Paz, 2007: 12.

[34] A worshipper with a drum is also the view of Keel / Uehlinger, 1998: 164–167. This fits into their basic construct that there were "Hesitations about representing the goddess anthropomorphically ... in Iron Age IIA in Israel" (Keel / Uehlinger, 1998: 167). Based on this view, Sugimoto (2008: 85) assumes that the female drummers represent human women, however, that in Iron Age II "these human women were the way of representing a goddess", namely, Astarte. This seems to be a very sophisticated approach to simple domestic art.

[35] Kletter / Saarelainen, 2011: 11–28, esp. 24.

[36] For the detailed argumentation, see Tadmor, 2006: 321–338.

[37] Meyers, 2017: 127–130.

[38] Bernett / Keel, 1998: 31f, 37.

Fig. 3: Female terracotta plaque, Qubur al-Walaydah (Iron Age II). View from the back.

Fig. 4: Female terracotta plaque, Qubur al-Walaydah (Iron Age II). Frontal view, left side.

Fig. 5: Female terracotta plaque, Qubur al-Walaydah (Iron Age II). Frontal view, right side.

Fig. 6: Female terracotta plaque, Qubur al-Walaydah (Iron Age II). Frontal view, top.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Asscher, Y. et al., 2015: "Absolute Dating of the Late Bronze to Iron Age Transition and the Appearance of Philistine Culture in Qubur el-Walaydah, Southern Levant". Radiocarbon 57, 77–97.

Ben-Shlomo, D., 2010: *Philistine Iconography: A Wealth of Style and Symbolism*. OBO 241. Fribourg/Göttingen.

Berlejung, A. / Lehmann, G. (eds.), 2010: "Qubur al-Walaydah". WO 40/2, 137–284.

Bernett, M. / Keel, O., 1998: *Mond, Stier und Kult am Stadttor. Die Stele von Betsaida (et-Tell)*. OBO 161. Fribourg/Göttingen.

Cohen, R., 1978: "Qubur el-Walaida". IEJ 28, 194–195.

Cornelius, I., 2007: "The Headgear and Hairstyles of Pre-Persian Palestinian Female Plaque Figurines". In S. Bickel et al. (eds.): *Bilder als Quellen: Images as Sources, Studies on Ancient Near Eastern Artefacts and the Bible Inspired by the Work of Othmar Keel*. OBO Special Volume. Fribourg/Göttingen. Pp. 237–252.

— 2008. *The Many Faces of the Goddess: The Iconography of the Syro-Palestinian Goddesses Anat, Astarte, Qedeshet, and Asherah c. 1500–1000 BCE*. OBO 204. Fribourg/Göttingen.

— 2010. “Qudshu”. Iconography of Deities and Demons in the Ancient Near East, Electronic Pre-Publications, http://www.religionswissenschaft.uzh.ch/idd/prepublications/e_idd_qudshu.pdf.

Darby, E., 2014: *Interpreting Judean Pillar Figurines: Gender and Empire in Judean Apotropaic Ritual*. FAT II/69. Tübingen.

Faigenbaum, S. et al., 2014: “Multispectral Imaging of Two Hieratic Inscriptions from Qubur el-Walaydah”. Ägypten und Levante 24, 349–353.

Holland, T. A., 1975: *A Typological and Archaeological Study of Human and Animal Representations in the Plastic Art of Palestine during the Iron Age*. 2 Vols. Oxford.

— 1977: “A Study of Palestinian Iron Age Baked Clay Figurines, with Special Reference to Jerusalem Cave 1”. Levant 9, 121–155.

Keel, O. / Uehlinger, C., 1998: *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel*. Minneapolis.

Kletter, R., 1996: *The Judean Pillar-Figurines and the Archaeology of Asherah*. BAR International Series 636. Oxford.

— 2015: “Iron Age Figurines”. In I. Beit-Arieh / L. Freud (eds.): *Tel Malhata: A Central City in the Biblical Negev II*. Tel Aviv University Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology Monograph Series 32. Tel Aviv. Pp. 545–573.

Kletter, R. / Saarelainen, K., 2011: “Judean Drummers”. ZDPV 127/1, 11–28.

Lehmann, G. et al., 2009: “Ausgrabungen in Qubur el-Waleyide, Israel, 2007–2008. Vorbericht (with Appendix)”. ZDPV 125/1, 1–32.

— 2010: “Excavations at Qubur al-Walaydah, 2007–2009”. WO 40/2, 137–159.

Lehmann, G. / Wimmer, S., 2014: “Two Hieratic Inscriptions from Qubur el-Walaydah”. Ägypten und Levante 24, 343–348.

Manclossi, F. et al., 2018: “The Decline and Disappearance of Chipped-Stone Tools: New Insights from Qubur el-Walaydah, A Late Bronze/Iron Age Site in Israel”. Lithic Technology 43/2, 93–124.

Meyers, C., 2017: “Disks and Deities: Images on Iron Age Terracotta Plaques”. In F. E. Greenspahn / G. A. Rendsburg (eds.): *Le-maʿan Ziony: Essays in Honor of Ziony Zevit*. Eugene. Pp. 116–133.

Nunn, A., 2000: *Der figürliche Motivschatz Phöniziens, Syriens und Transjordaniens vom 6. bis zum 4. Jahrhundert v. Chr*. OBO SA 18. Fribourg/Göttingen.

Paz, S., 2007: *Drums, Women, and Goddesses: Drumming and Gender in Iron Age II Israel*. OBO 232. Fribourg/Göttingen.

Sugimoto, D. T., 2008: *Female Figurines with a Disk from the Southern Levant and the Formation of Monotheism*. Tokyo.

Tadmor, M., 2006: “Realism and Convention in the Depiction of Ancient Drummers”. In Y. Amit et al. (eds.): *Essays on Ancient Israel in its Near Eastern Context: A Tribute to Nadav Na’aman*. Winona Lake. Pp. 321–338.

Uhlenbrock, J., 2016: “Terracottas in the News: A Bronze-Age Terracotta Figurine Discovered by a Seven-Year-Old Boy”. Les Carnets de l’ACoSt 14, http://journals.openedition.org/acost/825.

FRAUENBILDNISSE UND IHRE GESTEN

Astrid Nunn

1. EINLEITUNG

Die Verbreitung von Frauendarstellungen führte zu einem frühen Interesse mit unterschiedlichen Deutungsversuchen, die zunächst vor allem um „Fruchtbarkeit“ und „Mutterschaft“ kreisten. Obwohl das Studium der Frauenbildnisse kaum einen Abschluss finden wird, erlauben heute vielfältige Ansätze ein weites und differenziertes Deutungsfeld.[1] Sakkies archäologischen Interessen folgend—Sakkie hat sich ein Leben lang mit der Deutung von Frauendarstellungen auseinandergesetzt—widme ich ihm sehr gerne die folgende kleine Studie verbunden mit den besten Wünschen für zahlreiche weitere produktive Jahre.

Aus der unendlichen thematischen Vielfalt, die mit der Abbildung von Frauen verbunden ist, habe ich das Thema der Gesten ausgewählt. Dieser Beitrag beschäftigt sich mit Material aus Israel/Palästina und beginnt mit dem zweiten Jahrtausend, da es erst ab diesem Zeitpunkt mehr Frauendarstellungen gibt.

Das lateinische Wort *gestus* unterscheidet nicht zwischen Bewegung und Haltung des Körpers. Die Wurzel ist *gero, gerere*, was „ausführen“, „tragen“ und „sich verhalten“ bedeutet. Daraus stammt der Ausdruck „eine Geste machen“. Somit beschreiben „Haltung“ sowie „Gesten“ Körperstellungen, die eng verknüpft sind. In der Altorientalistik gibt es einige Werke über Gesten und Haltungen, in denen bisweilen versucht wird, die Gesten mit einer akkadischen Benennung zu verbinden.[2] In jüngerer Zeit sind Gesten als körperlicher Ausdruck („corporeality“)[3] von Emotionen studiert worden.[4]

Doch gibt es noch weitere, in der Altorientalistik weitgehend unerforschte Ansätze. Gesten stellen eine in jeder Kultur entwickelte Antwort auf auszudrückende Zustände dar. Als kultureller Ausdruck unterliegt Gestik somit Regeln, die, weil kulturabhängig, kodifiziert und dadurch jedem Menschen eines Kulturkreises verständlich werden. Dies wurde im 19. Jahrhundert erkannt und unter dem Begriff „symbolic gesture“, sowie später, vor allem ab den 1980ern, als metaphorische Bildsprache betrachtet, um ab den 1990ern in die Wissenschaft der Semiotik eingebettet zu werden.[5] Diese auf die Moderne angewandte Interpretation gilt genauso für die Antike.

Auch wenn Haltungen und Gesten für das in diesem Aufsatz betrachtete archäologische Material ab und zu erwähnt und gedeutet werden, ist es nie vorrangig unter diesem Aspekt behandelt worden. Erschwerend kommt die kaum mögliche Verbindung zu schriftlichen Quellen hinzu, und die Tatsache, dass viele der hier betrachteten Bilder zweidimensional mit einer *en face* und ohne Kontext abgebildeten Frau sind. Umso wichtiger ist die zusammenhängende Betrachtung der über eine Geste berührten Elemente wie Brüste, Scham, Bauch, Kind oder Musikinstrument.

---

[1] Vgl. z. B. Cohen, 2016.
[2] Pongratz-Leisten / Highcock, 2015.
[3] Morris / Peatfield, 2002. Anders in Dominicus, 1994.
[4] Kipfer, 2017.
[5] Cienki / Müller. 2008.

Die Debatte über die Identifikation der einzelnen Frauenbilder ist nicht abgeschlossen, und auch nicht mein Ziel. Gelegentliche Importe, seltene Gesten[6] oder gar Einzelhaltungen[7] bleiben unberücksichtigt. Damit der Leser eine Referenz hat, sind die herangezogenen Objekte (es sind nicht alle!) in einem Anhang mit Bibliographie angegeben. Die Hauptwerke, die dank ihrer zahlreichen Abbildungen einen Überblick ermöglichen, sind Negbi, 1976, Winter, 1983, Keel / Uehlinger, 1992, Cornelius, 2004 und Schroer, 2008, 2011, 2018.

2. ZU DEN TRÄGERN

Allgemein bestehen die Träger vor allem aus rundplastischen und flachen Ton- und Metallfiguren, Siegeln, Skarabäen und Amuletten sowie wenigen Steinplastiken. Im Einzelnen umfassen sie in der MBZ oft Skarabäen und ausgeschnittene Bleche oder rundplastische Metallfiguren (Typ 1b, 2, 4b), die mehr oder minder stilisiert sind (Typ 7). Skarabäen gibt es auch in der EZII–Achämenidenzeit (Typ 10). Aus Matrizen hergestellte Terrakotten, vor allem in Form von Plaketten, werden ab der SBZ, und rundplastische Tonfigurinen, auch an Ständern oder Modellen ab der EZII gängig. Weitere Formen sind die sog. „Gravidenflaschen" (SBZ-EZI, Typ 8a), kleine Steinstelen und Naiskoi aus Ton (Typ 5a), für die EZ Amulette in Knochen oder Faience (Typ 5a, 10a).

2.1 Die Typen (Tabelle 1)

Das operative Kriterium zur Typenbildung sind die Gesten verbunden mit den nackt oder bekleidet sein und dem Tragen einer Kopfbedeckung. Die Häufigkeit und die chronologische Einordnung bestimmen die Reihenfolge innerhalb eines Typs.

Die ihre Brüste darbietende Frau kommt in der MBZII vor, und noch zahlreicher bis zum Ende der EZ (Typ 1). Den Typ 1 kann man in Frauen ohne Kopfbedeckung (Typ 1a) und mit Kopfbedeckung (Typ 1b) unterteilen. Einen weiteren kleinen Unterschied bilden die Handhaltungen: Entweder werden die Brüste in den körbchenförmigen Händen gehalten (Abb. 1b, 1e), oder die Hände verdecken die Brüste (Abb. 1d). Die erste Haltung ist gängiger als die zweite. Es halten auch kaum ausgearbeitete Hände die Brüste (Abb. 1c).

Die ältesten Darstellungen des Typ 1a kommen auf Skarabäen vor, auf denen die Frau ab und zu von Zweigen umgeben ist (Abb. 1a). Die Skarabäen mit diesem Bild wurden als eigene Gruppe bearbeitet.[8]

Von der SBZ an taucht dieser Frauentypus vielfach als Tonplaketten auf (Abb. 1b). Rundplastische Tonfigurinen sind geläufiger ab der EZII und besonders in der Achämenidenzeit. Zahlreiche rundplastische, wegen ihres geraden Aufbaus und ihrer Fundorte in Judäa Judean Pillar Figurines (JPF) genannte und in das 8. Jahrhundert zu datierende Terrakotten bieten ihre Brüste dar (Abb. 1c).[9] Während die Frauen in der Regel nackt abgebildet sind, weist eine EZIIa bekleidete Frau auf einer Kalksteinskulptur aus Megiddo dieselbe Geste auf.

Nur in der MBZ und SBZ tragen Frauen, die ihre Brüste halten, eine Kopfbedeckung (Typ 1b). Die Metallfigurine aus Tell el-Ajjul trägt eine Hörnerkrone mit „Feder" (Abb. 1e), diejenigen aus Megiddo eine hohe und spitze Kappe, die sich von der eckigen auf den SBZ Tonplaketten unterscheidet.

---

[6] Auf mittanisch-syrischen Rollsiegeln erscheint eine Frau, die ihre Hände unter ihren Brüsten hält (Bet Shemesh und Megiddo, SB, Winter, 1983: 142–143) oder ihren Schleier lüftet (MBZII Megiddo, Hazor, Tell el-Farah Nord, Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 30–31; Winter, 1983: Abb. 303). Geflügelte nackte Frau auf seltenen importierten Rollsiegeln (Acco, SBZ, Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 53) und syro-phönizischen Stempelsiegeln (aus Israel oder Juda, 8.–7. Jh. Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 331a). Das Bild der Frauen mit Armstümpfen stammt aus Syrien (als TR, 1900–1600 v. Chr. Badre, 1980: Tf. 1–3ff; Keel / Schroer, 2006: Abb. 42–44); in Israel/Palästina als Steinstatue (MBZ: Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 26b; Schroer, 2008: Nr. 402, Tel Kitan); Dreidimensionale Frauen mit nach vorne ausgestreckten Armen sind selten in Israel/Palästina (MBZ: Negbi, 1976: Nr. 1519; Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 28a; Schroer, 2008: Nr. 461; Negbi, 1976: Nr. 1533? 1540–1541? Männer, Bleche, Megiddo, Nahariya; SBZ–achäm.: Stern, 2010: Abb. 21.1, TR, und 21.8, TP).

[7] Terrakotta einer trauernden Frau aus Tel Etun, 12.–11. Jh., Zwickel, 2017: 99 und Abb. 7; Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1226; Frau mit Taube aus Achzib, Dayagi-Mendels, 2002: 148, Nr. 5; Badende Frau, Dayagi-Mendels, 2002: Nr. 10.

[8] Schroer, 1987; Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: 30.

[9] Kletter, 1996: 95, 405, Stücke aus Jerusalem. Sie tragen ab und zu ein Tamburin oder ein Tier.

Unter Typ 2 bietet die nackte Frau nur eine Brust, während der zweite Arm am Körper hängt oder auf den Bauch oder die Scham weist. Auch hier hält eine Hand die Brust, sie bedeckt sie oder sie befindet sich neben der Brust. In der MBZII ist diese Haltung als Metallfigurine belegt, in der SBZ als Griff eines bronzenen Spiegels (Abb. 2a). Von der EZI an sind die Träger Ton (Abb. 2b).

Im Unterschied zu Typ 1 halten bei Typ 3 die Frauen ihre Hände unter den Brüsten oder sie verschränken sie wie bei den Judean Pillar Figurines und der „Gravidenflasche“ aus Tell el-Qasile (Abb. 3a, 8b). Auch wenn die Hände sich unweit unter den Brüsten befinden, heben sie sie nicht hervor. Die seltene Haltung, in der die Brüste von der Seite gepresst werden, erscheint auf einem EZII-Skarabäus aus Lachish (Abb. 3b). In der Achämenidenzeit gibt es diesen Typ nicht.

In einer weiteren, vereinzelt auftretenden Haltung weist die nackte Frau mit ihren Händen auf ihre Scham (Abb. 4) oder auf ihren Bauch (Typ 4). Der älteste Beleg ist eine MBZ-Blechfigur. SBZ und EZ Bildträger sind vor allem Tonplaketten. Die SBZ-Stücke aus Revadim, Aphek und Tel Harasim heben sich durch zwei in den Ton gezeichnete säugende Kinder und einen Capriden am Baum auf jedem Oberschenkel hervor (Abb. 9).

Das Hängen lassen der Arme am Körper ist eine übliche Haltung (Typ 5), wobei meist keine Kopfbedeckung vorhanden ist (Typ 5a). Wie bei Typ 1 sind Skarabäen und Metallfigurinen die ältesten Träger (MBZ). Auch hier sind die Frauen oft von Zweigen umrahmt (Abb. 5a, siehe oben). Von der SBZ an sind neben den Tonplaketten weitere Bildträger die ägyptischen und ägyptisierenden Kalksteinplastiken der „Frauen auf einem Bett“ aus dem Friedhof von Der el-Balah. In der EZII kommen kleine, auch Naiskoi genannte Votivschreine vor, in denen—wenn erkennbar—die nackte Frau steht (Abb. 5b). Weiterhin bieten etwa 45 EZII, überwiegend aus Nilpferdzahn gefertigte und v.a. in Gräbern gefundene sog. „Knochenamulette“ (Abb. 5c) und eine geschnitzte Knochenfigur aus Dor diese Haltung.

Zum Typ 5b gehören einige MBZII Skarabäen und zahlreiche Blechfiguren. Die Kopfbedeckung erscheint in Gestalt eines Sterns (Abb. 5e), einer Hörnerkrone, eines Polos und von Widderhörnern auf einem Skarabäus aus Jericho (Abb. 5d). Frauen mit hängenden Armen und Kopfbedeckung gibt es nach der SBZ nicht mehr.

Die nackten Frauen des Typ 6 haben angewinkelte Arme und halten vorwiegend Zweige, Papyrusdolden und Lotosblüten. Dieser in der SBZ gängige sog. *Qedešet*-Typ (s.u.) kommt als Blech (Abb. 6) und als Tonplakette vor. Eine Frau, die eine Pflanze ohne angewinkelte Arme hält, gibt es bereits in der MBZII.

Meist aus Gold gefertigte birnenförmige Anhänger zeigen die auf ein Hathor-Gesicht, Brüste und Scham verkürzte Darstellung einer Frau (Typ 7, Abb. 7). Neben diesen zahlreichen Objekten gibt es—ebenfalls aus Metall—stilisierte Frauen, die man als Silhouette bezeichnen kann.

Die Typen 8–10 und teilweise Typ 12 haben einen Bezug zur Mutterschaft, sei es als Schwangere oder als Frau mit Kind. Als einziges Kriterium für die Schwangerschaft[10] gilt der runde Bauch. Dementsprechend bleibt die Deutung, ob die Frau schwanger abgebildet ist, subjektiv und mutmaßlich (Typ 8a). Als Beispiel, zeigen die MBZIIB Goldfigur aus Gezer und die Tonfigurine aus Ashdod wirklich schwangere Frauen (Abb. 2b, 8a)? Oder Abb. 1b und 1d? SBII- und EI-zeitliche, u.a. aus Gräbern in Gezer und einem Tempel in Bet Shean stammende Spendengefäße erhielten den Namen „Gravidenflasche“ in Anlehnung an den ursprünglich ägyptischen Typ (Abb. 8b). In der späten EZ werden die sogenannten *deae gravidae* äußerst geläufig (Abb. 8c). Wegen ihres runden Bauchs und weil diese Frauen mit dem rechten Arm über den Bauch gelegt und dem linken auf dem Schoß sitzen, werden sie als schwanger betrachtet. Manchmal liegen beide Hände auf dem Schoß, oder sie halten ein Tamburin oder einen Fächer. Da dieser Typ aus Phönizien stammt, wurde er zahlreich an der nordisraelischen Küste sowie in achämenidenzeitlichen Orten und Favissae Israels und Palästinas gefunden. Vielleicht befanden sich unter den zahlreichen stehenden und bekleideten Frauenfiguren aus dem Meer bei Shavei Zion (Typ 12, s.u.) auch einige *deae gravidae*.[11]

[10] Winter, 1983: 369–374.

[11] Nunn, 2000: Tf. 41, 141; Keel / Schroer, 2006: Abb. 197.

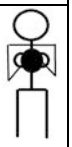
Typ	1a	1b	2	3	4	5a	5b	6	7	8a	8b	9	10a	10b	11
												Arme wie Typ 4 und 10			
Nackt	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x			x
Bekleidet	se, JPF?		x Sp	JPF?		se Sp					x		x	x	x
Oben nackt, unten bekleidet				x						x		se			
Stehend	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x
Sitzend											x	x	x		
Brüste zeigend	x	x	x												
Arme am Körper						x	x								
Mit Vegetation								x						x	
Mit Kind										x	x	x	x	x	
Mit Instrument															x
MBZ	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x					
SBZ	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x		
EZI	x		x	x	x	x				x		x	x		
EZII	x		x	x	x	x				x	x		x	x	x
Achä	x		x			x					x		x	x	x

Tabelle 1: Kriterien für eine Klassifikation. se: selten. Sp: Spätzeit. Angabe der Laufzeit

Typ 9 und 10 zeigen eine Mutter mit Kind. Die nackte stillende Frau ist selten und kommt v.a. in der SBZ und der EZI vor (Typ 9). Die SBZ Tonplaketten Revadim (Abb. 9), Aphek und Tel Harasim mit dem außergewöhnlichen Bild einer nackten Frau, die ihre Hände über ihrer Scham hält und an deren Brüste zwei Kinder saugen, erscheinen bereits unter Typ 4. Auf zwei weiteren früh-EZ Tonplaketten aus Bet Shean hält eine nackte stehende Frau ein Kind. Sitzend und zumindest unten bekleidet sehen wir diese Frau auf einer Tonplakette aus Tell el-Farah Nord.

Äußerst zahlreich sind stillende Mütter, die ihr Kind in einem Arm halten und ihre Brust mit der zweiten Hand zum Kind führen (Typ 10a). Am häufigsten ist die Mutter bekleidet und sitzt. Oft nimmt sie die aus Ägypten bekannte Gestalt der Isis mit ihrem Kind Horus an (als Amulett und auf Skarabäen Abb. 10a–b). Aus welchem Material auch immer, die rundplastischen Tonfiguren, die Tonplaketten, die etwa 30, hauptsächlich aus glasiertem Kompositmaterial bestehenden Amulette[12] und die Skarabäen sind in Palästina spät-EZ und achämenidenzeitlich.

Vereinzelt tritt die stehende bekleidete stillende Mutter auf, die ebenfalls als Isis mit ihrem Kind Horus erscheint (Typ 10b, Abb. 10c). Sie gibt es auf späten Skarabäen und als rundplastische Tonfiguren.

Einzelbilder von Frauen mit Kind und deswegen hier nicht als Kategorie zusammengefasst weisen weitere Haltungen auf. Auf dem Fragment (eines Ständers oder eines Modells) aus Shechem erscheint ein Kind, das auf dem Schoß seiner oben nackten und unten bekleideten (?) Mutter sitzt und ihre Brüste mit seinen erhobenen Armen hält (Abb. 12). Auf einer EZII rundplastischen Terrakotta aus Tell Bet Mirsim trägt eine Frau ein

[12] Herrmann, 1994: 114–131.

Kind auf dem Rücken.[13] Schließlich erscheinen auf gräzisierten achämenidenzeitlichen Tonplaketten aus Tel Sippor und Dor eine Frau mit einem Kind, dessen Kopf allein sichtbar ist.[14]

Zahlreiche EZII Tonplaketten zeigen eine öfter nackte als bekleidete Frau mit einem Musikinstrument (Typ 11).[15] Ein vor der Brust gehaltenes Tamburin ist das verbreitetste Instrument (Abb. 11).

Hunderte von stehenden und bekleideten rundplastischen Tonfiguren wurden im Meer bei Shavei Zion, 7km nördlich von Acco, geborgen (Typ 12). Ihre nicht einheitliche Datierung reicht vom Ende der EZ zum Beginn der hellenistischen Zeit. Unter den unterschiedlichen Gesten halten die meisten Frauen ihre rechte Hand im erhoben. Die linke Hand befindet sich entweder zwischen oder unter den zwei Brüsten oder sie hält ein Kind. Weitere ähnliche Figuren sind aus Tyros, sowie den Favissae von Tel Sippor und Tel Machmish bekannt. Auf einigen Basen befindet sich ein Tanit-Zeichen.[16]

2.2 Zur chronologischen Erscheinung verbunden mit der geographischen Ausbreitung der einzelnen Typen (Tabelle 1 und Karte)

Die größte Funddichte besteht an der Küste von Phönizien bis nach Philistia, die geringste in Samaria und Judäa. Etwa genauso viele Orte liegen im schmalen Küstenstreifen im Vergleich zum Binnenland. Zahlreiche Funde sind eisenzeitlich und gerade in dieser Epoche war die Küstenregion dicht besiedelt. Dennoch gibt es wichtige Fundorte in allen Gebieten. Für den Norden sind es Hazor, Megiddo, Taanach und Bet Shean, für Samaria Samaria, Shechem und Tell el-Farah Nord und für Judäa, Jericho und Bet Shemesh.[17]

Die große Fundortzahl bringt eine größere Zahl an Typen mit sich. Der Typenreichtum ist im südlichen Streifen (CS+S+J) um ein Drittel höher als im Norden (CN+N) und doppelt so hoch wie im Zentrum (CC+Sa).

Die Brüste zeigende Typen (Typ 1–3) sowie die Mutter mit Kind-Typen (Typ 8–10) kommen mehr im N und in CN vor. Letztere wurden kaum in Judäa gefunden, während umgekehrt die Pfeilerfiguren v.a. aus Judäa stammen. Die Tatsache, dass der Typ „Arme am Körper“ (Typ 5) hauptsächlich an der Küste und im Süden vorkommt, ist dem ägyptischen Einfluss geschuldet. Ein Teil des Materials mit dieser Geste—so die Kalksteinstelen und die Amuletten—ist auch nah am ägyptischen Vorbild. Der *Qedešet*-Typ und die vielfach damit vorkommenden birnenförmigen Anhänger (Typ 6–7) sind ebenfalls an der Küste und im Süden verbreitet[18]. Ebenso erklärt die phönizische Herkunft einiger Bilder von Mutter und Kind (Typ 10), dass sie im Norden vielfach auftreten.

Chronologisch wird in der levantinischen Ikonographie das Bild der Frau erst mit dem Beginn des zweiten Jahrtausends ausgesprochen wichtig.[19] In der EZI gibt es allerdings kaum Bilder, dafür umso mehr ab der EZII.

Allgemein sind Frauen stehend abgebildet. Die sitzende Haltung ist durchweg mit dem Halten eines Kindes verbunden. In diesem Katalog tauchen sitzende Frauen erst in der EZII auf.

Die Bilder der Frauen, die ihre Brüste halten (Typ 1) und solche, deren Arme am Körper hängen (Typ 5), sind zugleich die geläufigsten und die ältesten. Während Typ 1a und 5a bis zur Achämenidenzeit bekannt bleiben, erscheint die Variante mit einer Kopfbedeckung Typ 1b und 5b ab der EZI nicht mehr. Frauen, die auf eine Brust (Typ 2) und auf die Scham oder den Bauch (Typ 4) weisen, bestehen seit der MBZ. Die EZI-Geste der Hände unter den Brüsten halten (Typ 3) und die gepressten Brüste sind seltene Alternativen. Einen eigenen Charakter besitzen der SBZ *Qedešet*-Typ 6 und die Verkürzung Typ 7. Trotz der bildlich schweren Erkennbarkeit schwangerer Frauen, scheint ihre Präsenz in der MBZ–EZI beschränkt zu sein (Typ 8a). Bilder von Frauen und Kindern spielen erst ab der EZII eine wichtige Rolle (Typ 8b, 10). Frauen mit einem Musikinstrument sind vor der EZII kaum vorhanden (Typ 11). Die rechte erhobene Hand des Typ 12 ist lediglich für die Achämenidenzeit charakteristisch.

---

[13] Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 326.
[14] Winter, 1983: Abb. 60; Stern, 2010: Abb. 13
[15] V.a. 10.–8. Jh. Paz, 2007.
[16] Nunn, 2000: 68, Tf. 41,140, 143.
[17] S. Karte (Abb. 13).
[18] Cornelius, 2004: Kat. 5.20, 23, 27–28, 62.
[19] Uehlinger, 1998–2001. Für MBZ, Schroer, 2008.

2.3 Gesten verbunden mit Fundort

Für zahlreiche Objekte wären ungenaue Fundortangaben möglicherweise mit einem (von mir nicht durchführbaren) vertieften Studium zu präzisieren. Auch müsste nach Zeit und Gattung unterschieden werden. Die zur Zeit bekannten Hauptfundorte sind Tempelanlagen mit ihren Favissae[20] und Gräber.[21] Häuser wurden allgemein weniger ausgegraben, doch weiß man, dass die Judean Pillar Figurines (Typ 1a und 3) und später viele Tonobjekte der Achämenidenzeit[22] zahlreich in Häusern lagen. Außerdem spricht möglicherweise gerade die Tatsache, dass für die meisten Terrakotten der Fundort fehlt, für ihren vielfachen Gebrauch in Wohnarealen und nicht in kultischen Arealen und Gräbern. Was Gesten betrifft, lässt sich am Material (vorerst) keinen Zusammenhang zwischen Ort und Geste ablesen.

3. DIE GESTEN: EINE DEUTUNG

Gesten und Gebärden sind Ausdruck des Körpers oder eines Teils des Körpers und erlauben eine wortlose Verständigung der Menschen untereinander. Sie drücken präzise Informationen, geistige Zustände oder Emotionen aus. Wir als heutige Betrachter wissen, dass der Körper und seine Teile sozial determiniert und Zeichenträger sind, in den die Vorstellungen der Gesellschaft „eingeschrieben" sind.[23]

Wichtig scheint mir auch, dass viele Frauen nichts halten, sondern einen Teil ihres eigenen Körpers—Brüste, Bauch, Scham, Oberschenkel, Schoß—berühren. Zu den Typen mit Frauen, die etwas halten, gehören der Typ 6, und 10–12. Auffällig ist, dass sie zunächst Pflanzen und selten Tiere, später vor allem Kinder und ein Tamburin halten. Obgleich Frauen, die sich berühren oder etwas halten über den gesamten Zeitraum bestehen, sind Frauen, die etwas halten, präsenter in der Spätzeit.

3.1 Darbietung der Brüste (Typ 1, Typ 2 und 3), Hände auf den Bauch oder die Scham (Typ 4)

In dieser Typologie erscheint zuerst die Geste der Darbietung der Brüste (Typ 1, teilweise Typ 2 und 3). Der Typ 1 ist mit Typ 5 der „erfolgreichste". Diese offensichtlich in der Antike aussagekräftige Geste gibt es im gesamten Vorderen Orient (s.u.).[24] Die bevorzugte Geste ist das Halten der Brüste in den Händen. Während Brüste auch teilweise verdeckt sein dürfen, finden sich verschränkte Arme unter den Brüsten und von der Seite gepresste Brüste kaum (Typ 3). So ist der Skarabäus aus Lachish wahrscheinlich ein Importstück aus Phönizien (Abb. 3b).

Der Bauch ist meist flach. Nur ausnahmsweise ist er so abgerundet, dass er eine schwangere Frau evozieren könnte. Die Scham ist in der MBZ oftmals betont (Skarabäen, TP, Bleche). In der EZ wird sie nicht mehr betont, dafür ab und zu die Vulva.

Viel seltener können Frauen auch nur eine Brust mit einer Hand darbieten (Typ 2).[25] Diese Geste ist seit der MBZ bekannt, kommt aber möglicherweise häufiger in der EZ vor. Jedenfalls ist die Geste der mit der linken Hand dargebotenen Brust und dem rechten am Körper hängenden Arm die gängigste Verteilung zwischen der rechten und der linken Seite. Die zweite Hand kann auch auf dem Bauch liegen. Auf beiden EZI Stücken, die keine Plakette sondern ein Krughenkel und ein Ständer sind, halten die Frauen ihre rechte Hand an der Brust, wobei die linke Hand auf den Unterbauch deutet[26] oder der linke Arm am Körper hängt.[27]

Die auf den Bauch oder die Scham deutende Geste des Typ 4 folgt den bisherigen Typen, insofern als auch hier ein Körperteil unterstrichen wird.[28]

Sicherlich wird die Geste, durch die eine oder die zwei Brüste dargeboten und somit betont werden, mit den Stichwörtern Mutter, Fruchtbarkeit oder Erotik verbunden. Auch wenn diese Elemente mitspielen, reichen sie wohl nicht aus, um die Popularität dieses sicher vielschichtigen Bildtyps zu erklären. In diesem

[20] Typ 1–8, 10a–12. Tonständer/Tonmodelle, Bleche, „Gravidenflaschen", rundplastische Tonfiguren.
[21] Typ 1, 2, 4, 6–8, 10, 11. Skarabäen, Bleche, Metallspiegel, Amulette, Kalksteinstelen, rundplastische Tonfiguren.
[22] Nunn, 2000: 81.
[23] Steinert, 2012: 134–135.
[24] Bereits im Neolithikum: Kozlowski / Aurenche, 2005: Annex 6.3.2.1, 6.5.2.2; Orrelle, 2014: Nr. 54, 76, 116, 117.
[25] Bereits im Neolithikum: Orrelle, 2014: Nr. 81.
[26] Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1173.
[27] Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1194.
[28] Bereits im Neolithikum: Kozlowski / Aurenche, 2005: 6.5.2.1; Orrelle, 2014: Nr. 71.

Zusammenhang stellt sich die Frage, ob es in der Antike einen Unterschied oder eine Nuance zwischen dem Halten oder dem auch partiellen Verbergen von Brüsten gab. Typ 1 zeigt eine unbekleidete Frau, auch in Zeiten, wo zahlreiche Frauen bekleidet werden. Die Brüste müssen demnach gesehen werden, ihre Andeutung unter Händen oder einem Gewand genügt nicht, um ihre Funktion zu erfüllen. Auch ist die Geste des Darbietens verbreiteter als die des partiellen Verdeckens. Somit stehen die Brüste im Zentrum des Bedeutungsfelds.

Die Geste des auf etwas Deutens ist eine ruhende Geste. Den Elementen, auf die gewiesen wird—Brüste, Bauch, Vulva—ist gemeinsam, dass sie ein „Gefäß", also ein von einer Hülle umgebenen Raum darstellen. Die mit Milch geschwollene Brust der Mutter bleibt ein Symbol der Sicherheit von der Geburt bis zum Tod.[29] Siegel mit dem Frauenabbild Typ 1 gehörten auch Männern.[30] Judean Pillar Figurines sind zahlreich im häuslichen Bereich gefunden worden.

Verschränkte oder zusammengelegte Hände unter den Brüsten sind darüber hinaus eine Geste der Souveränität. Brüste werden frei sichtbar gelassen, aber sie werden gerahmt, vielleicht sogar inszeniert. Möglicherweise ist die mindere Unmittelbarkeit der verschränkten Arme, die Erklärung für ihre relative Seltenheit in Israel/Palästina.

Der Bauch als Gebärmutter ist das sichtbarste Zeichen für das Tragen eines Kindes und signifikant in allen Kulturen. Leben entsteht, während zugleich das Leben der Mutter in Gefahr gerät. Im Akkadischen des zweiten Jahrtausends „bildet das Körperinnere das physische Zentrum der Person … Die … Termini *kabattu* ‚Bauch, Körperinneres, Leber(?)', *karšu* ‚Bauch, Magen' … sind gleichsam das Zentrum des Selbst. Gedanken und Emotionen, Bewußtsein und Intellekt, Wissen, Willen, Absichten werden in diesen ‚Organen' lokalisiert oder aktiv durch sie hervorgebracht".[31] So könnte ein flacher Bauch eine andere Nuance besessen haben als ein gerundeter. Ich glaube jedoch, dass der dicke Bauch nicht nur auf das Tragen eines Kindes reduziert werden kann. Er behält seine allwärtige Suggestivkraft, die man vielleicht auch an der Vielzahl der auf den „Gravidenflaschen" und den *deae gravidae* vorkommenden Gesten messen kann.

Was die Scham betrifft, so hat U. Steinert festgestellt, dass *bāštu* „Würde, Ehre, positive Ausstrahlung" und *būštu* „Scham, Schande, subjektives Schamgefühl" wichtige positive und komplementäre Konzepte darstellen.[32]

S. Schroer insistiert auf große Ohren auf den MBZ-Skarabäen (Abb. 1a, 5a). Somit wäre eine „freundlich hörende Göttin und die erhörende Göttin" abgebildet.[33] Ohren sind im Alten Orient generell groß und zu hoch angesetzt (s. auch Typ 6), so dass ein stilistisches Merkmal nicht außer Acht gelassen werden sollte. Hinzu kommt, dass die Ohren nur bei *en-face*-Darstellungen groß sind, im Verhältnis auf Skarabäen mehr noch als auf Tonplaketten. So taucht die Überlegung auf, ob Ohren nicht schon deshalb „muschelartig" wiedergegeben werden müssen, um überhaupt gesehen werden zu können.

Die Betonung der Brüste, des Bauchs und der Scham, scheint mir eine Möglichkeit zu sein, den Menschen bildlich eine sanfte Sicherheit zu vermitteln. Indem die abgebildete Frau etwas anbietet, und somit auch schenkt, wird ihre Macht größer und zuverlässiger.

3.2 Arme am Körper (Typ 5)

Die Arme am Körper hängen zu lassen, ist eine in Israel/Palästina über den gesamten hier betrachteten Zeitraum vorhandene Haltung.[34] In der EZII–Achämenidenzeit nimmt sie vor allem die Form von Amuletten an. Auch wenn sich diese Haltung über den ägyptischen Einfluss verbreitete, musste sie mit positiven einheimischen Vorstellungen verbunden gewesen sein.

Die Haltung der herabhängenden Arme ist der Ausdruck der inneren Sammlung und der Ruhe, gleichsam eine Nicht-Geste. Diese weder aggressive noch defensive Haltung bezeichnet die Physiotherapie als „Nullstellung". Dies bedeutet, dass von da aus die Grade der Rotation, Flexion, Extension im Schultergelenk (ebenso Ellenbogen- und Handgelenk) gemessen werden.[35] Es gibt keine Nullstellung beim aktiven

[29] Cienki / Müller, 2008.
[30] Darby, 2014: 326–327.
[31] Steinert, 2012: 133, 518. S. auch Schroer / Staubli, 1998: 75–79.
[32] Steinert, 2012: 405–509, 516–517.
[33] Schroer, 1989: 110–113; Schroer / Staubli, 1998: 146.
[34] Bereits im Neolithikum: Kozlowski / Aurenche, 2005: 6.3.3.2.–4.?; Orrelle, 2014: Nr. 107:2, 108.
[35] Ich danke meiner Freundin Andrea Moritz, Berlin.

Menschen, da dieser immer in Bewegung ist. Beim lebenden Menschen bedeuten herabhängende Arme ein gefasstes und gewachsenes Selbstbewusstsein. So findet man solche Frauen in den Nischen der Naiskoi (EZII). Betrachtet man weitere Kulturkreise, so offenbart sich die selbe Empfindung der Ruhe, etwa bei Korai und Kouroi. Diese Haltung verkörpert auch die letzte Ruhe der Verstorbenen, etwa im Alten Ägypten und im Christentum.[36] Deswegen zeigen auch zahlreiche EZII Knochenamulette, die in Gräbern den Toten beigelegt wurden, gerade diese Haltung.

Diese Haltung ist demnach künstlich und bewusst gewählt. Eine „Nullstellung" deutet auf Selbstbewusstsein und Gelassenheit oder auf eine an Eigenschaftslosigkeit grenzende Ruhe. Dazu gehört auch die zeitlose Nacktheit.

3.3 V-förmig angewinkelte Arme (Typ 6) und damit gefundener Typ 7

Der *Qedešet*-Typ mit den V-förmig angewinkelten Armen zeigt eine Frau, die zugleich eine Pflanze und selten ein Tier hält. Dazu steht sie häufig auf einem Tier (Löwen, Pferden).

Das Bild ist in der Südlevante verbreitet.[37] Die wichtigste Spur zur weiteren Deutung ist der Bezug zu den beschrifteten ägyptischen Stelen, durch den diese Frau mit den Göttinnen *Qdš(t)*, Anat und Astarte verbunden werden kann. Von diesen drei Göttinnen stellt der Typ 6 wohl *Qdš(t)*/*Qedešet* dar—möglicherweise das Epithet einer Kanaanäischen Göttin, die Zuspruch in Ägypten bekam—und besitzt den engsten Bezug zu einer Fruchtbarkeitsgöttin mit heilendem Charakter. Über die genaue Rolle der *Qedešet* in der Levante und ihre alltägliche Schutzwirkung auf Frauen wissen wir jedoch nichts.[38] Birnenförmige Anhänger, mit der verkürzten Darstellung einer Frau, die auch Hathorlocken trägt, wurden oftmals mit den Tonplaketten des *Qedešet*-Typs gefunden.[39] Die Tatsache, dass man die Metallstücke mit diesem Motiv am Körper tragen und damit den unmittelbaren Kontakt zum Körper haben konnte, offenbart den Schutzaspekt dieses Bildes.

Die Verbindung mit Tieren lässt diese Frau als mächtige *potnia theron* erscheinen. Ergänzend oder als Vollendung drückt das Element „Pflanze" Reichtum aus und dadurch möglicherweise Fruchtbarkeit mit sich (Typ 6–7). Göttinnen waren bereits auf älteren MBZ-Skarabäen mit Pflanzen verbunden worden. Ihre Armhaltung ist leicht unterschiedliche, insofern als sie nicht V-förmig ist. Auf den SBZ-Tonplaketten aus Revadim, Aphek und Tel Harasim sind Capriden, die an einem Baum stehen, in die Beine der stillenden Frauen eingeritzt worden (Typ 4 und 9). In dieser Kombination wird die Bedeutung der Pflanze als Reichtum verbunden mit Fruchtbarkeit sogar noch expliziter.

3.4 Frau und Kind (Typ 8, 9 und 10)

Die Typen 8, 9 und 10 zeigen die Kombination Frau und Kind. Schwangere Frauen sind durch SBZ–EZI „Gravidenflaschen" vertreten, deren unterschiedliche Armhaltungen den Typen 1, 4, 5 und 6 entsprechen (Typ 8a). Rezentere schwangere Frauen sitzen und stehen (Typ 8b). Am häufigsten ruht die rechte Hand der Sitzenden auf dem Bauch und ihre linke auf dem Schoß. Bei den Stehenden hängt der linke Arm am Körper. Der Mutter und Kind-Typ ist ab dem Ende der EZI etwas zahlreicher anzutreffen, am üblichsten jedoch ab der EZII. Vereinzelt tritt die stehende, teilweise oben entblößte Frau und stillende Frau auf (Typ 9). Der Typ 10a der sitzenden, stillenden und bekleideten Frau ist in der EZ v.a. als Amulett, und in der Achämenidenzeit als Tonfigur vertreten. Der stehende Typ 10b ist wesentlich seltener.

Für den Toten bietet neben den Amuletten der Frau mit hängenden Armen (Typ 5a) solche, die Isis und das säugende Horus-Kind abbilden. Das ägyptische Isis-Horus Vorbild war prägend und genoss große Beliebtheit, auch weil das Bild des säugenden Babys für Schutz und Liebe gestanden haben muss.

3.5 Mit einem Musikinstrument (Typ 11)

Frauen mit einem Musikinstrument, das vorwiegend ein Tamburin ist, gibt es vor allem in der EZIIA (Typ 11). Musik begleitet unzählige Aspekte des Lebens, im profanen wie im religiösen Alltag. Sie besteht nicht nur aus Melodien, sondern auch aus Rhythmen, an denen sich Seele und Körper des Menschen bewegen.

---

[36] Demisch, 1984: 272–282; Schroer / Staubli, 1998: 70–71.
[37] Cornelius, 2004: Kat. 5.1–10, 14–18.
[38] Cornelius, 2004: 94–99.
[39] Budin, 2016.

3.6 Rechte erhobene Hand (Typ 12)

Die Frauen des Typ 12 bringen durch die Hand an den Brüsten, den eventuell gerundeten Bauch und das Halten eines Kindes bereits besprochene Elemente zusammen. Die rechte Hand ist erhoben, die im Alten Orient die gemeingültige reine Hand des Grußes und des Segens ist.

4. BEKLEIDET VS. NACKT (TABELLE 1)

In der MBZ und der SBZ wird die Frau allgemein nackt abgebildet (Typ 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8a). Obwohl es in der SBZ unter dem Typ 8a und in der EZI unter den Typen 3, 8a und 9 vereinzelt zumindest teilweise bekleidete Frauen bereits gibt, werden bekleidete Frauen erst in der EZII gängig. Den Wandel von nackt zu bekleidet kann man am Typ 2 und 5a gut beobachten. Sämtliche Frauen sind nackt außer den achämeniden-zeitlichen Beispielen, die eindeutig einen griechischen Einfluss aufweisen.

Es scheint auf der Hand zu liegen, dass im Gegensatz zu den Frauen mit hängenden Armen (Typ 5) Typ 1–3 des Brüste Betonens immer nackt sein muss, damit man die Brüste sieht. Ich gehe davon aus, dass dies auch durchweg der Fall ist. Zu den Ausnahmen zählt die kleine EZII bekleidete Kalksteinfigur aus Megiddo.[40] Obwohl die *communis opinio* dazu tendiert, die Judean Pillar Figurines (Abb. 1c, 3a) als nackt zu betrachten, bleibt die Frage unbeantwortet.[41] Die Tatsache, dass die Frauen häufiger nackt dargestellt werden, ist vielleicht doch ein Grund, die Judean Pillar Figurines als nackt zu betrachten. Hinzu kommt, dass die Frauen, die ihre Brüste darbieten, gegen den Trend bis zur Achämenidenzeit nackt bleiben. Bei Typ 4 ist es ebenso naheliegend, dass die auf ihre Scham weisende Frau nackt ist. Typ 5b, der nach der EZI nicht mehr vorkommt, weist entsprechend keine bekleideten Frauen auf.

Bei einigen Objekten kann die Frage, ob die abgebildeten Frauen nackt oder bekleidet sind, nicht eindeutig entschieden werden. Manche Frauen scheinen oben nackt und unten bekleidet zu sein. Dies gilt insbesondere für die SBZ „Gravidenflasche“ aus Tell el-Farah Süd und die EZI Flasche aus Tell el-Qasile[42] (Typ 8a, Abb. 8b) und für weitere und spätere Träger (Abb. 3b).[43]

In der EZII gibt es unter den Musikerinnen (Typ 11) mehr unbekleidete als bekleidete. In der Achämenidenzeit sind sie jedoch bekleidet. Generell gibt es in der Achämenidenzeit vor allem bekleidete Frauen (Typ 8b, 10, 12).

Ein nackter Körper löst andere Emotionen aus als ein bekleideter und wirkt somit anders auf „soziale Beziehungen“.[44] So sind die Gesten, in denen auf ein Körperteil gedeutet wird und die hängenden Arme fast nur mit Nacktheit verbunden. Stillende Mütter sind größtenteils bekleidet, während schwangere Frauen und Musikerinnen sowohl bekleidet als nackt vorkommen. Ein- und dieselben Gesten und Haltungen scheinen bei nackten oder bekleideten Frau denselben Wert zu haben. Nuancen, die es zwischen diesen Möglichkeiten wahrscheinlich gab, verstehen wir heute nicht mehr. Ob die abgebildete Person dieselbe ist, sei dahingestellt.

5. VERGLEICH DER GESTEN MIT DEN UMLIEGENDEN REGIONEN[45] (TABELLE 2)

Ein Blick auf die umliegenden Regionen, soll nur dazu dienen, das Verhältnis zwischen Geste und ihrer Bedeutung herauszufinden. Dieser sehr oberflächliche und v.a. auf Terrakotten basierende Überblick zeigt, dass es zwischen Israel/Palästina und den umliegenden Gegenden Übereinstimmungen und Unterschiede gibt. Tendenziell kommen fast alle Typen überall vor, jedoch teilweise zeitlich versetzt.

Allgemein stehen die Frauen in Israel/Palästina. Sitzende Frauen werden ab der EZII geläufiger, und somit später als in Mesopotamien (altbabylonische Zeit) und Syrien (SBZ).[46] Der Typ 1 tritt überall zahlreich

[40] Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 324. In Syrien: Pruß, 2010: Nr. 177–180, späte EZ–achäm.
[41] Dank an Raz Kletter, 1/12/2019.
[42] Die bemalten Striche zwischen den Brüsten könnten Schmuck angeben.
[43] TP aus Tell el-Farah Nord, Typ 9.
[44] Steinert, 2012: 440, Anm. 142.
[45] Dieser Vergleich kann nicht vertieft werden. Für das 2. Jt. in Jordanien gibt es wenig Funde, und zudem keine Übersicht.
[46] Winter, 1983: 393 (Ugarit SBZ); mit Kind, Abb. 61 (Byblos SBZ), 399 (Tello, altbabylonisch).

auf. Seine Verteilung könnte im Westen regelmäßiger sein als in Mesopotamien, wo es ihn im ersten Jahrtausend mehr gibt als im zweiten[47]. Typ 2[48] und Typ 4[49] sind nirgends zahlreich vorhanden ebenso wie die von der Seite gepressten Brüste (Typ 3). Somit treten die Typen 1a und 2 viel früher und häufiger in Israel/Palästina auf. Dafür sind unter den Brüsten verschränkte Hände in Mesopotamien ungleich gängiger (Typ 3).[50] Typ 5a und Typ 6 wurden aus Ägypten übernommen und sind somit viel gängiger in Israel/Palästina als umliegend. Das Verteilungsschema ist für Typ 5a ebenso versetzt. Das Vorkommen dieser Geste dehnte sich bis nach Jordanien aus, kaum nach Syrien und nicht bis in das Mesopotamien des zweiten Jahrtausends. Lediglich in der Spätzeit gibt es dort eine vergleichbare Haltung.[51] Der ebenfalls mit Ägypten verknüpfte Typ 6 ist bis zur syrischen Küste aber nicht (nachweisbar) in Jordanien vorhanden.[52] In Mesopotamien erinnert er an den seltenen und prägnanten Typ des „Burney-Reliefs“[53].

Die Mutter-Kind-Darstellungen sind in Mesopotamien nicht besonders geläufig (Typ 8–12). Allerdings tritt er bereits im zweiten Jahrtausend auf. Die stehende, zumindest oben entblößte Frau und stillende Frau ist überall kaum vorhanden außer im späten Mesopotamien (Typ 9).[54] Typ 10a ist außer in der späten Levante,[55] und der stehende Typ 10b im gesamten Vorderen Orient selten.[56] Während Musikspielerinnen in der EZII Levante zahlreich sind, treten sie in Mesopotamien viel früher auf.[57]

[47] Badre, 1980: Tf. 3–7ff für Syrien im 3. und 2. Jt.; Pruß, 2010: Tf. 12–20, SBZ. ʿAmr, 1980 für EZ-Jordanien. Opificius, 1961: 42–48, Nr. 58–89; in Mesopotamien neuer Typus scheint in der ABZ aufzutreten, vielleicht schon UR III; Barrelet, 1968: Nr. 436–446 (Tello neuassyr.), 807 (KH), 1022–1025 (Uruk, UR III–altbabyl. nackt), viel mehr in der EZ. Klengel-Brandt / Cholidis / Von Eickstedt, 2006: Tf. 5 (2. Jt.), 40–42 (1. Jt.). Kassitische und mitanische Rollsiegel.

[48] In Syrien: nicht viele in Badre, 1980: Tf. 8.16 (Kamid), Tf. 10.7 (Selemiyeh), Tf. 20.51 (Alalakh), Tf. 57, 70, 76 (Byblos); Pruß, 2010: Nr. 176 (nicht lokal); Bronzeplakette aus Tainat, Winter, 1983: Abb. 162; Selten in ʿAmr, 1980 für EZ-Jordanien; Mesopotamien: keine in Opificius, 1961; Barrelet, 1968: Nr. 808 KH achäm. Klengel-Brandt / Cholidis / Von Eickstedt, 2006: Tf. 43, achäm.–parthisch, nackt, 2. Arm am Körper.

[49] Kein eindeutiges Beispiel aus Syrien (Badre, 1980), aus EZ-Jordanien (ʿAmr, 1980) und aus Mesopotamien (Opificius, 1961).

[50] In Syrien: Otto, 2000: Nr. 52–53, 94–95, 118–119, 148, 312, 454, 456–457; Badre, 1980: Tf. 26.10, 12–19, 26–27, 38 (Mari), Tf. 40.27–28, 45, 49, 50–54ff (Selenkahiye) (3. Jt.) und keine in Pruß, 2010; Selten in ʿAmr, 1980 für EZ-Jordanien; Sehr viele in Mesopotamien: Opificius, 1961: 28, 37–42 Tf. 1-3 (2. Jt.) meist nackt; Barrelet, 1968, erste Hälfte des 2. Jts. und 1. Jt. Zahlreiche mitanische Rollsiegel. Klengel-Brandt / Cholidis / Von Eickstedt, 2006: Tf. 16–18 (1. Jt.).

[51] Syrien selten: Badre, 1980: Tf. 38.26–30 (Meskene-Emar), Tf. 57.75 (Byblos), Tf. 60.11–32 (Ugarit), wo die Frauen zusätzlich die ägyptische Hathorfrisur tragen; Pruß, 2010: Nr. 173, 176 (Import aus dem Süden) EZII. Seltene altsyrische Rollsiegel, Winter, 1983: Abb. 132. Otto, 2000: Nr. 54, 147; Jordanien: in SBZ, z. B. Pella, McNicoll et al., 1992: Tf. 72.1 RN 701908, dafür kaum in EZ (ʿAmr, 1980). Nicht in Opificius, 1961; Barrelet, 1968: Nr. 447 1500–1000?, 447bis achäm.? nackt aus Tello. Klengel-Brandt / Cholidis / Von Eickstedt, 2006: Tf. 33–39, nackt achäm.–parthisch.

[52] Cornelius, 2004. Ein nicht in allem vergleichbarer Tonrelief aus Alalakh in Badre, 1980: 249, Nr. 48, Tf. 20. Keine in Pruß, 2010; Bronzeaxt, Winter, 1983: Abb. 510.

[53] Barrelet, 1968: Nr. 651, 784b, 793 (1. Hälfte des 2. Jts.). „Nachfolge“ als Elfenbeintäfelchen aus Nimrud, Winter, 1983: Abb. 161, 163 (neuassyr.).

[54] Keine in Badre, 1980 und Pruß, 2010. Wenig in Barrelet, 1968: Nr. 452? Tello neuassyr.?, 592–595 Larsa neuassyr.?, 820–822 KH neuassyr.? Klengel-Brandt / Cholidis / Von Eickstedt, 2006: Tf. 19–21 (neuassyr./neubabyl.).

[55] Keine in Badre, 1980 und Pruß, 2010; Barrelet, 1968: Nr. 528–530 Tello AB, 824 KH neuassyr.; Klengel-Brandt / Cholidis / Von Eickstedt, 2006: Tf. 21 (neuassyr./neubabyl.).

[56] Badre, 1980: Tf. 34.31–35 (Chuera) mit Kind?; Pruß, 2010: Nr. 498 EZII; Opificius, 1961: Nr. 228–240; Barrelet, 1968: Nr. 826 KH neuassyr.; Klengel-Brandt / Cholidis / Von Eickstedt, 2006: Tf. 59–60 (1. Jt.).

[57] Keine in Badre, 1980 und Pruß, 2010. Opificius, 1961: 54–56 „Mit Tympanon vor der Brust“ Nr. 123–135 und seitlich des Körpers Nr. 136–141. Barrelet, 1968: Nr. 340–367, 368–382.

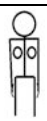
Typ	1a	2	3	4	5a	6	9	10a	10b	11
										
Israel/Pal, 2. Jt.	++	-	-	+	++	++	-	-	0	0
Israel/Pal., 1. Jt.	++	-	-	0	++	0	-	++	-	++
Jordanien 2. Jt.	?	?	?	?	++	0	?	?	?	?
Jordanien 1. Jt.	+	-	-	0	0	0	-	0	0	+
Syrien 2. Jt.	++	-	+-	0	0	+-	0	0	0	0
Syrien 1. Jt.	++	0	0	?	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mesopotamien 2. Jt.	+-	0	++	0	0	-	-	-	-	++
Mesopotamien 1. Jt.	++	-	++	0	+	-	++	-	-	0

Tabelle 2: Vergleich der Gesten mit den umliegenden Regionen.
0: keine/kaum; -: wenig; +-: mittel; +: viele;++: sehr viele.

6. GESTE VERBUNDEN MIT DER AUFFASSUNG DER FRAU

Während in der Altorientalistik schon lange bezweifelt wird, ob die zahlreichen vielfach nackten Frauen auf den altbabylonischen Terrakotten und Rollsiegeln Göttinnen sind, und die allgemeine Tendenz sogar eine nicht immer definierbare profane Person sieht,[58] ist für Israel/Palästina die Deutung als Göttin omnipräsent. Die Bezeichnungen der späten Typen *dea gravida* (Typ 8b, 10), *dea nutrix* (Typ 9–10), „Astarteplaketten" (Typ 9–10) oder „Asherah" für die Judean Pillar Figurines zeigen, dass diese attribut- und kontextlosen Frauen als Göttinnen angesehen werden.

Göttinnen sind sie auch, wenn sie durch eine Hörnerkrone charakterisiert werden, was für manche oder alle Figuren unter Typ 1b, 2, 5b, 8a/MBZ und 10a–b gilt. Somit können die Haltungen und Gesten der Brüstedarbietung, der hängenden Arme, die nackt schwangere und die Horus stillende Isis die einer Göttin sein.

Daraus sollte aber nicht geschlossen werden, dass diese ausschließlich spezifisch für Göttinnen sind.[59] Die erfolgreichen Gesten sind Ausdruck einer alltäglichen Frömmigkeit. Die Objekte stammen aus Privathäusern, Tempeln und Gräbern. Es befinden sich keine Kultbilder unter ihnen, auch wenn sie sicher Göttinnen abbilden. Zahlreiche Tonplaketten zeigen anmutig geformte, bisweilen ihre Brüste darbietende oder stillende nackte Frauen, deren Scham oft betont wird. Z. Bahrani hob die Schönheit und den Reiz dieser jungen Frauen hervor, die für Jugend, Verführung und Erotik stehen könnten.[60] Der Rahmen der Naiskoi gibt möglicherweise sakrale Architektur wieder (Abb. 5b). Dennoch lassen Formschönheit der Frauen, ihre Doppelung und ihre Attributlosigkeit an eine Deutung als Göttin zweifeln. Musikerinnen werden eher mit profanen Ausführenden verbunden. Weder Fundkontext noch Aussehen kann sicherstellen, dass die Judean Pillar Figurines Göttinnen abbilden.[61] Von den Gesten ausgehend wurde oben eine viel weitere Deutung vorgeschlagen, die nicht göttinnenspezifisch, sondern eher frauenspezifisch ist. Ob Göttin, Dämonin oder profane Frau, Frauen erscheinen in überaus unterschiedlichen mitunter auch starken Positionen im Kult und im Alltag.[62]

Möglicherweise sind die Inhalte, die in den unterschiedlichen Kulturräumen des Alten Orients ausgedrückt werden sollten, nicht sehr unterschiedlich. Dennoch deutet das zwischen der Levante und Mesopotamien unterschiedlich dichte und teilweise zeitversetzte Aufkommen darauf, dass das Bedürfnis nach einem bestimmten Inhalt je nach Gegend unterschiedlich war und dass Bildtypen mit bestimmten Haltungen und Gesten bewusst gewählt wurden, oder, überwiegend aus geographisch nicht allzu entfernten Gebieten,

[58] S. z. B. Wiggerman, 1998–2001: *baštu*.
[59] Budin, 2015.
[60] Bahrani, 2001: 47–55, 67–95, 130–134.
[61] Kletter, 1996; Darby, 2014.
[62] Chavalas, 2014.

übernommen werden konnten. In Israel/Palästina übernommene Typen—etwa die hängenden Arme, der *Qedešet*-Typ und die Isis stillende Horus aus Ägypten wie auch die *dea gravida* aus Phönizien—konnten jedoch nur „Erfolg haben", insofern sie die Einwohner dieser Gegend ansprachen und sie integrierbar waren. Denn oft verbanden die Bewohner ihre übernommenen Bilder mit anderen Gottheiten als im Ursprungsgebiet. Die Gesten wurden als Erscheinungsbild in die eigene Kultur einverleibt. Die geringere Relevanz des Erscheinungsbilds im Vergleich zur inhaltlichen Bedeutung ist typisch für Mischkulturen, wie wir sie in der Levante antreffen. Die vielseitigen Bildmöglichkeiten für einen Inhalt deuten auf eine flexible Handhabung der Bilder und unterstreicht m.E. die allgemeine, private und umfassende Deutung der Frauenbilder.[63]

Gerade in Israel/Palästina und Syrien scheint bereits im zweiten Jahrtausend eine relativ klare Trennung zwischen namentlich genannter Göttin und sterblicher Frau einem schützenden und Glück bringenden, umfassend weiblichen Prinzip zu weichen, eine Entwicklung, die dann in der Achämenidenzeit vollendet wurde. Dies erklärt die zunehmende Beliebtheit der Kinderabbildungen ab der EZII.[64]

7. ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die Gesamtzahl der wichtigen Gesten und Haltungen ist klein. Die zwei wichtigsten unter ihnen sind die Darbietung der Brüste und die am Körper hängenden Arme (Typ 1 und 5). Somit waren manche Gesten „erfolgreicher" als andere. Im betrachteten Material gibt es weder machtpolitische, gewalttätige und dynamische Gesten, sondern nur ruhende. Man kann sich sogar fragen, ob nicht das seitliche Pressen der Brüste (Abb. 3b) als zu „aggressiv" empfunden wurde und deswegen ungeliebt blieb.

Weiterhin zeigen die erfolgreichsten Typen von einzeln abgebildeten Frauen solche, die ein Teil ihres—nackten—Körpers berühren. Die andere Möglichkeit ist das Halten unterschiedlicher Elemente. Die gehaltenen „Zusätze" sind erst Pflanzen und Tiere, später vor allem Kinder und Musikinstrumente.

Die Frauen sind häufiger nackt als bekleidet abgebildet. Bekleidung taucht spät auf, was ich mit einer gesellschaftlichen Veränderung erklären möchte. Während ältere Gesten weiterhin bestehen, und sie möglicherweise sogar den selben Charakter behalten, verliert die Nacktheit offensichtlich ihre Funktion. Da das Berühren von Körperteilen mit Nacktheit verbunden ist, wird mit dem Abklingen der Nacktheit das Berühren gleichsam durch das Halten von Elementen ersetzt. Dies hatte zur Folge dass dem älteren Schwerpunkt von Nacktheit/stehender Haltung/sich berühren/Halten von Pflanzen und Tieren die neue Kombination von Bekleidung/sitzender Haltung/Halten von Kindern und Musikinstrumenten folgte. Vielleicht kann diese Entwicklung als Schritt zur größeren Nähe zwischen abgebildeter Frau und Betrachter gedeutet werden: Nacktheit ist befremdlicher als Bekleidung, stehende Haltung machtvoller als sitzende, ein Tier mächtiger als ein Kind oder ein Musikinstrument.

Unter dem Standpunkt ihres „moralischen" Aspekts betrachtet,[65] drücken die auf diesen Bildern vorkommenden Gesten Sicherheit und Großzügigkeit (Typ 1–4, 8–10, 12), Bescheidenheit und Ruhe (Typ 5), Lebenskraft (Typ 6, 8–12) und Schönheit (alle) aus. Sie halfen gleichermaßen Lebenden wie Verstorbenen, ihre persönliche Lage zu verschönern.

ANHANG[66]

Typ 1a: Brüste darbietend, ohne Kopfbedeckung: Nackt MBZ–EZI, nackt und bekleidet.

- MBZ: Frau mit Zweigen auf SK: Schroer, 1989: 97, Nr. 3 / Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 11a Jericho, 4–5 / Winter, 1983: Abb. 153–154 / Schroer, 2008: Nr. 404-405 (Abb. 1a) KH.
- SBZ: Winter, 1983: Abb. 24 / Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 121b TP T. Zeror 2x; Winter, 1983: Anm. 49 Ashdod, Hazor, mehrere aus T. el-Farah Nord; Winter, 1983: Abb. 27 Glasrelief Lachish; s. unter Typ 8a.

[63] Nunn, 2000: 184–186.
[64] Nunn, 2000: 186.
[65] Schmitt, 1992: 39.
[66] Typen mit Angaben der Literaturquelle, des Trägers und des Fundortes wenn bekannt. Abkürzungen = EZ: Eisenzeit; KH: Kunsthandel; MBZ: Mittelbronzezeit; SBZ: Spätbronzezeit; SK: Skarabäen; TP: Tonplakette; TR: Tonfigur, die rundplastisch ist; /: gleich; //: Parallelstücke, Vergleichsstücke.

- EZI: Winter, 1983: Abb. 28 / Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 122a / Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1172 TP T. Zeror.
- EZII: Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 217c (Abb. 1b) / Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1541 Model für TP T. Batash; Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 324 / Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1813 Kalksteinfigur Megiddo (oben nackt, unten Rock); Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 377 / Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1805 (Abb. 1d) Fragment eines Modells oder Ständers aus Ton Horvat Qitmit; Kletter / Ziffer / Zwickel, 2010, mindestens 10 Ständer aus Ton Yavneh; Das ist die Haltung von vielen Judean Pillar Figurines (Kletter, 1996; Darby, 2014; Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 321b [Abb. 1c] / Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1543–1545).
- Ende EZ–Achäm.: Nunn, 2000: Tf. 23,56 TR Achzib 2x; Dor, Stern, 2010: Abb. 10–11, bei vielen ist der Kopf abgebrochen, sie sind alle nackt und gehören wahrscheinlich zu diesem Typ.

Typ 1b: Nackt, Brüste darbietend, mit Kopfbedeckung.

- MBZ: Negbi, 1976: Nr. 1542 / Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 27a / Schroer, 2008: Nr. 399 + 13 // Bleche Megiddo; Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 25b (Abb. 1e) / Schroer, 2008: Nr. 400; +1 // Negbi, 1976: Nr. 1602 Blech T. el-Ajjul; Negbi, 1976: Nr. 1546 / Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 27b Blech Megiddo.
- SBZ: Winter, 1983: Nr. 22 / Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 50 / Schroer, 2011: Nr. 830 TP Megiddo; Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: 62; 8 weitere Fragmente aus Megiddo (davon eine wahrscheinlich Keel / Schroer, 2006: Abb. 104) und // aus Gezer, Taanach, Shechem, T. Abu Hawam.
- EZI–Achäm.: Keine Beispiele.

Typ 2: Eine Brust darbietend, unterschiedliche Positionen für zweiten Arm.

- MBZ: Negbi, 1976: Nr. 1525, Abb. 75 / Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 18a / Schroer, 2008: Nr. 398 + 7ff // Blech Nahariya.
- SBZ: Winter, 1983: Abb. 55 / Schroer, 2011: Nr. 833 TP Gezer; Winter, 1983: Abb. 51 / Schroer, 2011: Nr. 769 (Abb. 2a) bronzener Spiegel Acco (späte BZ).
- EZI: Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1173 Krughenkel Tel Kinrot // aus Ashdod; Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1194 Ständer aus Ton Megiddo.
- EZII: Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 217a TP Ashdod; Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 330 (Abb. 2b) dicke TP Ashdod; Winter, 1983: Abb. 49 TP Ashdod; Winter, 1983: Abb. 52 TP Ashdod; Winter, 1983: Abb. 56 TR Bet Shean.
- Achäm.: Stern, 2010: 73–75, Abb. 20.1, 21.5 TP Dor (bekleidet, westlicher Einfluss).

Typ 3: Hände unter den Brüsten, verschränkt oder nicht; Hände, die Brüste von der Seite pressen.

- MBZ–SBZ: Keine Beispiele.
- EZI: Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1174 TR Tel Gerisa (wohl nackt); Winter, 1983: Abb. 317 / Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1176 TP Megiddo (eher nackt); s. unter Typ 8a.
- EZII: Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 323 / Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1807 (Abb. 3b) SK Lachish (Brüste von der Seite gepresst. Oben nackt, unten bekleidet). Dies ist mit Typ 1a die Haltung von vielen Judean Pillar Figurines (Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 321a [Abb. 3a]); Kletter / Ziffer / Zwickel, 2010: Nr. 28?, 29, 48 Ständer aus Ton Yavneh.
- Achäm.: Keine Beispiele.

Typ 4: Beide Hände auf Scham/Bauch, nackt.

- MBZ: Negbi, 1976: Nr. 1530 Blech Nahariya.
- SBZ: Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 82 / Keel / Schroer, 2006: Abb. 105 / Schroer, 2011: Nr. 828 (Abb. 9) TP Revadim, aus Aphek und T. Harasim; Winter, 1983: Abb. 46 TP T. Bet Mirsim; Winter, 1983: Abb. 44 / Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 121c TP Taanach; s. unter Typ 8a.
- EZI: Winter, 1983: Abb. 45 / Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 122b / Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1177 (Abb. 4) TP T. Bet Mirsim.
- EZII: Kletter / Ziffer / Zwickel, 2010: Nr.79 Ständer aus Ton Yavneh.
- Achäm.: Keine Beispiele.

Typ 5a: Arme am Körper hängend ohne Kopfbedeckung.

- MBZ: Negbi, 1976: Nr. 1609 / Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 18b / Schroer, 2008: Nr. 390, mit 18 weiteren // s. unter Nr. 398 Metallfigur Nahariya; SK: Frau mit Zweigen: Schroer, 1989: 97–100, Nr. 2 T. el-Ajjul, 9 / Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 12c / Schroer, 2008: Nr. 411 Aphek, 11 T. el-Farah Süd, 12 KH, 13 / Winter, 1983: Abb. 150 / Schroer, 2008: Nr. 407, KH, 14–15 KH, 16 / Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 11b, Lachish, 17 Gezer, 19 / Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 12a (Abb. 5a), Lachish, 20 Lachish, 21 Jericho, 22–23 T. el-Farah Süd, 24 Ajjul, 25–32 KH, 34 T. el-Farah Süd, 35 Akko, 36–38 KH, 48 KH; Keel, 2013: 414–415, Nr. 578 Gezer; Keel, 2017: 216–217, Nr. 455 Jericho; Keel, 2017: 336–337, Nr. 129 Jerusalem; Frau mit Krokodil, Keel, 2010: 312–313, Nr. 218 Bet Shemesh; Zwei Frauen flankieren Schriftzeichen, Keel, 2013: 304–305, Nr. 314 Gezer.
- SBZ: Winter, 1983: Abb. 11 / Schroer, 2011: Nr. 771 TP T. Yosef (nahe Bet Shean); Winter, 1983: Abb. 12 / Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 121a TP T. el-Masad bei Bet Shean; // Fragmente in Megiddo, Jokneam; Negbi, 1976: Nr. 1657 Blech T. el-Ajjul; Keel / Uelinger, 1992: Abb. 123 / Schroer, 2011: Nr. 772 und Keel / Schroer, 2006: Abb. 119 zwei Kalksteinstelen Der el-Balah; alle nackt.
- EZI: Naiskoi aus Ton: Mazar, 1985: 5, Abb. 1 / Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 124 T. el-Qasile; Mazar, 1985: 6, Abb. 2 / Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 125 / Keel / Schroer, 2006: Abb. 158a / Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1189 (Abb. 5b) KH Gegend von Gaza?; Mazar, 1985: 7–13, weitere 18 Stücke aus dem KH, die meisten ägyptisierend, Datierung auch in EZII.
- EZII: Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 217b / Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1534 Model für TP T. Batash; Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1804 TP Ashkelon; Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 216 6 x Knochenamulette / Herrmann, 1994: Nr. 239–242 / Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1540 (Abb. 5c), Herrmann, 1994: Nr. 244–249, 253–259 T. el-Farah Süd; Herrmann, 1994: Nr. 243, 250–252 T. Jemmeh; Herrmann, 1994: Nr. 260 Sheikh Zuweid; Stern, 2010: Abb. 26.1 geschnitzte Knochenfigur Dor; alle nackt; Kletter / Ziffer / Zwickel, 2010: Nr. 15–16 Ständer aus Ton Yavneh.
- Achäm.: Winter, 1983: Abb. 15 TP T. Sippor (nackt); Stern, 2010: 65, Abb. 14 (nackt), 72–73, Abb. 19.1 und 20 TP Dor (bekleidet, westlicher Einfluss).

Typ 5b: Nackt, Arme am Körper hängend *mit* Kopfbedeckung.

- MBZ: Frau mit Zweigen auf SK: Schroer, 1989: 97, 99, Nr. 1 / Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 10 / Schroer, 2008: Nr. 386 Bet Shemesh, 40 Tel Nagila, 41 / Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 2 / Schroer, 2008: Nr. 423 (Abb. 5d) Jericho; Bleche: Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 23 / Schroer, 2008: Nr. 388 + 5 // Negbi, 1976: Nr. 1601 Gezer; Negbi, 1976: Nr. 1532 / Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 17 / Schroer, 2008: Nr. 389 (Abb. 5e) / Keel / Schroer, 2006: Abb. 41 Gussform aus Nahariya; Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 24 / Schroer, 2008: Nr. 391 + 13 // Gezer; Negbi, 1976: Nr. 1531, Abb. 77 / Schroer, 2008: Nr. 397 Nahariya; Negbi, 1976: Nr. 1526 Nahariya.
- SBZ: Negbi, 1976: Nr. 1658, Tf. 52 / Schroer, 2011: Nr. 836 Blech T. el-Ajjul.
- EZI–Achäm.: Keine Beispiele.

Typ 6: Nackt, *Qedešet*-Typ.

- MBZ: Verwandte Haltungen: Frau mit Zweigen auf SK: Schroer, 1989: 99, Nr. 43 / Schroer, 2008: Nr. 408 und 44 KH, beide mit Kopfbedeckung; nach unten gewandte Arme halten Pflanzen: Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 12b / Schroer, 1989: 97, Nr. 6 / Cornelius, 2004: Abb. 46 / Schroer, 2008: Nr. 410 Gezer; Schroer, 1989: 97, Nr. 7–8, 42 (mit Kopfbedeckung) KH.
- SBZ: Bleche: Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 70 / Cornelius, 2004: Kat. 5.21 / Schroer, 2011: Nr. 862 (Abb. 6) Acco, Jaffa; Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 71 / Cornelius, 2004: Kat. 5.22 / Schroer, 2011: Nr. 869 Lachish; TP: Cornelius, 2004: Kat. 5.24 / Keel / Schroer, 2006: Abb. 106 / Schroer, 2011: Nr. 863 T. Harasim; Cornelius, 2004: Kat. 5.35 / Schroer, 2011: Nr. 864 Bet Shemesh; Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 69 / Cornelius, 2004: Kat. 5.38, 55 2 x Lachish; Winter, 1983: Abb. 39 / Cornelius, 2004: Kat. 5.40, 56–57 3 x T. Bet Mirsim; Cornelius, 2004: Kat. 5.25, 55b 2 x T. Harasim; Cornelius, 2004: Kat. 5.31 Aphek; Cornelius, 2004: Kat. 5.32–33, 46–51 8 x Gezer, 5.34 T. Batash, 5.36, 52–53 2 x Bet Shemesh, 5.37 Tell Zafit, 5.39 T. el-Hesi, 5.41 KH Hebron, 5.42–43 KH, 5.44–45 Megiddo, 5.54 Tell Zakhariya/Azekah, 5.55a Jericho, 5.59 Gezer, 5.61a Masmiyat al-Kabira;

Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 72 / Cornelius, 2004: Kat. 5.13 / Schroer, 2011: Nr. 870 Tonmodel Qarnayim nahe Bet Shean; s. unter Typ 8a.

- EZI–Achäm.: Keine Beispiele.

Typ 7: Verkürzungenin Form einer „Birne“ oder einer Silhouette; nackt.

- Ende MBII / Beginn SBI: „Birne“ aus Metall: Negbi, 1976: Nr. 1677 / Schroer, 2008: Nr. 392 T. el-Ajjul, Gold + 3 // Negbi, 1976: Nr. 1680 / Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 49 / Keel / Schroer, 2006: Abb. 46 / Schroer, 2008: Nr. 412 (Abb. 7) T. el-Ajjul; Negbi, 1976: Nr. 1678 / Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 48 T. el-Ajjul; Negbi, 1976: Nr. 1679 T. el-Ajjul, 1681 Lachish, 1683–1684 Megiddo.
- SBZ: Blechsilhouetten ohne Arme, teilweise äußerst stilisiert: Negbi, 1976: Nr. 1668 / Schroer, 2011: Nr. 837 Hazor; Negbi, 1976: Nr. 1669 Bet Shean, 1670–1672 3 x Megiddo, 1666–1667 2 x Hazor, 1673 Gezer, 1674 T. el-Ajjul.
- EZI–Achäm.: Keine Beispiele.

Typ 8a: Schwanger.

- MBZ: Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 25a / Schroer, 2008: Nr. 401 (Abb. 8a) + 1// Blech Gezer (nackt).
- SBZ: Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 127a „Gravidenflasche“ mit Armen des Typ 1 Gezer (nackt); Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 127b „Gravidenflasche“ mit Armen des Typ 4 T. el-Farah Süd (oben nackt, unten?); Winter, 1983: Abb. 387 „Gravidenflasche“ mit Armen des Typ 6 Bet Shean (eher nackt).
- EZI: Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 128 / Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1175 (Abb. 8b) „Gravidenflasche“ mit Armen des Typ 3 T. el-Qasile (oben nackt?, unten bekleidet); 10. Jh. Winter, 1983: Abb. 388 „Gravidenflasche“ mit Armen des Typ 3 ez-Zaheriye (eher nackt).
- EZII–Achäm.: Keine Beispiele.

Typ 8b: bekleidet, schwanger, sitzend und stehend.

- MBZ–EZI: Keine Beispiele.
- EZ Ende–Achäm.: TR von sitzenden Schwangeren mit der rechten Hand auf dem Bauch und der linken auf dem Schoß ist der gängigste Typ; Winter, 1983: Abb. 381 / Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1823 (Abb. 8c) aus Achzib; Nunn, 2000: 53, Anm. 49 T. Abu Hawam (2 x), Bet Shean (viele), T. es-Safi (1 x), Favissae in T. Machmish (3 x) und T. Sippor (viele); Sitzend, beide Hände auf Schoß: Dayagi-Mendels, 2002: 148, Nr. 6; Nunn, 2000: 53 Achzib; Stehend, rechte Hand auf Bauch, linker Arm am Körper: Stern, 2010: Abb. 12 Dor.

Typ 9: Kind stillend, nackt oder teilweise bekleidet.

- MBZ: Keine Beispiele.
- SBZ: Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 82 / Keel / Schroer, 2006: Abb. 105 / Schroer, 2011: Nr. 828 (Abb. 9) = TP Revadim; aus Aphek und T. Harasim (nackt).
- EZI: Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 189 / Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1143 TP T. el-Farah Nord (oben nackt, unten bekleidet); Winter, 1983: Abb. 57 / Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 103 / Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1179 TP Bet Shean, auch mit Tamburin umgezeichnet, s. Paz, 2007: A.5 (nackt); Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1180 TP Bet Shean (nackt).
- EZII–Achäm.: Keine Beispiele.

Typ 10a: Bekleidet, Kind stillend, sitzend.

- MBZ: Keine Beispiele.
- SBZ: Herrmann, 1994: Nr. 19 Fayence-Figürchen von Isis und Horus Megiddo; Herrmann, 1994: Nr. 32 Sheikh Zuweid.
- EZI: Figürchen von Isis und Horus: Herrmann, 1994: Nr. 20 Granit Bet Shean; ab hier aus Fayence Herrmann, 1994: Nr. 21 und 43 Bet Shean; Herrmann, 1994: Nr. 39–40 T. el-Farah Süd; Herrmann, 1994: Nr. 41 Ashkelon; Herrmann, 1994: Nr. 42 Megiddo.
- EZII: Gubel, 1987: Nr. 37 / Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 327a Model für TP (bekleidet?) Samaria; Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: 327b / Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1788 TP (bekleidet) Samaria; Schroer, 2018: Nr.

1787 Bronzefigur Ashkelon; Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1822 Model für TP Samaria; Fayence-Amulette: Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 328 / Herrmann, 1994: Nr. 24 / Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1789 (Abb. 10a) + Herrmann, 1994: Nr. 37 2 x Lachish; Herrmann, 1994: Nr. 21 Bet Shean; Herrmann, 1994: Nr. 22, 34 2 x Bet Shemesh; Herrmann, 1994: Nr. 23, 31 Sheikh Zuweid; Herrmann, 1994: Nr. 28–29 2 x T. el-Farah Süd; Herrmann, 1994: Nr. 30 T. el-Ajjul; Herrmann, 1994: Nr. 33 Megiddo; Herrmann, 1994: Nr. 35–36 2 x T. Jemmeh; Herrmann, 1994: Nr. 44–45;

- Achäm.: Nunn, 2000: Tf. 23,59 TR Achzib 1x, Dor 1x; Herrmann, 1994: Nr. 25–26, 38 3x Fayence-Amulett Ashkelon, vielleicht achäm.; Herrmann, 1994: Nr. 27 Fayence-Amulett T. es-Safi; Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 363c–d SK 2 x Atlit; Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 364 (Abb. 10b) SK Lohame; Herrmann, 2010: 227–228, Nr. 1.1 Faience-Figur mit Isis und Horus Dor.

Typ 10b: Bekleidet, Kind stillend, stehend.

- MBZ–EZI: Keine Beispiele.
- EZII–Achäm.: Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 363a (Abb. 10c) SK Atlit; Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 363b SK T. Megadim.
- Achäm.: Dor, Stern, 2010: Abb. 13 TR und TP Dor.

Typ 11: Nackt und bekleidet, mit einem Musikinstrument, meistens einem Tamburin.

- MBZ: Keine Beispiele.
- SBZ: Winter, 1983: Nr. 251 / Schroer, 2011: Nr. 953 Bronzefigur mit Laute Bet Shean.
- EZI: Keine Beispiele.
- EZII: Alle sind TP; Winter, 1983: Abb. 47 Aphek (10. Jh. nackt); EZIIA: Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 190a Taanach; Winter, 1983: Abb. 63 / Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 190b / Keel / Schroer, 2006: Abb. 155 / Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1186 Taanach; Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 190c T. el-Farah Nord 2 x; Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 190d / Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1187 Megiddo 7 x; Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 190e Samaria; Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 190f Gezer; Winter, 1983: Abb. 62 / Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1548 Gezer; Winter, 1983: Abb. 64 Hazor + 1 x; Winter, 1983: Abb. 65 Samaria + 8; Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1549 Samaria; Weiterhin Paz, 2007: A.2, A.3, A.4 Bet Shean, A.6 Delhamiyah (See Genezareth), A.7 Gezer, A.11 / Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1188 Jatt (nahe Samaria), A.13 Khirbet Umm el-Butm (nahe Taanach), A.23–30 8 x Rehov (nahe Bet Shean), A.31 Rosh Pina (nahe Hazor), A.37–40 4 x Tel Dover (See Genezareth), A.41 Tel Hadar, A. 42 / Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1821 (Abb. 11) Tel Ira, A.43–44 Tel Malhata (nahe Arad), A.45–46 T. el-Farah Nord; C.1–9 aus T. Jemmeh, Megiddo, Horvat Qitmit, Samaria; Kletter / Ziffer / Zwickel, 2010: Nr. 79 Ständer aus Ton Yavneh.
- EZII–Achäm.: alle TR: Nunn, 2000: Tf. 20,46–47 Achzib + Paz, 2007: B.1–7, B.8–9 aus Kabri (nahe Nahariya), B. 10 aus Tell el-Qitaf (nahe Bet Shean), B.11 aus Shiqmona; Dayagi-Mendels, 2002: 145, Nr. 1–3, mit Doppelpfeife, Nr. 4 / Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1552.

Typ 12: Stehend, bekleidet, rechte „erhobene“ Hand und linke zwischen den Brüsten, auf dem Bauch?, oder hält ein Kind, einige schwanger.

- Achäm.: Nunn, 2000: 68 und Tf. 41,140, 143, Hunderte TR Unterwasser bei Shavei Zion, 7km nördlich von Acco, Favissae von T. Sippor und T. Machmish.

Typ 1a (Abb. 1a–d)

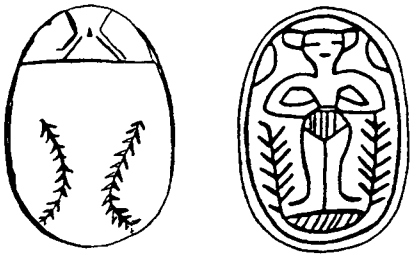


Abb. 1a: Skarabäus, Kunsthandel, Steatit, H. 1,78cm
(MBZ, 1700–1550). Aus: Schroer, 2008: Nr. 405.

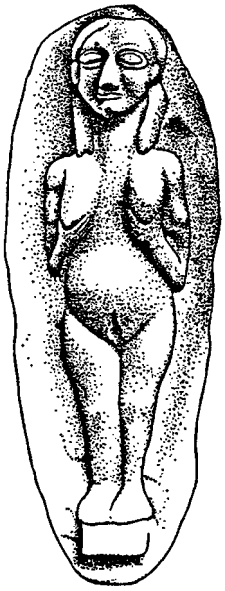


Abb. 1b: TP, moderne Figur aus alter Matrize,
Tel Batash, Ton, H. 12,1cm (8. Jh.).
Aus: Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 217c.

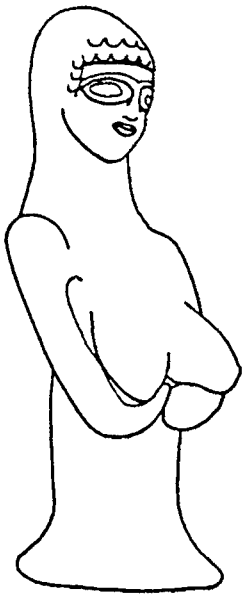


Abb. 1c: Judean Pillar Figurine, Jerusalem, Ton, 16,5cm
(8.–7. Jh). Aus: Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 321b.

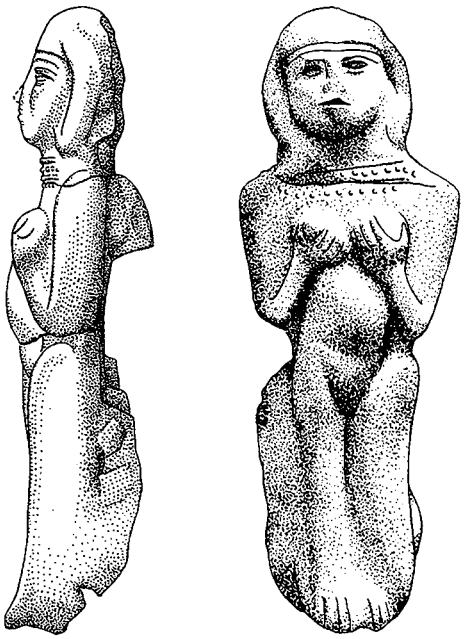


Abb. 1d: Fragment eines Modells oder Ständers, Horvat Qitmit,
Ton, H. 20cm (7. Jh.). Aus: Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1805.

Typ 1b (Abb. 1e)

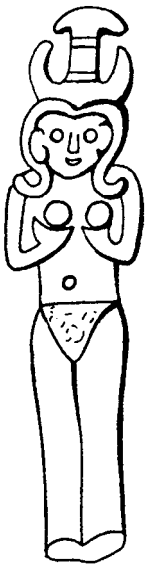


Abb. 1e: Blech, Tell el-Ajjul, Blei, H. 7,1cm (MBZ, 1770–1550). Aus: Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 25b.

Typ 2 (Abb. 2a–b)

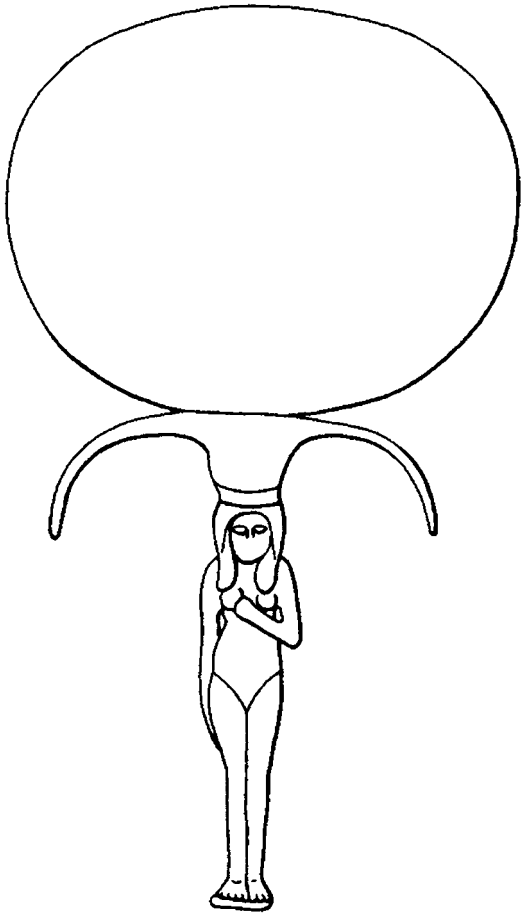


Abb. 2a: Spiegel, Acco, Bronze, ca. 25cm (14. Jh.). Aus: Schroer, 2011: Nr. 769.

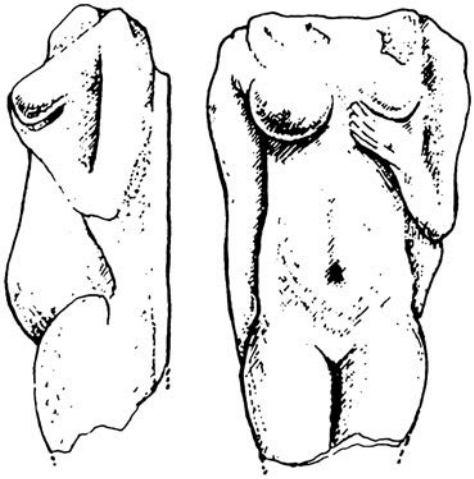


Abb. 2b: Dicke TP, Ashdod, Ton, H. 10cm (EZII, 7. Jh.). Aus: Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 330.

Typ 3 (Abb. 3a–b)

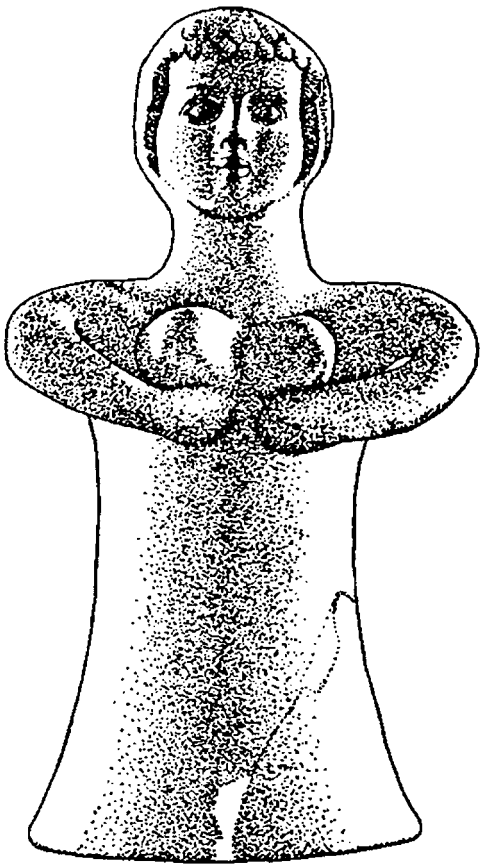


Abb. 3a: Judean Pillar Figurine, Lachish, Ton, 15cm (8.–7. Jh.). Aus: Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 321a.

Abb. 3b: Skarabäus, Lachish, Kalkstein, Maße? (7. Jh.). Aus: Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1807.

Typ 4 (Abb. 4)

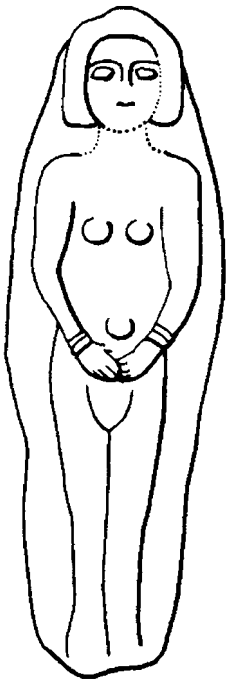


Abb. 4: Plakette mit Frau, die auf ihre Scham weist, Tell Bet Mirsim, Ton, H. 15cm (Beginn EZI). Aus: Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1177.

Typ 5a (Abb. 5b–c)

Abb. 5a: Skarabäus, Lachish, Material? H. 1,7cm (MBZ). Aus: Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 12a.

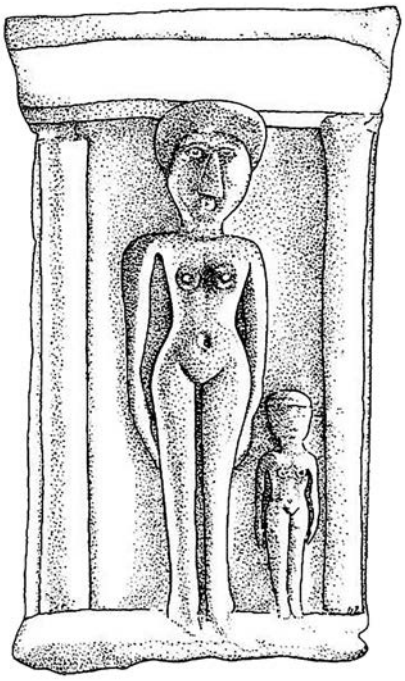


Abb. 5b: Naiskos, KH Gegend von Gaza? Ton, 23,5cm (EZI). Aus: Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1189.

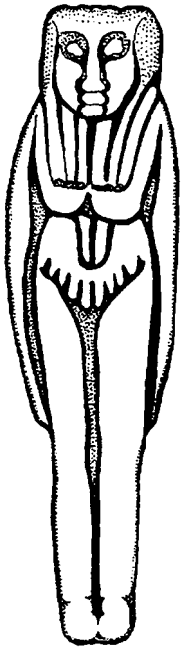


Abb. 5c: Amulett, Tell el-Farah Süd, Knochen (Nilpferdzahn?), ca. 5cm? (8. Jh.). Aus: Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1540.

Typ 5b (Abb. 5d–e)

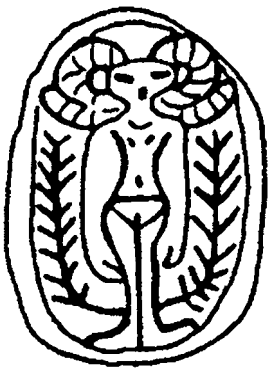


Abb. 5d: Skarabäus, Jericho, glasierter Steatit, H. 1,6cm (MBZ, 17. Jh.). Aus: Schroer, 2008: Nr. 423.

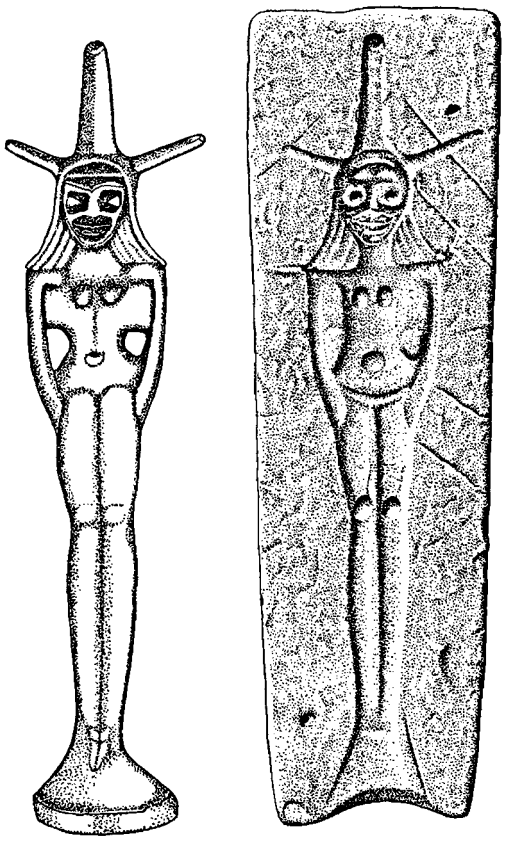


Abb. 5e: Gussform aus gebranntem Steatit und gegossene Figur, Nahariya, H. 20,8cm (MBIIA, 1950–1700). Aus: Schroer, 2008: Nr. 389.

Typ 6 (Abb. 6)

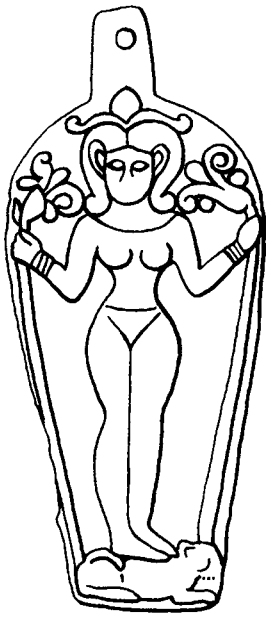


Abb. 6: Blech, Acco, Bronze, 8,3cm (ca. 1300). Aus: Schroer, 2011: Nr. 862.

Typ 7 (Abb. 7)

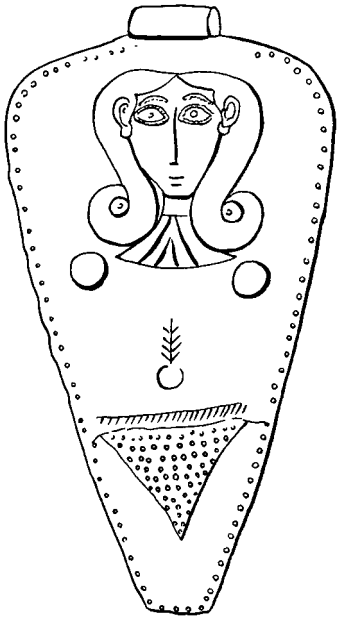


Abb. 7: Birnenförmiges Blech, Tell el-Ajjul, Gold, H. 7,9cm (SBZ, 16. Jh.). Aus: Schroer, 2008: Nr. 412.

Typ 8a (Abb. 8a–b)

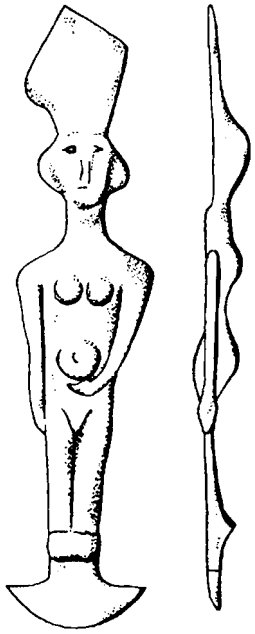


Abb. 8a: Blech, Gezer, Bronze, H. 11,2cm (MBZ, 1700–1550). Aus: Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 25a.

Abb. 8b: Gravidenflasche, Tell el-Qasile, bemalter Ton, H. 32,5cm (12. Jh.). Aus: Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1175.

Typ 8b (Abb. 8c)

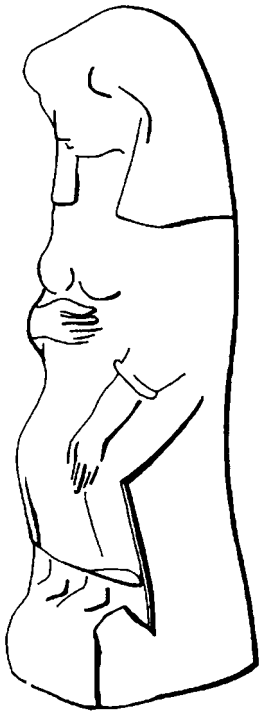


Abb. 8c: Figurine einer schwangeren Frau (*dea gravida*), Achzib, Ton, H. 23,5cm (Ende EZ–achämenidisch). Aus: Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1823.

Typ 9 (Abb. 9)

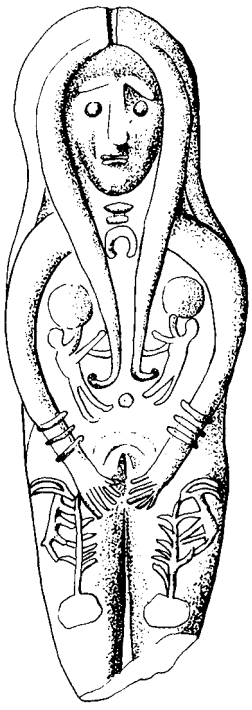


Abb. 9: Plakette einer Frau, die zwei Kinder stillt, Revadim, Ton, H. 11,1cm (SBZ, 13. Jh.). Aus: Schroer, 2011: Nr. 828.

Typ 10a (Abb. 10a–b)

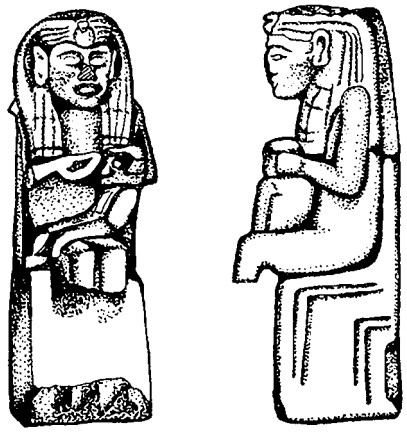


Abb. 10a: Amulett mit Isis, die Horus stillt, Lachish, Kompositmaterial mit blauer Glasur, H. 4,7cm (EZII). Aus: Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1789.

Abb. 10b: Skarabäus, Isis stillt Horus, Lohame ha-Geta'ot, Jaspis, H. 1,7cm (achämenidisch). Aus: Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 364.

Typ 10b (Abb. 10c)

Abb. 10c: Skarabäus, Isis stillt Horus, Atlit, Jaspis, H. 1,5cm (achämenidisch). Aus: Keel / Uehlinger, 1992: Abb. 363a.

Typ 11 (Abb. 11)

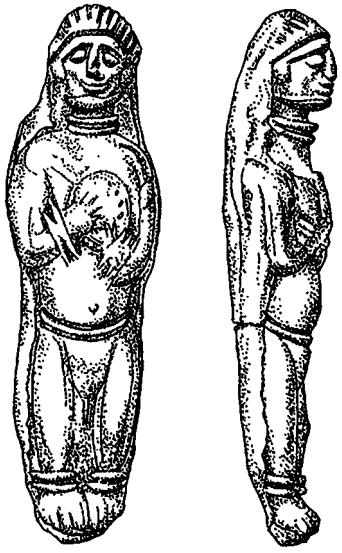


Abb. 11: TP mit Musikerin, Tel Ira, Ton, H. 13cm (7. Jh.). Aus: Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1821.

Ohne Typ

Abb. 12: Fragment eines Ständers oder eines Modells mit Kind auf dem Schoß seiner Mutter, Ton, Shechem, H. 7cm (SBIIB–EZI). Aus: Schroer, 2018: Nr. 1182.

Abb. 13: Karte mit Fundorten.

BIBLIOGRAPHIE

ʿAmr, A-J., 1980: *A Study of the Clay Figurines and Zoomorphic Vessels of Trans-Jordan during the Iron Age, With Special Reference to their Symbolism and Function*. PhD Dissertation, University of London.

Badre, L., 1980: *Les figurines anthropomorphes en terre cuite à l'âge du Bronze en Syrie*. BAH 103. Paris.

Bahrani, Z., 2001: *Women of Babylon: Gender and Representation in Mesopotamia*. London.

Barrelet, M-T., 1968: *Figurines et reliefs en terre cuite de la Mésopotamie Antique. I: Potiers, termes de métier, procédés de fabrication et production*. BAH 85. Paris.

Budin, S. L., 2015: „The Nude Female in the Southern Levant: A Mixing of Syro-Mesopotamian and Egyptian Iconographies". BAAL Hors-Série X, 315–336.

— 2016: „Reduced to Her Bare Essentials: Bronze Age Piriform Pendants in the Levant". NEA 79/3, 166–173.

Chavalas, M. W. (Hg.), 2014: *Women in the Ancient Near East: A Sourcebook*. London/New York.

Cienki, A. / Müller, C. (Hg.), 2008: *Metaphor and Gesture*. Amsterdam.

Cohen, C., 2016: *Femmes de la Préhistoire*. Paris.

Cornelius, I., 2004: *The Many Faces of the Goddess: The Iconography of the Syro-Palestinian Goddesses Anat, Astarte, Qedeshet, and Asherah c. 1500–1000 BCE*. OBO 204. Fribourg/Göttingen.

Darby, E., 2014: *Interpreting Judean Pillar Figurines: Gender and Empire in Judean Apotropaic Ritual*. FAT II/69. Tübingen.

Dayagi-Mendels, M., 2002: *The Akhziv Cemeteries: The Ben-Dor Excavations 1941–1944*. IAA Reports 15. Jerusalem.

Demisch, H., 1984: *Erhobene Hände: Geschichte einer Gebärde in der bildenden Kunst*. Stuttgart.

Dominicus, B., 1994: *Gesten und Gebärden in Darstellungen des Alten und Mittleren Reiches*. Heidelberg.

Gubel, E., 1987: *Phoenician Furniture*. StPhoen 7. Leuven.

Herrmann, C., 1994: *Ägyptische Amulette aus Palästina/Israel*. OBO 138. Fribourg/Göttingen.

— 2010: „Egyptian Faience Amulets". In E. Stern (Hg.): *Excavations at Dor: Figurines, Cult Objects and Amulets. 1980–2000 Seasons*. Jerusalem. Pp. 225–276.

Keel, O., 2010: *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel: Von den Anfängen bis zur Perserzeit. Katalog Band II: Von Bahan bis Tel Eton*. OBO SA 29. Fribourg/Göttingen.

— 2013: *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel: Von den Anfängen bis zur Perserzeit. Katalog Band IV: Von Tel Gamma bis Chirbet Husche*. OBO SA 33. Fribourg/Göttingen.

— 2017: *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel: Von den Anfängen bis zur Perserzeit. Katalog Band V: Von Tel al-ʿIdham bis Tel Kitan*. OBO SA 35. Fribourg/Göttingen.

Keel, O. / Uehlinger, C., 1992: *Göttinnen, Götter und Gottessymbole: Neue Erkenntnisse zur Religionsgeschichte Kanaans und Israels aufgrund bislang unerschlossener ikonographischer Quellen*. QD 134. Freiburg/Basel/Vienna.

Keel, O. / Schroer, S., 2006: *Eva—Mutter alles Lebendigen: Frauen- und Göttinnenidole aus dem Alten Orient*. 2. Aufl. Fribourg.

Kipfer, S. (Hg.), 2017: *Visualizing Emotions in the Ancient Near East*. OBO 285. Fribourg/Göttingen.

Klengel-Brandt, E. / Cholidis, N. / Von Eickstedt, U., 2006: *Die Terrakotten von Babylon im Vorderasiatischen Museum in Berlin, Teil I: Die anthropomorphen Figuren*. WVDOG 115. Saarwellingen.

Kletter, R., 1996: *The Judean Pillar-Figurines and the Archaeology of Asherah*. BAR International Series 636. Oxford.

Kletter, R. / Ziffer, I. / Zwickel, W., 2010: *Yavneh I: The Excavation of the 'Temple Hil', Repository Pit and the Cult Stands*. OBO SA 30. Fribourg/Göttingen.

Kozlowski, S. K. / Aurenche, O., 2005: *Territories, Boundaries and Cultures in the Neolithic Near East*. BAR International Series 1362. Oxford.

Mazar, A., 1985: „Pottery Plaques Depicting Goddesses Standing in Temple Facades". Michmanim 2, 5–18.

McNicoll, A. W. et al. (Hg.), 1992: *Pella in Jordan 2: The Second Interim Report of the Joint University of Sydney and College of Wooster Excavations at Pella 1982–1985*. Sydney.

Morris, C. / Peatfield, A., 2002: „Feeling through the Body: Gesture in Cretan Bronze Age Religion". In Y. Hamilakis / M. Pluciennik / S. Tarlow (Hg.): *Thinking through the Body: Archaeologies of Corporeality*. New York. Pp. 105–120.

Negbi, O., 1976: *Canaanite Gods in Metal: An Archaeological Study of Ancient Syro-Palestinian Figurines*. Tel Aviv.

Nunn, A., 2000: *Der figürliche Motivschatz Phöniziens, Syriens und Transjordaniens vom 6. bis zum 4. Jahrhundert v. Chr*. OBO SA 18. Freiburg/Göttingen.

Opificius, R., 1961: *Das altbabylonische Terrakottarelief*. Berlin.

Orrelle, E., 2014: *Material Images of Humans from the Natufian to Pottery Neolithic Periods in the Levant*. BAR International Series 2595. Oxford.

Otto, A., 2000: *Die Entstehung und Entwicklung der Klassisch-Syrischen Glyptik*. Berlin.

Paz, S., 2007: *Drums, Women, and Goddesses: Drumming and Gender in Iron Age II Israel*. OBO 232. Fribourg/Göttingen.

Pongratz-Leisten, B. / Highcock, N., 2015: „Hand, Hands". EBR 11, 166–172.

Pruß, A., 2010: *Die Amuq-Terrakotten: Untersuchungen zu den Terrakotta-Figuren des 2. und 1. Jahrtausends v.Chr. aus den Grabungen des Oriental Institute Chicago in der Amuq-Ebene*. Subartu 26. Turnhout.

Schmitt, J-C., 1992: *Die Logik der Gesten im europäischen Mittelalter*. Stuttgart.

Schroer, S., 1987: „Die Zweiggöttin in Palästina/Israel: Von der Mittelbronze IIB-Zeit bis zu Jesus Sirach". In M. Küchler / C. Uehlinger (Hg.): *Jerusalem: Texte—Bilder—Steine*. NTOA 6. Fribourg/Göttingen. Pp. 201–225.

— 1989: „Die Göttin auf den Stempelsiegeln aus Palästina/Israel". In O. Keel / H. Keel-Leu / S. Schroer: *Studien zu den Stempelsiegeln aus Palästina/Israel II*. OBO 88. Fribourg/Göttingen. Pp. 89–207.

— 2008: *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels und der Alte Orient: Eine Religionsgeschichte in Bildern. Band 2: Die Mittelbronzezeit*. Fribourg.

— 2011: *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels und der Alte Orient: Eine Religionsgeschichte in Bildern. Band 3: Die Spätbronzezeit*. Fribourg.

— 2018: *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels und der Alte Orient: Eine Religionsgeschichte in Bildern. Band 4: Die Eisenzeit bis zum Beginn der achämenidischen Herrschaft*. Basel.

Schroer, S. / Staubli, T., 1998: *Die Körpersymbolik der Bibel*. Darmstadt.

Steinert, U., 2012: *Aspekte des Menschseins im Alten Mesopotamien: Eine Studie zu Person und Identität im 2. und 1. Jt. v. Chr*. CM 44. Leiden.

Stern, E., 2010: „Figurines and Cult Objects of the Iron Age and Persian Period". In E. Stern (Hg.): *Excavations at Dor: Figurines, Cult Objects and Amulets. 1980–2000 Seasons*. Jerusalem. Pp. 1–113.

Uehlinger, C., 1998–2001: „Nackte Göttin. B. In der Bildkunst". RlA 9, 53–64.

Wiggermann, F. A. M., 1998–2001: „Nackte Göttin. A. Philologisch". RlA 9, 46–53.

Winter, U., 1983: *Frau und Göttin: Exegetische und ikonographische Studien zum weiblichen Gottesbild im Alten Israel und in dessen Umwelt*. OBO 53. Freiburg/Göttingen.

Zwickel, W., 2017: „The Iconography of Emotions in the Ancient Near East and in Ancient Egypt". In S. Kipfer (Hg.): *Visualizing Emotions in the Ancient Near East*. OBO 285. Fribourg/Göttingen. Pp. 95–121.

FEEDING, NURSING, CARING … : SOME NOTES ON THE WOMAN AND CHILD FIGURINES FROM PERSIAN PERIOD ISRAEL/PALESTINE

Katharina Pyschny[1]

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the most important studies on images of woman and child from the Bronze Age by Stephanie Lynn Budin begins with the following statement: "'Mother and child.' The combination seems so natural, even inevitable, that it is hardly surprising that depictions of it should have a universal presence and appeal in the iconographic and archaeological record. And yet this is very much not the case. Portrayals of woman and child or children are far from universal, and in point of fact are actually far rarer than much current scholarship would recognize".[2] This statement is even more remarkable, when compared to the following remark from the most recent book on figurines from Hellenistic Babylonia by Stephanie Langin-Hooper: "It is perhaps not surprising that one of the few types of relationships depicted in Hellenistic Babylonian figurines was that between an adult woman and a child, usually an infant … Perhaps because of the primal nature of this relationship, depictions of an adult woman with a child have a long history in the figurine traditions of the ancient world".[3] At first glance, these statements appear to contradict one another, but, in fact, both are accurate. Based on the Bronze Age and all kinds of iconographic sources, the woman and child motif cannot be considered prominent iconography. However, looking at (terracotta) figurines from Hellenistic times that show *relationships*, the picture changes significantly.

This holds true particularly for the so-called woman and child figurines from Persian period Israel/Palestine. Even though they are not the most important type of figurines in Persian times in terms of numbers, they reflect a remarkable development in the quantity (when compared to the Bronze and Iron Ages), typology and iconography of woman and child imagery. Inspired by the volume on the material culture of the Persian period, which I coedited with Sakkie Cornelius and Christian Frevel, and by Sakkie's article on figurines therein,[4] the following remarks aim to analyse the woman and child figurines from Persian period Israel/Palestine. Due to the pragmatics of an article, the following does not present an exhaustive study of these figurines, but should rather be understood as a note on two selected aspects, typology and iconography, that have been neglected in past and present scholarship and are still in need of further research. Based on an elaborate typology of Persian period woman and child figurines, it will be argued that their iconography (be it understood as a depiction of either a mortal or divine woman) does not aim at representing maternity or fertility, but rather aspects like feeding, nursing, and caring which are potentially situated in both the mortal and the divine sphere.

---

[1] I would like to thank the editors for their invitation to contribute to Sakkie's *Festschrift* and all their editorial efforts. My research for this article is closely linked to another project conducted in collaboration with Christian Frevel which reevaluates typological indicators in the case of Southern Levantine figurines from Persian and early Hellenistic times (see Frevel / Pyschny, forthcoming). My deepest gratitude goes to the *École biblique et archéologique française de Jérusalem* for granting me a scholarship for the academic year 2018/2019.

[2] Budin, 2011: 1

[3] Langin-Hooper, 2020: 101.

[4] See Frevel / Pyschny / Cornelius, 2014 and Cornelius, 2014: 67–93 in particular.

2. TYPOLOGY

In contrast to other terracotta figurines such as the so-called bearded men, the woman and child figurines did not emerge in the Persian period, but can be traced back to longstanding traditions within the ancient Near East and the Southern Levant in particular.[5] Thus, this type of figurine has a remarkable continuity starting from the late Bronze and Iron Age I and continuing throughout the Iron Age II until Persian and early Hellenistic times. In their most basic form, these figurines show a female adult (mortal or divine, see below) carrying, holding, or nursing a child[6] and, therefore, might be considered kourotrophic iconography.[7] However, the typological and stylistic variety of these figurines is much more complex than this classification and minimalistic description suggest. Based on the material from Persian times, the figurines differ in regard to the posture of the woman, her clothing, the age of the child, its position and, as a consequence of the latter, its arm gesture. With these varieties in mind, the woman and child figurines can be divided into four sub-types: *first*, a seated or standing woman nursing a child; *second*, a standing woman holding a child at her left hip; *third*, a seated woman with a child on her lap; and *fourth*, a standing woman with a child seated on her left shoulder.[8]

The *first sub-type* consists of hollow figurines with a front made in a mould showing a seated or standing woman nursing a child (fig. 1). A complete example of this sub-type was found in Dor[9] and several parallels are known from other sites in Israel/Palestine such as Makmish. Most of the examples depict a (nude) woman standing on a pedestal nursing a baby or an infant with her left breast. The woman's right hand rests either on her (rather prominent) belly, supports her right breast, or is put gently on the child. The figurine from Dor wears a long Egypto-Phoenician wig falling in front of the shoulders.[10] The similarities of this figurine to the so-called *dea gravida* figurines are striking, not only with regard to the headdress, but in particular with regard to the manufacturing technique and style. The *dea gravida* figurines (figs. 2 and 3) emerged in the late Iron Age II and became very popular throughout the Persian period.[11] Based on the finest examples from Akhziv, the figurines can be described as follows: "The figure sits on a narrow, high-backed chair, her body inclined slightly forward and her face downcast. She draws her right hand above her prominent abdomen and rests the left hand along her knee. She wears a long dress, without folds, and a veil over her head. This covers two projections on the side of the head, most probably the side-coils of hair … thus giving her a distinctive hooded appearance …".[12] These figurines are typically, but not necessarily accurately, identified as a goddess. They have been found at Phoenician sites in the Levant like Akhziv, Makmish, Dor, Tel Sippor, Tell es-Saidiyeh, Tell Abu Hawam, Kharayeb, Byblos, Tyre, and many more, as well as in Cyprus. They are hollow, mould-made and were often found in favissae buried with other objects. Interestingly, the "blending"

[5] For a thorough study on images of woman and child from the Bronze Age, see the aforementioned study by Budin, 2011.

[6] In contrast to Nakhai (2014), who divides the woman and child figurines into three classes (women pregnant or in the process of childbirth, women holding children, and women nursing children), I do not treat figurines showing pregnant women as woman and child figurines. However, as will be shown below, the so-called *dea gravida* figurines play a crucial role in understanding the typology and iconography of the woman and child figurines.

[7] As was pointed out by Budin (2011: 29), to use this term "is both an anachronism and an imposition. The word itself comes from the Greek *kouros*, meaning 'child' or 'boy,' and *trophos*, 'feeder, rearer, nurse'". As the title of a function, *kourotrophos* is the name or epiclesis of several Greek gods and goddesses concerned with helping children safely achieve adulthood (e.g., Artemis, Hekate, Gaia, Demeter, Aphrodite). However, Budin (2011: 30) has good reasons to use this term for images of woman and child in the Bronze Age: "To use the term 'kourotrophos,' then, designates exactly what the images portray: an adult (mortal or divine) who nourishes and/or protects a child, regardless of whether or not that adult is to be understood as the child's parent. In this way, the terminology allows for issues of wet nurses, adoption, and caretakers without automatically implying the concept of 'mother'". This kind of descriptive usage of the term is to be distinguished from referring to *kourotrophos* as a more or less specific iconographic motif in the Greek world.

[8] The following typology was first developed for Frevel / Pyschny, forthcoming. Please note that the order of sub-types 1 and 2 is switched here for the sake of the thematic focus and the argumentative flow.

[9] See Stern, 2010: fig. 13:1, pl. 7.

[10] See Avigad, 1960: pl. 11, fig. C.

[11] See also Nakhai, 2014: 165–198.

[12] Culican, 1969: 35, 37.

of woman and child and *dea gravida* figurines, that is to say, a kourotrophic *dea gravida*, is not only attested in Dor, but is also present in the Cypriote figurine assemblage.[13]

The *second sub-type*, a woman holding a child on her left hip (fig. 4), is known from Tel Halif,[14] Tel Sippor,[15] and Beersheba.[16] The moulded figurines show a standing woman in frontal pose with her hair hanging down. In some cases, she wears some kind of headdress or hairband. Details like eyes, nose, and sometimes even the mouth, are clearly visible. The woman is portrayed either nude or semi-nude with clothing from the waist down, while the breasts remain exposed. Some examples show accessories such as a pendant necklace. The woman holds the child by putting her left arm around him or her. The right arm either supports the child's ankles or rests at the woman's waist. The children linked to the female figures are of different ages, spanning from babies and infants up to small children, and it is almost impossible to discern their gender. In the cases of babies or infants, genitalia are not visible at all and even when small children are depicted nude, the focus of the composition is not on the child's genitalia. The only examples that show more or less visible (male) genitalia are from Tel Halif. However, in most examples, the child faces the front and his or her body is draped around the woman's left side in a sitting/lying or, less frequently, a standing position. Very often the child touches the woman's left breast with his or her left hand, while his or her right arm is put around the woman's neck, and his or her hand rests on the woman's shoulder.

Figurines showing a woman with child on her left hip or side are also known from Dor and Maresha, but these specimens differ from the described iconographic composition. The figurines from Dor depict a woman wearing a different (head-)dress and a baby or infant completely wrapped up in this clothing with only its face visible (fig. 5).[17] The specimens are completely solid and modelled on the front. Even though Stern lists these figurines in his Eastern group, he admits that they "show Greek influence in their dress and hair style"[18] and interprets the (head-)dress as a himation.[19] In Hellenistic art, the himation is usually wrapped around a woman's body: "Even though there are variations on how the himation falls or is wrapped around the arms … the bulk of the fabric is shown either covering her completely or wrapped around her waist … Furthermore, in statues of women, sometimes the himation is pulled over the head, like a veil …".[20] Even though the figurines of Dor do not show any wrinkles in the garment, a certain Greek influence is evident. This impression is supported by the somewhat similar figurines from Maresha[21] that attest to the same veil-like himation.[22]

The *third sub-type*, a seated woman with a child on her lap, is only attested at two sites from Israel/Palestine (Maresha and Tel Halif).[23] Both figurines are in a rather fragmentary state providing us with the middle part of the figurines only. It is safe to say, though, that the figurines show a seated woman (probably on a throne) holding an infant on her lap and nursing it with her left breast. Her left arm holds the child and rests on his or her shoulder. The right hand is directed towards the baby and her breast, probably supporting the latter in order to nurse the child. This motif might represent the Egyptian goddess Isis and her son Horus,[24]

---

[13] See, for instance, the examples from Kition in Karageorghis, 1999: pl. LXX, no. 25 and Maillard, 2019: 85, 89 with no. 6–13, pl. 3–5.

[14] See Jacobs, 2015.

[15] See Negbi, 1966: pl. 1:2.

[16] See Stern, 1982: 169, fig. 8.

[17] See Stern, 2010: fig. 13:4–5, pl. 7.

[18] Stern, 2010: 14.

[19] See Stern, 2010: 12.

[20] Bobou, 2015: 50.

[21] On the Maresha figurines, the himation corresponds more to Hellenistic conventions. Furthermore, the child is not an infant, but rather a small child. Also the position of the child is not completely similar; it is closer to the woman's head than in the figurines from Dor. See Erlich, 2006: 45–59.

[22] Thus, this sub-type already attests to a certain fluidity or hybridity within Eastern and Western types of figurines. This impression is supported by two figurines from Hilalia, which show similarities to both the abovementioned figurine from Tel Sippor and the rather Greek styled figurines from Dor. While the posture and gesture of the child are in line with the example from Tel Sippor, the veil-like dress, which falls from the woman's head, nestles around the pointed headgear of the child, and runs under her right arm, resembles the figurines from Dor. As Nunn (2000: 49) points out: "Haltung und Art, nicht aber die Details, wie Gesichtszüge oder Faltenwurf, ähneln ionischen Terrakotten des beginnenden 4. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.".

[23] See Jacobs, 2015: 61.

[24] See Jacobs, 2015: 61.

as was also pointed out by Langin-Hooper in connection with similar figurines from Hellenistic Babylonia: "The particular motif of the enthroned mother has strong parallels in representations of the goddess Isis suckling the god Horus (also known as Harpocrates in the Hellenistic period)—imagery that was widely popular throughout the Mediterranean in the Hellenistic period".[25] Alternatively, this sub-type could be considered a representation of Aphrodite and Eros.[26]

The *fourth sub-type*, a standing woman with a child seated on the left shoulder, is most prominently attested in Maresha[27] (around 22 figurines), but has parallels in Tel Safi,[28] Beersheba, Tel Sippor,[29] Tel Erani,[30] Lachish,[31] and Tel Halif.[32] Based on the well preserved material from Maresha, this type can be described as follows: The figurines are made either of one mould (mould-made front, while the back is not modelled but roughly smoothed and scratched instead) or two moulds.[33] In both cases, only a few details have been cast in the mould. Some figurines show traces of red and black paint. "The child is made of thin wall for the front, and thick wall for the back, which is sometimes made of two thick coils of clay joined in the middle of the back".[34] The figurines can be up to 12,5cm high[35] and up to 4,5cm wide. The woman is portrayed in a frontal pose with her hair hanging down, some kind of band on her forehead, and large eyes. She appears to be semi-nude[36] with her breasts exposed. The position of her hands varies: She either rests both hands on her waist underneath the navel, or holds the child's ankles with her left, while the right rests along her body. The child, whose gender cannot be discerned,[37] is old enough to sit stably on the female's shoulder. Sometimes he or she has unusually long legs, draped over the left shoulder of the woman. According to Erlich, this type is based on a Greek-Ionian type, which is much more plastic and three-dimensional. As noted by Erlich, this sub-type is influenced by the *kourotrophos* and is probably of Greek-Ionian origin, even though its style is undoubtedly local: "Although the source of the type is Ionian, the result is Eastern and basically local".[38]

3. ICONOGRAPHY

When it comes to the interpretation of the woman and child figurines, we immediately face a basic problem or question in the study of terracotta figurines: Do these figurines portray a goddess or a mortal woman? In the case of the woman and child figurines, this question is almost impossible to resolve with certainty, since the figurines predominantly lack clear divine attributes. Stern seems to be well aware of this dilemma, when he proposes an interpretation as fertility goddess first, but states immediately afterwards: "It is also possible, on the other hand, that these figurines should be interpreted as votive objects dedicated by women when making supplications to the gods".[39] Stern's interpretation as fertility goddess is based on two rather problematic aspects: first, the assumption that the majority of woman and child figurines depict nude females with emphasised and exaggerated sexual organs and, second, the direct link and exclusive restriction of nudity to aspects of fertility.[40] While the interpretation of the figurines as goddess cannot be maintained based on these arguments, it is supported by the typological and stylistic similarities between the *dea gravida* and the woman

[25] Langin-Hooper, 2020: 109.
[26] See Erlich, 2006: 45–59; and for further discussion Frevel / Pyschny, forthcoming.
[27] See Erlich, 2006: 52, pl. III, 7–8.
[28] See Bliss / Macalister, 1902: pl. 70 (drawing); Stern, 1982: 169, fig. 289, no. 7 (photo).
[29] See Negbi, 1966: 10, pl. 1.
[30] See Ciasca, 1963: 50–52, pl. XV:1, 3.
[31] See Tufnell, 1953: pl. 33.
[32] Jacobs, 2015: 60 lists fourteen figurines of this type.
[33] See Erlich, 2014: 51.
[34] See Erlich, 2014: 51.
[35] See the table provided by Erlich, 2014.
[36] It is diffult and sometimes even impossible to assess the degree of nudity due to the state of preservation. Furthermore, it is not clear whether the paint indicates some type of clothing.
[37] Jacobs, 2015 considers the child a boy.
[38] Erlich 2006: 52. Thus, this type clearly attests to a mixing of Western motifs and Eastern style, a phenomenon that is best described as hybridisation (see Frevel / Pyschny, forthcoming).
[39] Stern, 2010: 13.
[40] For the various understandings of nudity in Southern Levantine iconography, see Pyschny, 2019: 127–161.

and child figurines. If the *dea gravida* can be considered a goddess (without showing any clear divine attributes), there is no reason to exclude this line of interpretation in the case of the woman and child figurines as such. However, the following remarks concentrate on the figurines' iconographic composition and its meanings first, before coming back to the identification of the woman as mortal or divine.

Although it is extremely popular, even in recent studies, to link the woman and child figurines with aspects of motherhood, this term seems rather misleading.[41] It is by no means (self-)evident that the woman represented is the child's (biological) mother. Thus, the relationship portrayed here is not one of actual maternity, but rather of feeding, nourishing, and caretaking. The (mortal or divine) woman can be understood as biological mother, "surrogate", wet nurse, adoptive mother, or another kind of caretaker. In fact, the actual identity or social role of the woman is not decisive for the meaning(s) of the figurine. It is important to note that the figurine is not a simple portrayal of a (concrete) everyday scene, but has a rather symbolic meaning. Typical scenes from everyday life like nursing, holding, or caring for a child are used to present the relationship between and the relatedness of woman and child. The figurines present (literary embodied) connections.[42] Parallel to the depictions of children on Neo-Assyrian reliefs, the figurines associate childcare exclusively with women. They do not only nourish babies or infants, but also take care of older girls and boys.[43] Even though "women were probably the primary caregivers of infants in the ancient world, they were most certainly not exclusively so, nor did they have to be … Fathers, grandparents, older siblings, and members of the more extended family can, did, and still do contribute to the rearing of small children. Nevertheless, they are not shown acting in these capacities. The exclusive female sex of *kourotrophos* is at least partially ideological, but that ideology is wholly consistent. 100% of the time, people happen to conceive of children's caretakers as female. By extension, child care itself is gendered female, regardless of historical (or contemporary) practical realities".[44]

Since the woman and child figurines show a remarkable typological variety (especially with regard to the relationship between woman and child indicated by the different postures), their interpretation should take these differences into account. Taking all sub-types of the woman and child figurines together, there are significant changes or developments in the display of the relationship between woman and child. The smallest children, babies and toddlers, are held close to the woman's body, firmly supported by both her hands, and/or placed on her lap (sub-types 1 and 3). This constellation is the only case where the child does not face the front as if he or she is unaware of the outside world and solely focused on and content within his or her relation to the woman. In the case of sub-type 2, the child is not a baby or infant anymore, but can be held at the side with the woman's left hand only, already sits a little upright, and faces the front. Furthermore, the child is in a way more "active" within the relationship by placing his or her hand on the woman's breast and/or shoulder. Both gestures portray the close relationship and relatedness of woman and child. Considering the lack of visual interaction, the scene is not so much about shared (personal) intimacy, but rather about the acts of feeding, nursing, and caring in context of the bond between woman and child. Finally, sub-type 4 shows an even older child sitting on the woman's shoulder. While the child is still dependent on his or her caretaker (the woman holds the child's ankles and the child touches the woman's head), he or she is old enough to sit stably on the woman's shoulder. This image constellation, thus, reflects the child's (lasting) dependence on his or her caretaker, while at the same time showing the child's growing "independence". Evidently, the woman and child figurines present a dynamic relationship between woman and child and different degrees of (in)dependence between them. In light of these insights, the notion that "his [that is, the child's] attachment to his mother is purely iconographical, as to allow his identification as a child"[45] is too simplistic and does not do justice to the variety of the figurines.

Considering the substantial responsibility and labour-intensive nature of childcare (continuous physical and emotional demands, getting acquainted with breastfeeding), the imagery of the woman and child figurines seems more idealistic than realistic: "Indeed, the women depicted in these figurines seem immune to the whole host of chores and challenges that even mothers who breastfeed easily must deal with … Often

[41] Langin-Hooper, 2020 distinguishes between biological and social mother.
[42] Budin, 2011: 329.
[43] On the Neo-Assyrian reliefs, see Schwyn, 2000. For a general overview on children and childhood in the ancient Near East, see Meyer, 2001: 215–233; and Kunz-Lübcke, 2007.
[44] Budin, 2011: 333–334.
[45] Erlich, 2006: 53.

placed literally on a pedestal, this mother is both symbol and impossible standard, her openness to spectatorship implying that this perfect maternal ideal should be witnessed, understood, and emulated".[46] In the ancient world, lactation and nursing competency was crucial to child survival and embedded into a network of social and economic connections. The commodification of childbearing and nursing were conceptually and maybe even physically situated in the public sphere (be it only the extended family). Thus, the figurines do not only portray a physical and emotional bond between two individuals, but also the social space allotted to the relationship between woman and child and their social roles therein. In accordance with Langin-Hooper, this imagery could be understood as an iconography of service (to society): "Her body's ideal—even superlative—ability is available to serve not just the child, but everyone, just as the child too is nurtured primarily in service of peopling the community and facilitating future social connections".[47]

It is interesting to note that within all sub-types of the woman and child figurines, the child is held or carried on the woman's left side exposing the woman's right side to the eyes of the viewers. While a left-side preference on this kind of figurine is already visible in earlier times, it is by no means as exclusive as in Persian and early Hellenistic times. Thus, it cannot be simply explained by tradition history. In Mesopotamian art, it is the king's right side that is presented to the direct sight of the viewer in order to demonstrate his physical or political power.[48] Maybe a similar logic was at play in the case of woman and child figurines. By exposing the woman's (perfect and unblemished) right side to view, she is envisioned as a strong, powerful, and proactive caretaker and protector of the child.[49]

Even though Stern overestimates the aspect of nudity by exclusively linking it to fertility, it plays a significant role in the iconography of the woman and child figurines. With regard to methodology, it is important to, first, assess the degree of nudity and, second, the potential meanings linked to it. Usually, it is only the upper-body of the woman, namely her breasts, that is uncovered and somehow accentuated. In the case where the figure is completely nude, there is no remarkable emphasis on, for instance, the pubic area. The exposed breasts, which are sometimes supported by the woman herself and/or the child, should be understood in line with female figurines (e.g., the Judean Pillar Figurines) who represent the aspect of nursing and blessing (*dea nutrix* aspect).[50] Thus, the nudity of the woman and child figurines has nothing or only little to do with fertility, sexuality, or eroticism. Concerning the clothed figurines from Maresha, Erlich argues that the woman's sexual components are concealed and, therefore, she is portrayed in an asexual manner.[51] For Erlich, the woman remains modest and hidden (underneath her clothes), which reflects an emphasis of motherhood over fertility and is caused by Greek influence.[52]

Returning to the question of identification, we have to admit that the iconography of the figurines does not provide a clear-cut answer. However, the results support an interpretation of the figurines as a goddess *by tendency*. Considering the highly symbolic and idealised portrayal of woman and child, it is not exactly clear what these kinds of votive offerings are supposed to represent. Especially if it is accepted that the iconography does not focus on fertility or maternity as such, it becomes harder to consider the figurines "as votive offerings presented to the deity in a request for divine assistance".[53] The idea that the "figurines were presented to the deity by women applying for help or thanking the deity in an expressive way"[54] becomes doubtful as well.

---

[46] Langin-Hooper, 2020: 106–107.
[47] Langin-Hooper, 2020: 110.
[48] Winter, 1995: 2578.
[49] See Langin-Hooper, 2020: 112. Based on recent psychological studies, she proposes another reason for the left-side preference: "Psychologically and neurologically, left-side placement of a child is ideal: for maternal health, for infant develoment, and—crucially—for enabling the child to develop successful relationships later in his or her social life".
[50] See Frevel, 1994: 771 and Pyschny, 2019: 139.
[51] Erlich, 2006: 54.
[52] Erlich, 2006: 54. See also the statement on the same page: "The frontal and prominent display of the child high above his mother is a new practice in the figurines of the region, and it might imply a shift from concern about potential for children, i.e. fertility, towards a concern for children themselves".
[53] Stern, 2010: 443.
[54] Lipiński, 2003: 301. He elaborates further: "Such votive offerings may record a ceremony of thanksgiving on the part of the mother shortly after the birth of her child or her ritual cleansing in the sanctuary after childbirth, as prescribed in Leviticus 12" (Lipiński, 2003: 302).

At the same time, the highly symbolic and idealised portrayal of woman and child (especially sub-types 1–3) where the posture clearly resembles divine or royal iconography, fits a representation of a goddess (independent from her exact identification). Furthermore, by highlighting aspects such as life, vitality, nourishing, caretaking, and blessing, the image constellation is closely linked to the divine sphere. Considering the typological continuity with the *dea gravida* figurines and the analogy to the Isis and Horus iconography, the interpretation of the figurines as a goddess seems plausible.[55] However, one cannot escape the impression that the oscillation between mortal (e.g., the lack of clear divine attributes) and divine (e.g., typological continuity with *dea gravida* figurines, seated posture, analogy to the iconography of Isis and Horus) iconography is deeply embedded in the imagery of the woman and child figurines and is part of a sophisticated iconographic play of interpretation, in which aspects of feeding, nursing, and caring are considered the fields of competence of both goddesses and human women.

4. CONCLUSIONS

It is evident that the woman and child figurines from Persian period Israel/Palestine are highly complex objects as far as their typology and iconography are concerned. Based on the different postures of the woman, her clothing, the age of the child, its position and, as a consequence of the latter, its arm gesture, four subtypes of these figurines can be identified, of which the first one—a seated or standing woman nursing a child—shows remarkable typological and iconographic analogies to the *dea gravida* figurines. The study of the iconographic constellation of the woman and child figurines benefitted from this typological categorisation, in as much as the latter provides a lens with which to perceive the portrayed relationship between woman and child in its dynamics and different degrees of (in)dependence.

It was argued that the relationship represented by these figurines is not one of actual maternity, but rather of feeding, nourishing, and caretaking. The actual identity or social role of the (mortal or divine) woman is not decisive for the interpretation of the figurines, since the scene is highly infused with symbolic meaning(s). In addition, the scene is strongly idealised, making the woman not only a symbol, but also an impossible standard. While the woman and child imagery of earlier times are often linked to aspects of social status (especially its acquisition), the woman and child figurines from the Persian period seem to be related to social roles and functions instead. They do not aim to portray a physical or emotional bond between two individuals, but represent their roles in the public sphere (even if only in the extended family). While the woman is defined as a strong, powerful, and proactive protector and caretaker of the child, the child is solely characterised by his or her relation to the woman. The notion of the woman's life promoting power and blessing is sometimes accentuated by her (semi-)nudity, which should not be misinterpreted as representing fertility, sexuality, or eroticism. The depiction of the woman is rather asexual, being almost exclusively restricted to her role as caretaker and protector.

As far as the identification of the female as a mortal or divine woman is concerned, neither the typology nor the iconography can provide a definitive answer. Both perspectives support an interpretation of the figurines as a goddess by tendency. At the same time, it is evident that the figurines oscillate between mortal and divine iconography suggesting that when it comes to the commodification of feeding, nursing, and caring for a child, human woman and goddess are closely interrelated to one another.

[55] This does not mean that this kind of interpretation is imperative or should be applied to all sub-types alike.

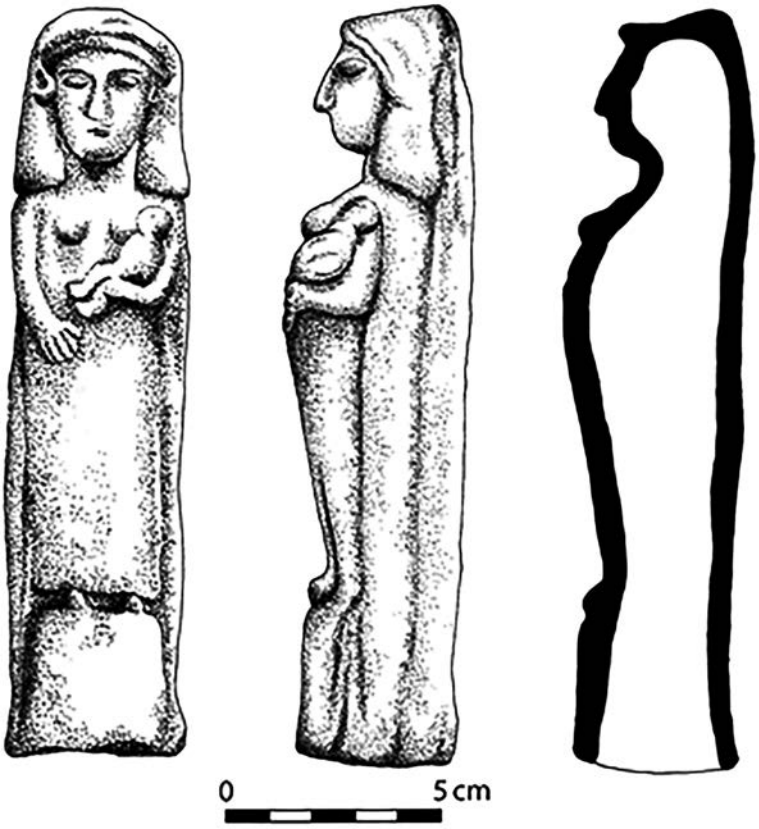


Fig. 1: Woman and child figurine, Dor (Persian period). Source: Stern, 2010: fig. 13:1 (Courtesy of Tel Dor Archaeological project).

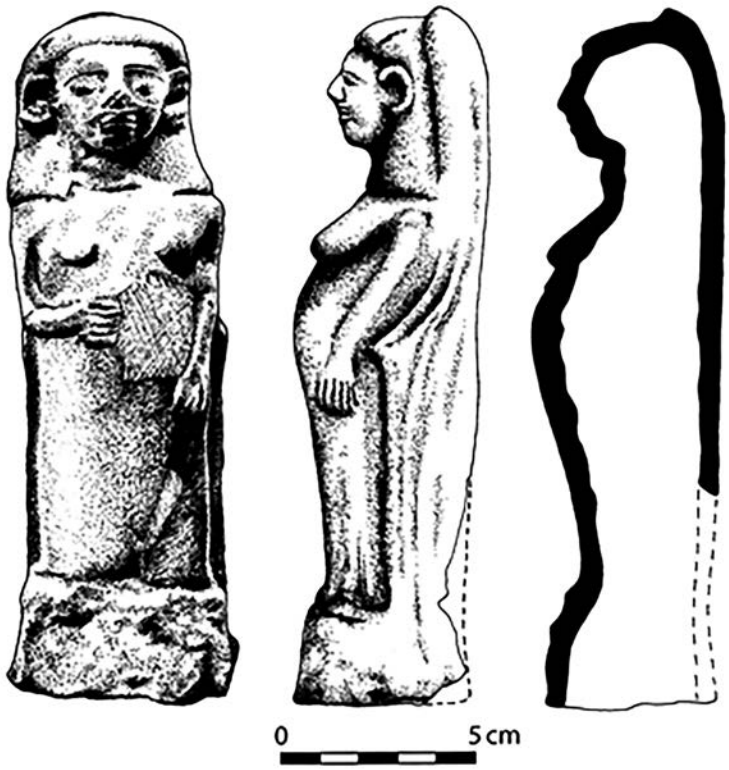


Fig. 2: Figurine of a pregnant woman, Dor (Persian period).
Source: Stern, 2010: 12:1 (Courtesy of Tel Dor Archaeological project).

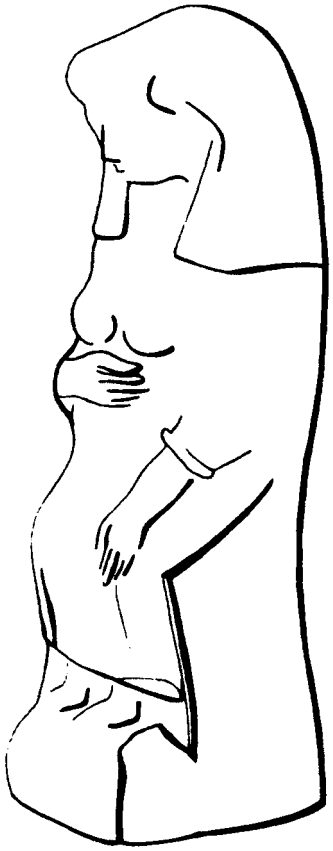


Fig. 3: *Dea gravida* figurine, Akhziv (Persian period). Source: Winter, 1983: fig. 381.

Fig. 4: Woman and child figurine, Tel Halif (Persian period). Source: Cornelius, 2014: fig. 3 (Courtesy of the Lahav Archaeological project).

Fig. 5: Woman and child figurine, Dor (Persian period). Source: Stern, 2010: fig. 13:5 (Courtesy of Tel Dor Archaeological project).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Avigad, N., 1960: "Excavations at Makmish, 1958: Preliminary Report". IEJ 10, 90–96.

Bliss, F. J. / Macalister, R. A. S., 1902: *Excavations in Palestine During the Years 1898–1900*. London.

Bobou, O., 2015: *Children in the Hellenistic World: Statues and Representation*. Oxford.

Budin, S. L., 2011: *Images of Woman and Child from the Bronze Age: Reconsidering Fertility, Maternity, and Gender in the Ancient World*. New York.

Ciasca, A., 1963: "Un deposito di statuette da Tell Gat". OrAnt 2, 45–63.

Cornelius, I., 2014: "'East Meets West': Trends in Terracotta Figurines". In C. Frevel / K. Pyschny / I. Cornelius (eds.): *A "Religious Revolution" in Yehûd? The Material Culture of the Persian Period as a Test Case*. OBO 267. Fribourg/Göttingen. Pp. 67–93.

Culican, W., 1969: "Dea Tyria Gravida". AJBA 1, 35–50.

Erlich, A., 2006: "The Persian Period Terracotta Figurines from Maresha in Idumea: Local and Regional Aspects". Trans 32, 45–59.

— 2014: "Terracotta Figurines". In I. Stern (ed.): *The Excavations of Maresha Subterranean Complex 57: The 'Heliodorus' Cave*. BARIS 2652. Oxford. Pp. 39–70.

Frevel, C., 1994: *Aschera und der Ausschließlichkeitsanspruch YHWHs: Beiträge zu literarischen, religionsgeschichtlichen und ikonographischen Aspekten der Ascheradiskussion*. BBB 94,1–2. Weinheim.

Frevel, C. / Pyschny, K., forthcoming: "On Headgears, Beards, and Clothes: Revaluating Typological Indicators in the Case of Southern Levantine Figurines from Persian and Early Hellenistic Times".

Frevel, C. / Pyschny, K. / Cornelius, I. (eds.), 2014: *A "Religious Revolution" in Yehûd? The Material Culture of the Persian Period as a Test Case*. OBO 267. Fribourg/Göttingen.

Jacobs, P. F., 2015: *Lahav IV: The Figurines of Tell Halif*. Winona Lake.

Karageorghis, J., 1999: *The Coroplastic Art of Ancient Cyprus V: The Cypro-Archaic Period. Small Female Figurines B: Figurines moulées*. Nicosia.

Kunz-Lübcke, A., 2007: *Das Kind in den antiken Kulturen des Mittelmeers: Israel—Ägypten—Griechenland*. Neukirchen-Vluyn.

Langin-Hooper, S. M., 2020: *Figurines in Hellenistic Babylonia: Miniaturization and Cultural Hybridity*. Cambridge.

Lipiński, E., 2003: "Phoenician Cult Expressions in the Persian Period". In W. G. Dever / S. Gitin (eds.): *Symbiosis, Symbolism and the Power of the Past: Canaan, Ancient Israel, and Their Neighbors from the Late Bronze Age through Roman Palaestina: Proceedings of the Centennial Symposium W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research and American Schools of Oriental Research, Jerusalem, May 29–May 31, 2000*. Winona Lake. Pp. 297–308.

Maillard, P., 2019: *Les terres cuites des Salines de Kition: Étude d'un culte chypriote d'époque Classique*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Lausanne.

Meyer, J-W., 2001: "Kind und Kindheit im Alten Orient". In G. Scholz / A. Ruhl (eds.): *Perspektiven auf Kindheit und Kinder*. Wiesbaden. Pp. 215–233.

Nakhai, B. A., 2014: "Mother-and-Child Figurines in the Levant from the Late Bronze Age through the Persian Period". In J. R. Spencer / R. A. Mullins / J. A. Brody (eds.): *Material Culture Matters: Essays on the Archaeology of the Southern Levant in Honor of Seymour Gitin*. Winona Lake. Pp. 165–198.

Negbi, O., 1966: *A Deposit of Terracottas and Statuettes from Tel Sippor*. Atiqot 6. Jerusalem.

Nunn, A., 2000: *Der figürliche Motivschatz Phöniziens, Syriens und Transjordaniens vom 6. bis zum 4. Jahrhundert v. Chr.* OBO SA 18. Freiburg/Göttingen.

Pyschny, K., 2019: "Concepts and Contexts of Female and Male Nudity in the Iconography of the Southern Levant". In C. Berner et al. (eds.): *Clothing and Nudity in the Hebrew Bible*. London. Pp. 127–161.

Schwyn, I., 2000: "Kinderbetreuung im 9.–7. Jahrhundert: Eine Untersuchung anhand der Darstellungen auf neuassyrischen Reliefs". lectio difficilior 1/2000, http://www.lectio.unibe.ch/00_1/1-2000-k.pdf.

Stern, E., 1982: *Material Culture of the Land of the Bible in the Persian Period 538–332 B.C.* Warminster.

— 2010: "Figurines and Cult Objects of the Iron Age and Persian Period". In E. Stern (ed.): *Excavations at Dor: Figurines, Cult Objects and Amulets, 1980–2000 Seasons*. Jerusalem. Pp. 3–116.

Tufnell, O., 1953: *Lachisch III (Tell Ed Duweir): The Iron Age*. London.

Winter, I. J., 1995: “Aestetics in Ancient Mesopotamian Art”. In J. M. Sasson (ed.): *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*. Vol. 4. New York. Pp. 2569–2580.

Winter, U., 1983: *Frau und Göttin: Exegetische und ikonographische Studien zum weiblichen Gottesbild im alten Israel und in dessen Umwelt*. OBO 53. Freiburg/Göttingen.

A CONFLATION OF DIVINE AND ROYAL IMAGERY? THE CASE OF THE WINGED SYMBOL IN ACHAEMENID PERSIA

Louis C. Jonker

1. INTRODUCTION

The celebrant of this volume loves images! Since I met him for the first time in 1983 when I was an Honours student in Semitic Languages and Cultures, and he a Master's student, I was highly impressed by his vast knowledge of the ancient Near East (or, rather, ancient Western Asia, as the celebrant would call this region today). At our first meeting, he showed me many pictures and images, and explained enthusiastically why these were so significant. Being somebody who loves texts, I secretly did not share his enthusiasm at that occasion. However, over the years of our friendship and while being colleagues in sister departments at Stellenbosch University, I saw him grow into one of the international experts in ancient Near Eastern iconography, and he has since our first meeting succeeded in convincing me that the images also have a right to be seen (with apology to Othmar Keel's famous title).[1] In fact, we often discuss the relationship between exegesis of images and exegesis of texts; and both of us are somewhat sceptical about what is now called "iconographic exegesis".[2] I am still somebody who loves texts more than images, but Sakkie Cornelius has taught me so much about the ancient Near East through the images that he studies.

Knowing well that the celebrant would rather be interested in images than in texts, I chose to rush in where angels fear to tread, namely to write on an image that we have discussed on many occasions, namely the winged symbol of Achaemenid Persia.[3] Garrison remarks the following about this image: "The most perplexing and often-debated question in the study of religious iconography of the Achaemenid Persians is the identification of the figure in the winged symbol".[4] In many discussions Sakkie Cornelius and I have speculated about whether the figure that is seen in the Achaemenid versions of this symbol depicts a king or a deity. Through these discussions, I was challenged to reflect on this issue within the framework of my own fields of specialisation. It is impossible for me to try to provide an iconographic analysis—there are numerous titles available on this issue, by "pure-blood"[5] iconographers[6]—and I would rather venture into an analogical argument. I am interested in the conspicuous analogy between the vagueness of imagery in the figure of the winged symbol, on the one hand, and the vagueness of the function of the royal audience hall ("apadana") in Achaemenid architecture, on the other hand.

---

[1] Cf. Keel, 1992.

[2] Cf. De Hulster / LeMon, 2014; De Hulster / Strawn / Bonfiglio, 2015.

[3] For definitions of the whole range of descriptive terms used for the Achaemenid imagery, see Garrison, 2009: 25–26. He distinguishes between the (i) "figure in winged ring"; (ii) "figure in winged disk"; (iii) "figure in winged ring/disk"; (iv) "winged ring-and-disk"; (v) "winged disk"; (vi) "winged ring-and-disk/disk"; and (vii) "winged symbol". I prefer to use the neutral term "winged symbol" in this contribution, which, according to Garrison's definition, is a "global term to designate all of the previous types". However, where I engage with secondary literature, I will use the terminology mentioned in the specific literature.

[4] Garrison, 2009: 25. See also his discussion in Garrison, 2017a: 185–246.

[5] With apology to J. K. Rowling of Harry Potter-fame.

[6] For comprehensive bibliographies, see Ornan, 2005: 207–242; Garrison, 2017a: 185–246.

I will start with a very brief summary of the arguments surrounding the winged symbol. Thereafter, I will proceed with a discussion on the seeming absence of temples in Achaemenid architecture and the prominence of audience halls, before formulating my analogical argument.

2. THE ACHAEMENID WINGED SYMBOL: FROM CLEARCUT IDENTIFICATIONS TO POLYVALENCE

It is impossible to provide a comprehensive overview of this matter in the short span of the present contribution, and I rather refer the reader to some of the excellent summaries that are already available in print.[7] However, I would like to take my point of departure in the celebrant's own contribution to the debate. In a volume on *Religions and Trade*, Cornelius discussed the matter under the title "'Trading Religions' and 'Visible Religion' in the Ancient Near East".[8] Probably under the pressure of the volume's theme, Cornelius discusses the winged symbol as one of the excellent ancient West-Asian religious symbols that travelled through trade activities. He states: "The winged disk/sun disk makes a good case study because it helps in understanding the dynamics of the transfer of ancient visual symbols. The symbol involved was not only adopted, but also adapted".[9] Before taking his reader on a tour from Africa to Asia, or more specifically from Egypt to Persia, he remarks that "(n)o attempt will be made to identify or name the deities which might be represented by or linked with the winged disks. Not in all cases does the disk represent only the sun or is it a symbol representing the sun god, but also a variety of deities".[10] From this remark, one might gather that Cornelius is convinced that the figure in the winged disk does indeed portray a deity, although it is not certain which deity or deities is/are represented. However, later in the essay, in the discussion of the Persian context, Cornelius brings more nuance into his discussion when he says: "(T)he identification of the figure in the disk is disputed. Traditionally it has been linked to the god Ahura Mazda, but this view has been criticized. It might be 'a sign of legitimate kingship'".[11] His conclusion on the winged disk case study reconfirms his awareness of the fact that the winged disk, and particularly the figure in it in Persian times, might have had royal connections:

> In sum, this first case study has traced how the winged disk/sun travelled from Egypt to the East as far as Persia. The emblem/symbol of the winged sun was adopted from Egypt, but adapted locally and given other meanings. The royal symbolism (or some link with royalty) prevailed in most cases, from the Hittites to the Persians. In Assyria (and taken over by the Persians) a figure was added to the disk and the Assyrians made this figure a war deity.[12]

Cornelius's vagueness on the matter is a good reflection of the scholarship on this issue. The fact that the same emblem/symbol existed through many centuries, and was widespread from Egypt to Persia, made it inevitable that—after adoption in new historical, cultural, political, and geographical contexts—it was also constantly adapted. Of necessity, one historical or geographical context does not have a final say on what the symbol means. The meaning of the symbol, together with its adaptions, should be interpreted time and again against the background of the "new" context. The same applies to the Achaemenid contexts.[13]

Older scholarship, such as that of Unvala and Shahbazi, suggested that the symbol and figure had connections with kingship.[14] Suggestions that the figure in the winged disk/ring symbolised the *fravashi*, or spirit, of the king (Unvala), or the royal *khvarenah*/glory (Shahbazi), were influential in scholarship for a long period.[15] Root, however, was convinced that the winged symbol with the figure represented the deity Ahura

[7] See Ornan, 2005; Garrison, 2009; 2017a; Shannahan, 2015: 27–41.
[8] Cornelius, 2014.
[9] Cornelius, 2014: 144–145.
[10] Cornelius, 2014: 145.
[11] Cornelius, 2014: 152–153. He refers to Garrison's suggestion of "a sign of legitimate kingship". Garrison, 2009: 39.
[12] Cornelius, 2014: 155.
[13] This does not only apply to the Persian heartland, but also to the outlying parts of the Achaemenid empire. See, e.g., the analysis of the Samarian depictions of the figure in a winged disk by Shannahan, 2015: 27–41.
[14] Unvala, 1950; Shahbazi, 1974.
[15] Brosius and Wiesehöfer, two more recent scholars, still reflect something of this view in their explanations. For example, Brosius (2006: 67) indicates: "[T]he figure in the winged disc featuring so prominently on the reliefs of

Mazda.[16] Most of the monumental depictions[17] do indeed place the symbol above the head of the king, and this position can be interpreted iconographically as the deity hovering over the king in protection and/or guidance.[18] Root has further argued that, since Ahura Mazda is the only deity mentioned in the monumental royal inscriptions of the Achaemenid heartland, the winged symbol with the figure must be a representation of that specific deity.[19]

Garrison returns to a much more nuanced position.[20] He cautions as follows: "Many of these theories involve projecting religious concepts from much later periods backward to the Achaemenid period".[21] He therefore sets out to rather look for associations in closer chronological proximity: "There exists … a concept documented much closer in time and space to the early Achaemenid period. This is the Elamite concept of *kitin*".[22] Garrison refers to Henkelman's definition of *kitin*, a definition quoted here again:

> *Kitin* is a hard-to-define abstraction that was crucial to (Neo-)Elamite religion and royal ideology. In broadest terms, *kitin* seems to refer to divine authority and power as it emanates from the divine down to the mortal world. "Divine protection" is a translation that covers some of its occurrences, but is probably just a weak rendering of its full significance for an Elamite audience. Other uses of the term lead to supplementary interpretations such as "god-given royal power," "divinely-enforced legal protection," "legal authority," "legal order, rules," and "divine symbol, emblem".[23]

Henkelman also refers to an inscription from the neo-Elamite period where it becomes clear that the most popular Elamite deity, Humban, bestows *kitin* on the king.[24] Furthermore, the Elamite version of the Daiva inscription of Xerxes (XPh, lines 29–32) mentions that the king uses *kitin* as instrument of power.[25]

Although Garrison finds these references of Henkelman significant, he warns that one should not simply replace anachronistic concepts such as *fravashi* or *kvarenah* (suggested in older scholarship) with *kitin*, with the result that one monolithic explanation dislodges another. More complex associations should be sought. He therefore suggests that

> the winged symbol may have become polyvalent by the Achaemenid period, laden with historical associations … Finally, it is clear that the image in the Achaemenid period had exceptionally intense linkages with Achaemenid dynastic ambitions … From an ideological standpoint, such a polyvalent

---

Achaemenid monumental architecture, including the royal tombs at Naqsh-I Rustam, has been identified as Ahuramazda, but another interpretation suggests that the figure represents Achaemenes, the eponymous founder of the empire. Most likely, however, is the suggestion that the image of the figure in the winged disc represented the 'good fortune', *khvarrah*, which symbolised the special status of the Achaemenid dynasty on which Ahuramazda had bestowed the kingship". Wiesehöfer (2001: 15) also indicates in connection with the Bisitun relief: "Above the scene hovers the 'winged' man, who for a long time was believed to depict Ahura Mazda, the god frequently invoked by Darius in the inscription, but perhaps this image should rather be interpreted as the *daimon* of his royal ancestors".

[16] Root, 1979: 169–176.

[17] The winged symbol occurs in the Achaemenid context mainly in some monumental reliefs at Bisitun, Naqš-i Ruštam, and Persepolis, but also in roll seal impressions and glyptic art of the Persepolis Fortification and Treasury archives. See Garrison, 2009 for a good catalogue and categorisation of Achaemenid occurrences of the winged symbol.

[18] See, e.g., Ornan, 2005: 234: "High positioning of an element within a given image implies high rank in ancient Near Eastern art. Therefore, the winged disc seems a perfect choice for representing major deities, who served as heads of pantheons. It may even be postulated that it was its position within the image that determined the choice of this symbol for representing major deities".

[19] See again Root, 1979: 169–176. This view is followed by many other scholars. See e.g., Lecoq, 1987: 379–382; Briant, 2002: 126; Stronach, 2003: 233–248; Shenkar, 2014: 47–65; Waters, 2014: 59; Compareti, 2020, 157–169.

[20] Garrison, 2009; 2017a; 2017b.

[21] Garrison, 2009: 36.

[22] Garrison, 2009: 36.

[23] Henkelman, 2008: 292.

[24] Henkelman, 2017: 273–346.

[25] XPh, 29–32: *ku-ud-da hi* ŠÀ-*ma* ^{AŠ}*da-a-ia-ma šà-ri mu*^{I}*-ur ap-pu-ka*$_4$ *da-a-ma ši-ib-be hu-ud-da-iš-da me-ni*^{I} *za-u-mi-in* ^{AN}*u-ra-mas-da-na* ^{DIŠ}*ú hu-be da-a-ma-da-na-um sa-ri ku-ud-da ki-te-in uk-ku ap-pi da da-a-ma ši-ib-be a-nu hu-ud-da-an* ("And among the lands there was [a place] where, formerly, [the people] made [for] the *daivā* their sacrificial feast[s]. Then, by the effort of Ahuramazdā [Uramasda], I devastated that place of *daivā* worship and I placed *kiten* upon them, lest the *daivā* their sacrificial feast be celebrated"; translation of Henkelman, 2008: 367). Cf. Cameron, 1959: 473; Vallat, 1977: 211.

> symbol as the figure in the winged ring/disk would have been an exceptionally powerful tool as Darius sought to legitimize both his specific seizure of power and his general dynastic program. The very restricted range of imagery in which the winged symbol occurs in both glyptic and monumental relief at the time of Darius, the very careful structural composition of those scenes, and the importance of the high frequency of the occurrence of the winged symbol with design elements that mark exceptionally high status/rank … suggest that the occurrence of the winged symbol is not simply random. While its specific divine signifier may have varied with context, its political content is without question: the legitimacy of specifically Achaemenid rule. It then becomes especially intriguing to consider the possibility that the winged symbol was chosen as one of the central images of Achaemenid kingship owing to its very polyvalence. This polyvalence could have been perceived as a potential catalyst for inviting more fluid readings of the symbol within specifically royal contexts. As several commentators have noted, in many scenes the figure in the winged ring/disk and the king are essentially one and the same.[26]

This position taken by Garrison signifies a much more complex understanding of the functioning of this symbol in Achaemenid times. Without denying that the symbol definitely recalled certain divine overtones, this position acknowledges simultaneously that the symbol became a prime expression of Achaemenid aspiration and royal ideology.

This brings us to the point to consider other architectural expressions of this royal ideology in the Achaemenid period. The issue of the prominence of the apadana in Achaemenid royal cities, and the seeming absence of temples, deserves our attention now.

3. ACHAEMENID RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS/ROYAL ARCHITECTURE

The following statement of Herodotus is well-known and often-quoted:

> Πέρσας δὲ οἶδα νόμοισι τοιοῖσιδε χρεωμένους, ἀγάλματα μὲν καὶ νηοὺς καὶ βωμοὺς οὐκ ἐν νόμῳ ποιευμένους ἱδρύεσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖσι ποιεῦσι μωρίην ἐπιφέρουσι, ὡς μὲν ἐμοὶ δοκέειν, ὅτι οὐκ ἀνθρωποφυέας ἐνόμισαν τοὺς θεοὺς κατά περ οἱ Ἕλληνες εἶναι:
> Now, the Persian, to my certain knowledge, have the following practices. It is not one of their customs to construct statues, temples, and altars; in fact, they count those who do so as fools, because (I suppose) they do not anthropomorphize the gods as the Greeks do (*Hist*. 1.131).[27]

Although commentators are fairly unanimous that this (and the following) statements of Herodotus are an over-interpretation of Persian religious customs in light of his own Greek bias,[28] it is quite interesting that archaeological evidence has proven Herodotus right that the Persians did not build temples.[29] However, apadanas are identified in some Achaemenid centres. The interpretation of these apadanas—not unlike the interpretation of the winged symbol and figure—remains a contentious matter. The term "apadana" refers in general to a large, hypostyle hall (that is, a hall built from stone with huge pillars) which functioned as an audience hall. More specifically, it refers to the audience halls that Darius I had constructed in the imperial centres, such as Susa and Persepolis. Schmitt describes these buildings as follows:

> The origins of audience halls of this highly specific type (to which one may possibly limit the designation *apadāna*) [that is, those found at Susa and Persepolis] are to be sought above all in the four-sided columned halls which were introduced by Cyrus the Great at Pasargadae … which themselves represent an intriguing amalgam of native and foreign influences … The great halls of Darius differed from those of Cyrus, however, in numerous respects; notably in the elevated locations chosen for them (conceivably a borrowing from Neo-Assyrian or Neo-Babylonian building practice), in their square, not rectangular, plans, in their use of cement rather than stone floors, and in their more impressive dimensions. The porticoes in this new form of audience hall were carried, as in Greek and Egyptian architecture, up to the same height as the ceiling of the main hall; and, where the palaces of Cyrus had

[26] Garrison, 2009: 38.
[27] The translation is by Waterfield, 2008: 60.
[28] See, e.g., Jacobs, 2001: 83–107; Henkelman, 2008; Potts, 2011: 811–825; Lincoln, 2013: 253–265; Morgan, 2016.
[29] Henkelman, 2012: 931–962; Calloeri, 2017: 385–416. Although there are numerous indications of (often open-air) ritual sites, religious architecture such as monumental temples remain absent in the archaeological record.

> been strictly freestanding, the new *apadāna*s were very conveniently and closely adjacent to the residential quarters of the king. There appear to have been at least two practical functions of an *apadāna*: to serve as a royal audience hall of unmatched size (it has been calculated that the great halls of Susa and Persepolis could each have held ten thousand persons) and to constitute a suitable backdrop to the elevated, enthroned monarch when he reviewed ceremonies or parades on the plain below.[30]

Root confirms the situation when she says: "There are very few installations in Achaemenid Iran that fit normative ideas of what constitutes a 'temple' as a structure for the housing of a deity and/or for the exercise of 'religious observances'".[31] Lynch echoes the same sentiment: "Imperial religious culture took a distinctive turn under the Persians, at least when compared with the Egyptian, Assyrian, and Babylonian empires … Notably, great temples and cults played virtually no role within the dominant imperial system".[32] However, both Root and Lynch take a further step by indicating that palaces and audience halls (or apadanas) in Achaemenid centres were expressions of royal ideology that replaced the temple ideology of other ancient Near Eastern centres. Root makes the point as follows: "[There was] an inherent fluidity in the conceptualization between what we speak of as 'palaces' or audience halls in Persepolis and what may with equal validity be construed as 'temples' in the sense of being sites of religiously imbued observances focusing on the person of the king 'in residence'".[33] Lynch agrees: "Despite these absences [of temples], there are strong lines of continuity between Achaemenid palace ideology and ancient Near Eastern temple ideology … While Persians evidently supported local cults and temples, it appears that the primary means of manifesting divine power was through the imperial palace".[34] One should thus be careful not to work with pre-conceived definitions of "temples" as religious structures and "palaces" as royal structures. The continuities between these architectural features in Achaemenid Persia—as part of the wider Near East, geographically and chronologically—should be given account for in our own discussions in order to find more complex explanations for the phenomena we observe.

4. ANY ANALOGY OUT THERE?

In the two subsections above, it became clear that the state of research into the winged symbol with (or without) figure as used during the Achaemenid period, and on temple/palace architecture of the Achaemenids, is more or less the same. We have established above that polyvalency surrounding the winged symbol opens the door for interpreting the symbol as having religious overtones, but also as one of the very prominent expressions of Achaemenid aspiration and royal ideology. We have furthermore seen that, although there is a great measure of certainty that the apadanas were mainly used for audiences with the king, that these halls also had some religious overtones when observing the continuities with ancient Near Eastern temples. In the case of both the winged symbol and the apadana, the royal function and ideology is prominent, while the religious association is more subdued.[35]

---

[30] Schmitt / Stronach, 1986 (the quotation is from the online version).
[31] Root, 2010: 170.
[32] Lynch, 2014: 61–62.
[33] Root, 2010: 207.
[34] Lynch, 2014: 62–63.
[35] An issue which is left out of consideration here, is the indication by some scholars that there might have been winged symbols, without the figure, in the apadana at Persepolis. This view is, however, not based on actual reliefs or fragments that were found in the apadana, but rather on the assumption that, while other buildings had them, that the apadana should also have had them. Garrison (2009: 28) remarks the following about this issue: "How much significance one ought to attach to the apparent absence of the figure in the winged ring/disk on the Apadana and the Palace of Darius depends to a great deal on whether the so-called Central Building is to be dated to the reign of Darius. The figure in the winged ring is found floating above the scenes of the enthroned king and crown prince supported by subject peoples (on the doorjambs of the eastern doorway …) and the procession of king and attendants (on the doorjambs of the southern and northern doorways) in the Central Building. The execution and detailing of each figure in the winged ring in the scenes are exceptionally fine. While the figure in all cases holds one hand open, parallel to the plane of the relief, and grasps a ring in the other hand, i.e., exactly the same as on the reliefs at Behistun and Naqsh-i Rustam, there are many iconographic and stylistic details that set these images apart from those at Behistun and Naqsh-i Rustam".

At this point, Silverman's investigation is very helpful. He investigates the intersections of "mythology, religion, and imperial religious policy" in an essay with the following question as its title "Was there an Achaemenid 'theology' of kingship?" He starts his essay with the following:

> Achaemenid royal ideology—let alone religion—evades anything but minimal scholarly consensus, despite its arguable importance for understanding the Persian Empire generally. To find a new way into the problem, this paper tries to analyze one narrow question: how did the Achaemenid Great Kings themselves conceptualize or portray their rule, particularly as this relates to 'religious' ideas?[36]

I would argue that this is indeed the question that one should ask when trying to interpret the function of the winged symbol and the apadana. The religious conceptual world of the Achaemenids did, of course, give rise to the use of the iconographical symbols, architecture, and texts of their time. My argument is thus that the function of the winged symbol and the apadana should be investigated analogically, since both are expressions of the same royal/religious ideology.

In light of his investigation, Silverman cautions in the introduction to his essay:

> Since such enquiry requires the evaluation of such diverse areas as mythology, cult, and imperial policy, this paper proposes using the over-arching term 'theology' rather than 'ideology'. This use is intended to emphasize the ways in which ideas interrelated within a particular religious and cultural tradition. While for analytical purposes it can be useful to distinguish between things political and religious, this distinction can be difficult to maintain meaningfully, particularly in an ancient context. Is the idea of divine royal patronage a political or a religious idea? It certainly has political implications and expediencies, yet it can only be effective within a system that accepts both the suitability and reality of said idea; there would be no point in claiming support from a god no subjects believed existed or if none accepted the idea of divine legitimation as reasonable. With this perspective, an investigation into the Achaemenid theology of kingship hopefully will lead to new insights for broader areas of Persian imperial ideology.[37]

The distinction between religion and politics, between deity and king, that pervades scholarly arguments about the meaning of the winged symbol and the apadana, is untenable. The choice is not simply between religious OR royal; it can—within the ancient Achaemenid context—also be religious AND royal. Silverman does not agree with Lincoln when he uses the term "dualism" to describe this tendency,[38] and rather opts for using terms from theology, namely "deferred eschatology, or perhaps as a 'realized eschatology'".[39] These are not necessarily better terms, and are too laden and anachronistic for what we find in the ancient contexts. However, Silverman's description of this theology of kingship is valuable for our argument:

> [T]he kings play an integral part in Ahuramazda's plan, acting like *saošiiants*[40] in bringing the world towards its final fulfilment, both through improvement and through foreshadowing … [T]he kings viewed themselves as making the world safe for Ahuramazda's religion, drawing good from things both good and evil. Their role as kings was non-priestly and heroic but still divinely sanctioned, one that enabled priests to do their job. They fostered useful and pleasant plants and animals and brought order to their realm by bringing unity and harmony to diversity. This role, however, did not negate the centrality of their Persian identity, at least from Darius onwards. The above has an additional nuance beyond the orderly … It is orderly, yes—just as in previous ancient Near Eastern empires—but it is a

[36] Silverman, 2016: 172.
[37] Silverman, 2016: 172.
[38] See Lincoln, 2010: 95.
[39] Silverman, 2016: 188.
[40] Silverman took over this term from Skjærvø who speculated that Darius and other Achaemenid kings have seen themselves as *saošiiant*s. See Skjærvø, 2005: 52–84. The term can roughly be translated with "revitaliser" or "overcomer", and was understood as a figure who ushered in history's consummation. In Zoroastrian religion, this figure was seen as somebody who contributed towards the perfection of the world. Silverman summarises (somewhat anachronistically) the implications of this term for Achaemenid religion as follows: "This implies that the great kings did, indeed, view themselves as an integral part of Ahuramazda's plan to perfect the world. The use of *šiyāti* [well-being], then, imparts a connotation of teleology to the Achaemenids' self-understanding; they are bringing in the perfection of the world through their efforts, whether through the construction of paradises, population increases, or conquest. But this is a task reserved for Persian rule" (Silverman, 2016: 187).

> teleological order, a progressive order that contributes to the end (in both senses) of the world … [T]he teleological element makes the Achaemenid royal theology distinctive from the elements inherited from the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian Empires. Similarly, the non-divinity but divine importance of the king as *saošiiant* adds a new emphasis. One might posit that the Achaemenids were responsible for the change of emphasis in Iranian traditions from multiple *saošiiant*s to individual *saošiiant*s par excellence … This overall paradigm is one that could accommodate and adapt to all kinds of situations and nuance in details; nevertheless, it is the kind of central, dominant paradigm that would radically alter elements assimilated by it.[41]

Silverman's description (although his use of Zoroastrian understandings in his argument could be criticised as anachronistic) assists us to understand the Achaemenid royal-religious context within which the winged symbol and the apadana should be interpreted. Individually and analogically, both of them gave expression to a complex system of ideological thought in which the divine and the royal were integrated. The ambiguity (or polyvalence) of both the winged symbol and the apadana is therefore no coincidence and are not vague expressions that burden our interpretations of these iconographic and architectural images; the ambiguity is rather a fairly precise expression of a complex system of ideological thought in Achaemenid times.

5. CONCLUSION

I started this contribution by pointing out that there is often scholarly disagreement whether the winged symbol and figure are expressions of a deity, or rather of a king. Further investigation showed that there is an emphasis on their polyvalence in the present state of research. I continued my argument by indicating that the same tendency can be observed in studies on the interpretation of the apadana architecture. It is nowadays the consensus view that this monumental feature of some of the Achaemenid centres primarily had a royal audience function, but that it was not devoid of religious overtones. Both these images, the winged symbol and figure together with the apadana architecture, were then viewed against the background of the "royal theology" that Silverman has described in his contribution. We can conclude that both the winged symbol and the apadana architecture, when studied analogically, were excellent expressions of a complex system of ideological thought in the Achaemenid period.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Briant, P., 2002: *From Cyrus to Alexander. A History of the Persian Empire.* Winona Lake.

Brosius, M., 2006: *The Persians: An Introduction.* London.

Calloeri, P., 2017: "Achaemenid 'Ritual Architecture' vs. 'Religious Architecture': Reflections on the Elusive Archaeological Evidence of the Religion of the Achaemenids". In W. F. M. Henkelman / C. Redard (eds.): *Persian Religion in the Achaemenid Period*. CLeO 16. Wiesbaden. Pp. 385–416.

Cameron, G. G., 1959: "The 'Daiva' Inscription of Xerxes: in Elamite". WO 2, 470–476.

Compareti, M., 2020: "Contributions for the Identification of the Human Bust on a Winged Disc in Iranian Arts". In K-A. Niknami / A. Hozhabri (eds.): *Archaeology of Iran in the Historical Period*. University of Tehran Science and Humanities Series. Berlin. Pp. 157–169.

Cornelius, I., 2014: "'Trading Religions' and 'Visible Religion' in the Ancient Near East". In P. Wick / V. Rabens (eds.): *Religions and Trade: Religious Formation, Transformation and Cross-Cultural Exchange between East and West*. DHR 5. Leiden/Boston. Pp. 141–165.

De Hulster, I. J. / LeMon, J. M. (eds.), 2014: *Image, Text, Exegesis: Iconographic Interpretation and the Hebrew Bible*. LHBOTS 588. London.

De Hulster, I. J. / Strawn, B. A. / Bonfiglio, R. P., 2015: *Iconographic Exegesis of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: An Introduction to Its Method and Practice*. Göttingen.

Garrison, M., 2009: "Visual Representation of the Divine and the Numinous in Early Achaemenid Iran: Old Problems, New Directions". Iconography of Deities and Demons: Electronic Pre-Publication, http://www.religionswissenschaft.uzh.ch/idd/prepublications/e_idd_iran.pdf.

[41] Silverman, 2016: 188–189.

— 2017a: “Beyond Auramazda and the Winged Symbol: Imagery of the Divine and Numinous at Persepolis”. In W. F. M. Henkelman / C. Redard (eds.): *Persian Religion in the Achaemenid Period*. CLeO 16. Wiesbaden. Pp. 185–246.
— 2017b. *The Ritual Landscape at Persepolis: Glyptic Imagery from the Persepolis Fortification and Treasury Archives*. SAOC 72. Chicago.
Henkelman, W. F. M., 2008: *The Other Gods Who Are: Studies in Elamite-Iranian Acculturation Based on the Persepolis Fortification Texts*. Achaemenid History 14. Leiden.
— 2012: “The Achaemenid Heartland: An Archaeological-Historical Perspective”. In D. T. Potts (ed.): *A Companion to the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East*. Oxford. Pp. 931–962.
— 2017: “Humban and Auramazdā: Royal Gods in a Persian Landscape”. In W. F. M. Henkelman / C. Redard (eds.): *Persian Religion in the Achaemenid Period*. CLeO 16. Wiesbaden. Pp. 273–346.
Jacobs, B., 2001: “Kultbilder und Gottesvorstellung bei den Persern: Zu Herodot, Historiae 1.131 und Clemens Alexandrinus”. In T. Bakir / H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg (eds.): *Achaemenid Anatolia: Proceedings of the First International Symposium on Anatolia in the Achaemenid Period*. Leiden. Pp. 83–107.
Keel, O., 1992: *Das Recht der Bilder gesehen zu werden: Drei Fallstudien zur Methode der Interpretation altorientalischer Bilder*. OBO 122. Fribourg.
Lecoq, P., 1987: “Un problème de religion Achéménide: Ahura Mazda ou Xvarnah?” Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies 50/2, 379–382.
Lincoln, B., 2010: *Religion, Empire, and Torture: The Case of Achaemenian Persia, with a Postscript on Abu Ghraib*. Chicago/London.
— 2013: “Religion, Empire, and the Spectre of Orientalism: A Recent Controversy in Achaemenid Studies”. JNES 72/2, 253–265.
Lynch, M., 2014: *Monotheism and Institutions in the Book of Chronicles: Temple, Priesthood, and Kingship in Post-Exilic Perspective*. FAT II/64. Tübingen.
Morgan, J., 2016: *Greek Perspectives on the Achaemenid Empire: Persia through the Looking Glass*. Edinburgh.
Ornan, T., 2005: “A Complex System of Religious Symbols: The Case of the Winged Disc in Near Eastern Imagery of the First Millennium BCE”. In C. E. Suter / C. Uehlinger (eds.): *Crafts and Images in Contact: Studies on Eastern Mediterranean Art of the First Millennium BCE*. OBO 210. Fribourg/Göttingen. Pp. 207–235.
Potts, D. T., 2011: “Iran”. In T. Insoll (ed.): *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Ritual and Religion*. Oxford. Pp. 811–825.
Root, M. C., 1979: *The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art: Essays on the Creation of an Iconography of Empire*. AI 9. Leiden.
— 2010: “Palace to Temple—King to Cosmos: Achaemenid Foundation Texts in Iran”. In M. J. Boda / J. Novotny (eds.): *From the Foundations to the Crenellations: Essays on Temple Building in the Ancient Near East and Hebrew Bible*. AOAT 366. Münster. Pp. 165–210.
Shenkar, M., 2014: *Intangible Spirits and Graven Images: The Iconography of Deities in the Pre-Islamic Iranian World*. Magical and Religious Literature of Late Antiquity 4. Leiden.
Schmitt, R. / Stronach, D., 1986: “Apadāna”. Encyclopaedia Iranica II/2, http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/apadana.
Shahbazi, A. S., 1974: “An Achaemenid Symbol I: A Farewell to ‘Fravahr’ and ‘Ahuramazda’”. Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran 7, 135–144.
Shannahan, J., 2015: “Samarian Depictions of the Figure in the Winged Disc”. Notae Numismaticae. Zapiski Numizmatyczne 10, 27–41.
Silverman, J. M., 2016: “Was there an Achaemenid ‘Theology’ of Kingship? The Intersections of Mythology, Religion, and Imperial Religious Policy”. In D. V. Edelman / A. Fitzpatrick-McKinley / P. Guillaume (eds.): *Religion in the Achaemenid Persian Empire*. ORA 17. Tübingen. Pp. 172–196.
Skjærvø, P. O., 2005: “The Achaemenids and the Avesta”. In V. Sarkhosh Curtis / S. Stewart (eds.): *Birth of the Persian Empire*. London. Pp. 52–84.
Stronach, D., 2003: “Independent Media: Archaeological Notes from the Homeland”. In G. B Lanfranchi / M. Roaf / R. Rollinger (eds.): *Continuity of Empire (?): Assyria, Media, Persia.* History of the Ancient Near East Monographs 5. Padova. Pp. 233–248.

Unvala, J. M., 1950: “The Winged Disk and the Winged Human Figure on Ancient Persian Monuments”. In *Dr. Modi Memorial Volume: Papers on Indo-Iranian and Other Subjects in Honour of J. Jamshedji Modi*. Bombay. Pp. 488–513.

Vallat, F., 1977: *Corpus des inscriptions royales en elamite achemenide*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Paris.

Waterfield, R., 2008: *Herodotus: The Histories: A New Translation*. Oxford World’s Classics. Oxford.

Waters, M., 2014: *Ancient Persia: A Concise History of the Achaemenid Empire, 550–330 BCE*. Cambridge.

Wiesehöfer, J., 2001: *Ancient Persia from 550 BC to 650 AD*. London.

DIE BETERSTATUE VON TELL FEKHERIYE ALS DOKUMENT DER KÖNIGSIDEOLOGIE DES HERRSCHERS HADDAYISʿI VON BĪT BAḪIĀNI

Herbert Niehr[1]

1. EINFÜHRUNG

In den letzten Jahren wurden diverse Arbeiten zur Königsideologie in den westsemitischen Königreichen der Spätbronze- und Eisenzeit vorgelegt.[2] Hierdurch konnten bedeutende Einblicke in diesen Bereich der altorientalischen Herrschaftsausübung gewonnen werden. Die Ergebnisse dieser Untersuchungen bilden auch den Ausgangspunkt für die hier gestellte Frage nach der Königsideologie des Herrschers Haddayisʿi von Bīt Baḫiāni (ca. 850–800 v. Chr.),[3] die sich ausweislich der Beterstatue vom Tell Fekheriye, dem antiken Sikāni, und ihrer assyrisch-aramäischen Bilingue in ihren Grundzügen ausmachen lässt (Abb. 1). Wurden doch die Beterstatue vom Tell Fekheriye und ihre Bilingue in der bisherigen Forschung nur in geringem Ausmaß als Quelle für die Königsideologie im nordöstlichen Syrien des ersten Viertel des 1. Jahrtausends v. Chr. wahrgenommen.[4] Insofern besteht noch ein gewisser Nachholbedarf im Erfassen der königsideologischen Aussagen der Statue und ihrer Inschrift.

Im Verlauf der Gründung diverser aramäischer Königreiche und ihrer jeweiligen Hauptstädte entstanden auch Kanzleien für die königliche Administration. Aufgrund der schriftlichen aramäischen Quellen ab dem 9. Jahrhundert v. Chr. lassen sich solche Kanzleien in Nordwestsyrien mit Samʾal (Zincirli), in Zentralsyrien mit Arpad, Hamath und Damaskus sowie in Ostsyrien mit Gūzāna (Tell Halaf) ausmachen.[5] Die aramäische Inschrift vom Tell Fekheriye entstammt dieser letztgenannten Kanzlei.[6] Die Inschrift ist auf dem politischen und kulturgeschichtlichen Hintergrund der seit dem 12. Jahrhundert v. Chr. belegten Interaktionen von Aramäern und Assyrern in der Djezira, näherhin im Bereich des Khabur, zu lokalisieren.[7]

Was die beiden Sprachen der Inschrift auf der Beterstatue vom Tell Fekheriye angeht, so ist mittlerweile geklärt, dass die assyrische Version die Vorlage für die aramäische Version darstellt. Dies sieht man schon allein daran, dass die assyrische Version auf der Vorderseite angebracht ist und deshalb für die aramäische Inschrift nicht genug Platz auf der Rückseite verblieb.[8] Auf der Basis der assyrischen Inschrift wurde die

---

[1] Mit diesem Artikel danke ich Izak Cornelius für viele Jahre der gemeinsamen wissenschaftlichen Zusammenarbeit in Stellenbosch und Tübingen sowie für die vielfache Unterstützung, die ich als Professor Extraordinary in Ancient Studies an der Universität Stellenbosch seit 2002 erleben durfte. Für ihre Hilfe bei der Abfassung des Artikels danke ich meinen Tübinger Mitarbeiterinnen Magdalena Bekavac, Dagmar Kühn und Susanne Maier.

[2] S. etwa Amadasi Guzzo, 1984; Dion, 1997: 242–270; Xella, 2003; Green, 2010; Dick, 2011; Merlo, 2014: 111–118, 120–122; Knapp, 2015: 277–300; Salo, 2017; Kühn, 2018; Töyräänvuori, 2018; Niehr, 2018; 2020a; 2020b sowie die Beiträge in den Sammelbänden von Levin / Müller, 2017 und Gianto / Dubovský, 2018.

[3] Zur Geschichte von Gūzāna und Bīt Baḫiāni vgl. u.a. die Übersichten bei Lipiński, 2000: 119–133; Dornauer, 2010; Fuchs, 2011; Novák, 2013; Younger, 2016: 242–269; Mynářová / Dušek, 2019: 63–68.

[4] So etwa bei Merlo, 2014: 118, 122; Morrow, 2017: 112, 115, 118, 121; Dušek / Mynářová, 2016; Kühn, 2018: 163–165; Mynářová / Dušek, 2019: 68–73.

[5] Dazu Gzella, 2015: 57–77.

[6] Vgl. Gzella, 2015: 63–67.

[7] Zu den aramäisch-assyrischen Interaktionen im Bereich des Khabur vgl. etwa Kühne, 2009; Fales, 2011; Novák, 2013: 266–269; Edmonds, 2019 und Mynářová / Dušek, 2019: 63–68.

[8] So Lipiński, 1994: 19.

aramäische Version erstellt, die zusammen mit der erweiterten assyrischen Vorlage auf die jüngere und bis heute erhaltene Statue geschrieben wurde.[9] Dabei ist die Eigenständigkeit der aramäischen Version nicht zu übersehen.[10]

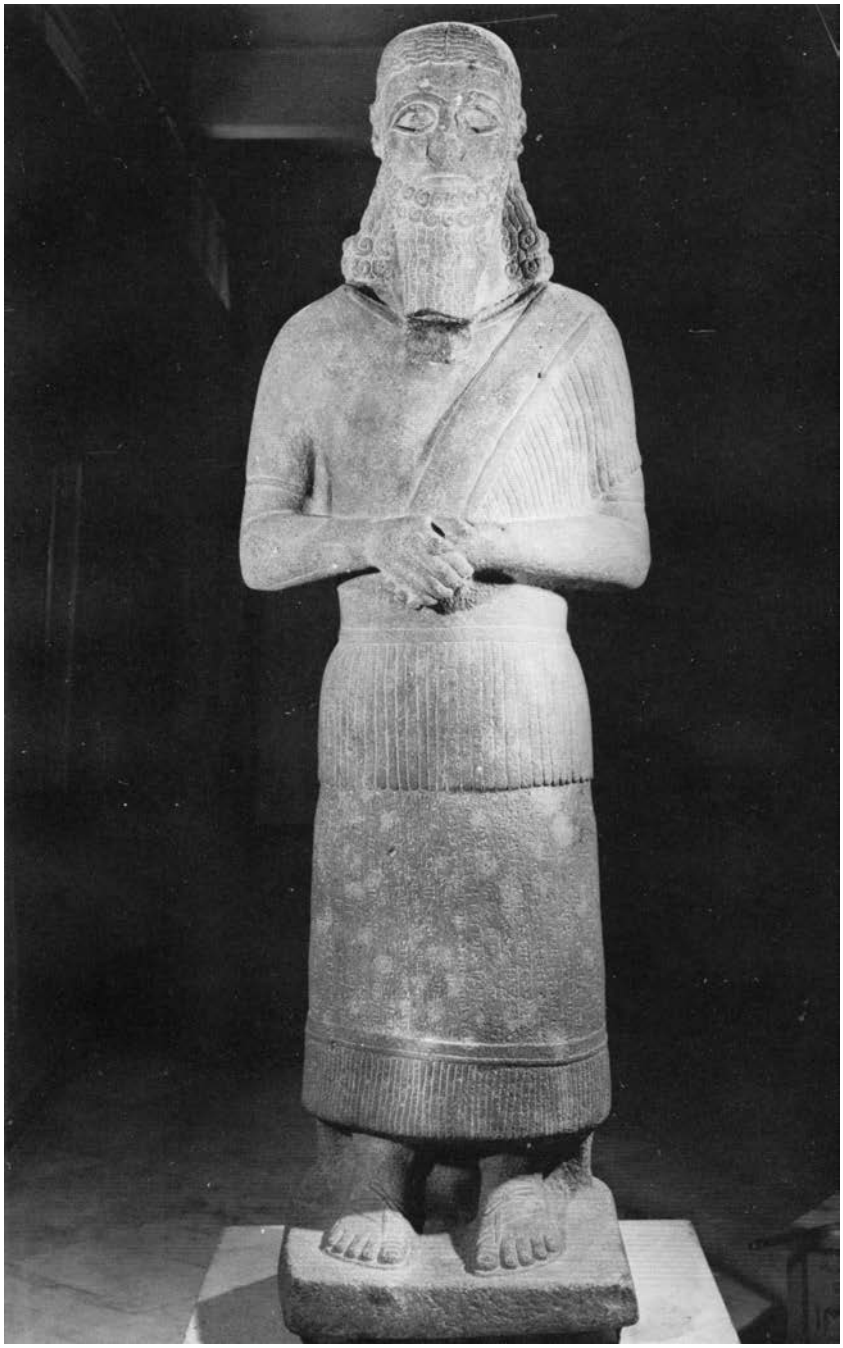


Abb. 1: Statue, Tell Fekheriye (ca. 9. Jh. v. Chr.).
Aus: Abou-Assaf / Bordreuil / Millard, 1982: Pl. I.

[9] Dazu zuletzt Crouch / Hutton, 2019: 137–227.

[10] Zum Vergleich beider Inschriften auf der Beterstatue vgl. bes. Abou-Assaf / Bordreuil / Millard, 1982: 67–79; Fales, 1983; Greenfield / Shaffer, 1983; Dušek / Mynářová, 2016: 10–19; Quick, 2018: 138–151; Crouch / Hutton, 2019: 41–227. Die Redaktionsgeschichte der Inschriften behandeln u.a. Abou-Assaf / Bordreuil / Millard, 1982: 67f; Gropp / Lewis, 1985: 55f; Leonhard, 1995; Parker, 1999: 50–52; Schwiderski, 2003; Dušek / Mynářová, 2016: 19–29; Mynářová / Dušek, 2019: 68–70; Crouch / Hutton, 2019: 6–22. Die Paläographie der aramäischen Schrift wird bei Abou-Assaf / Bordreuil / Millard, 1982: 87–97; Lipiński, 1994: 26–30; Rollston, 2010: 33f, 37–39; Fales / Grassi, 2016: 257f diskutiert.

Die aramäische Version der Inschrift vom Tell Fekheriye, die auch in die neueste Auflage der Sammlung „Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften“ (KAI) als Nummer 309 aufgenommen wurde,[11] stellt den Ausgangspunkt der folgenden Überlegungen zur Königsideologie des Herrschers Haddayisʿi von Bīt Baḫiāni dar.

2. DIE ARAMÄISCHE INSCHRIFT IN ÜBERSETZUNG

Da der Text sehr gut lesbar ist und sich auch keine großen philologischen Schwierigkeiten stellen, kann folgende Übersetzung der aramäischen Inschrift geboten werden:

(1) Die Statue, die Haddayisʿi ist,[12] welche er errichtet hat vor Hadadsikāni,
(2) dem Kanalinspektor von Himmel und Erde, der ausgießt Reichtum und gibt Weideland
(3) und Tränke allen Ländern und gibt Opferkorb und Libationsgefäß
(4) allen Göttern, seinen Brüdern, dem Kanalinspektor aller Flüsse, der erblühen lässt
(5) alle Länder, dem barmherzigen Gott, zu dem das Beten gut ist, der thront
(6) (in) Sikāni, dem großen Herrn, seinem[13] Herrn, Haddayisʿi, der König von Gūzāna, der Sohn
(7) des Sesnūri, des Königs von Gūzāna, hat für das Leben seiner Lebenskraft[14] und für die Länge seiner Tage
(8) und für den Reichtum seiner Jahre und für das Wohlergehen seines Hauses und für das Wohlergehen seiner Nachkommenschaft und für das Wohlergehen
(9) seiner Menschen und für das Verschwinden der Krankheit von ihm, und um zu erhören sein Gebet und um anzu-
(10) nehmen das Wort seines Mundes, (sie) errichtet und ihm gegeben. Und wer hiernach
(11) (sie) wegnimmt, um sie neu zu errichten, der soll meinen Namen[15] darauf setzen. Und wer tilgt meinen Namen von ihr
(12) und setzt seinen Namen (darauf): Der starke Hadad soll sein Gegner sein. Statue des Haddayisʿi,
(13) des Königs von Gūzāna und von Sikāni und Azran. Für die Erhaltung[16] seines Thrones
(14) und für die Länge seines Lebens und dass das Wort seines Mundes bei Göttern und bei Menschen
(15) gut sei, hat er dieses Bild gemacht, besser als das vorherige hat er es gemacht.[17] Vor Hadad,
(16) der in Sikāni wohnt, dem Herrn des Khabur, hat er sein Bild errichtet. Wer entfernt meinen Namen von den Gegenständen
(17) des Tempels des Hadad, meines Herrn: Mein Herr Hadad möge sein Brot und sein Wasser nicht annehmen aus
(18) seiner Hand. Šuwala, meine Herrin, möge sein Brot und sein Wasser nicht annehmen aus seiner Hand. Er möge
(19) säen und nicht ernten. Und tausend (Maß) Gerste möge er säen und ein halbes Maß möge er ernten davon.
(20) Und hundert Schafe mögen säugen ein Lamm und nicht werde es satt. Und hundert Kühe mögen säugen

[11] Vgl. Donner / Röllig, [5]2002: 74f und dazu die Ausgaben, Übersetzungen und Kommentierungen der Inschrift bei Abou-Assaf, 1981; Abou-Assaf / Bordreuil / Millard, 1982; Kaufman, 1982; Fales, 1983; Gropp / Lewis, 1985; Sader, 1987: 14–20; Bordreuil, 1993; Leonhard, 1995; Lipiński, 1994: 19–81; Dušek / Mynářová, 2016: 10–19; Fales / Grassi, 2016: 69–81.

[12] S. dazu 3.8.

[13] Aufgrund der assyrischen Vorlage ist im aramäischen Text *mrʾ(h)* anzusetzen; anders Fales / Grassi, 2016: 71, 74, die *mrʾ* als Status constructus verstehen.

[14] Zu aram. *nbš* als „Lebenskraft“ vgl. Kühn, 2005: 122f.

[15] Bei aramäisch *šmym* liegt m.E. eher ein Schreibfehler als ein assyrischer Einfluss vor; vgl. auch die Diskussion bei Abou-Assaf / Bordreuil / Millard, 1982: 32 und Fales / Grassi, 2016: 76.

[16] Vgl. zu diesem Terminus Dietrich / Loretz, 2006 und zuletzt die Diskussion bei Fales / Grassi, 2016: 77f.

[17] Abou-Assaf / Bordreuil / Millard, 1982: 25, 34; Lipiński, 1994: 15, 64 und Fales / Grassi, 2016: 71, 78 heben zu Recht den Aspekt der Verbesserung und nicht der Vergrößerung bei der Semantik des Verbs *ytr* H-Stamm hervor.

(21) ein Kalb und nicht werde es satt. Und hundert Frauen mögen stillen ein Kind und nicht werde es satt.
(22) Und hundert Frauen mögen im Ofen Brot backen und ihn nicht füllen. Und aus den Abfallgruben mögen seine Menschen Gerste sammeln, sie mögen sie essen.
(23) Und die Pest, die Geißel des Nergal, sei nicht ausgerottet aus seinem Land.

3. ZUR KÖNIGSIDEOLOGIE DES HERRSCHERS HADDAYISʿI

3.1 Der Königsname und seine Funktion

In den aramäischen Königreichen des 1. Jahrtausends v. Chr. zeigt sich mehrfach die Praxis der Vergabe bzw. des Tragens von Thronnamen: So bei den Namen Bar-Hadad („Sohn des Hadad“) in Arpad und Damaskus, beim Namen Bar-Rakkab („Sohn des Rakkab[ʾel]“) in Samʾal sowie bei den Namen Ṭāb-Rammān („Gut ist Rammān“) und Hadad-ʿIdri („Hadad ist meine Hilfe“) in Damaskus.[18] In all diesen Fällen bildet entweder der Hauptgott des Pantheons, Hadad bzw. (Hadad-) Rammān, oder der Gott der Dynastie, Rakkabʾel, das theophore Element im königlichen Thronnamen. Grundsätzlich kann man davon ausgehen, dass der Kronprinz seinen Thronnamen im Moment seiner Nominierung für den Thron bzw. bei seiner Thronbesteigung annahm oder ihm der Thronname in einem solchen Moment verliehen wurde.

Auf diesem Hintergrund der Praxis der Vergabe bzw. des Tragens von Thronnamen in den aramäischen Königreichen Syriens und Anatoliens und nicht zuletzt auch im zeitgenössischen Assyrerreich[19] stellt sich die Frage, ob auch der Name des Königs Haddayisʿi von Bīt Baḫiāni als Thronname zu erklären ist? Vom Typ her handelt es sich bei Haddayisʿi um einen Danknamen,[20] der aufgrund seiner Bedeutung „Hadda ist meine Rettung“[21] in die Richtung eines Thronnamens weist. Zugunsten dieser Annahme sprechen die Verwendung des theophoren Elements „Hadda“, in dem der höchste Gott des Lokalpantheons erscheint und der Aspekt des Dankes an diesen Gott. Die Tatsache, dass der Name „Haddayisʿi“ auch von nichtköniglichen Personen getragen wurde,[22] muss nicht grundsätzlich gegen seine Deutung als Thronname sprechen.

König Haddayisʿi hat seinen Namen auf der Beterstatue anbringen lassen und das Entfernen bzw. Ersetzen durch den Namen eines anderen Königs unter einen Fluch gestellt (Zeile 10–12). Sodann erwähnt Haddayisʿi, dass sich sein Name auch auf den Geräten des Hadad-Tempels befinde (Zeile 16–17). Hierin äußert sich die enge Bindung des Stifters Haddayisʿi an den Gott Hadad über die Widmung der Beterstatue hinaus, da so der Königsname während der Kultvollzüge kommemoriert wird (s.u. 3.4).

Diese Anbringung des Königsnamens auf der Beterstatue und auf den Tempelgeräten soll die Selbsterhaltung des Königs über seinen Tod hinaus garantieren, da der Name des Königs über sein Leben hinaus auch im königlichen Totenkult eine Rolle spielt. Hierin muss der Name genannt werden, um den König aus dem Jenseits zu evozieren und seinen Totengeist zu den Totenopfern einzuladen. Dies ist aus den aramäischen Kulturen des 1. Jahrtausends v. Chr. aufgrund der Inschrift auf der Hadadstatue aus Gerçin bei Samʾal gut bekannt, da König Panamuwa I. (ca. 790–750 v. Chr.) seinen Sohn und Thronnachfolger dazu aufruft, den Totengeist (*nbš*) des verstorbenen Vaters zusammen mit dem Namen des Gottes Hadad anzurufen (KAI 214, 15–18, 21–22).[23]

Dieses Thema wird jedoch in der Inschrift auf der Beterstatue nur *e negativo*, d.h. über die Verweigerung der Annahme der Totenopfer eines feindlichen Königs, erwähnt (s.u. 3.5).

3.2 Der Königstitel und die königliche Abstammung

In seiner Inschrift führt Haddayisʿi den Titel des Königs von Gūzāna (Zeile 6) bzw. den Titel des Königs von Gūzāna, Sikāni und Azran (Zeile 13). Für Aufsehen hat gesorgt, dass die assyrische Vorlage der Inschrift

[18] Vgl. Niehr, 2014a: 163f, 174, 196 und 2020a: 286–289.
[19] Zur Vergabe von Thronnamen im Assyrerreich vgl. Radner, 2005: 33–35.
[20] Zu diesem Namenstyp vgl. Noth, 1928 / 1980: 169–195.
[21] Das theophore Element des Personennamens spiegelt noch den ab dem 3. Jahrtausend v. Chr. belegten Wettergott Hadda, während der aramäische Gottesname Hadad im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr. die Aufsprengung der Doppelkonsonanz erkennen lässt; vgl. Schwemer, 2001: 34–58.
[22] Vgl. die Belege bei Younger, 2016: 264f.
[23] S. dazu Niehr, 2014a: 185–187 sowie Gzella, 2016f und s.u. 3.5 zum Thema der Totenopfer.

dem Herrscher Haddayisʿi den Titel *šakin māti* („Gouverneur des Landes“) beilegt (Zeile 19). Allerdings zeigen sich in dieser unterschiedlichen Titulatur lediglich zwei differierende Sichtweisen auf denselben Sachverhalt.

Deren erste blickt von außen, d.h. aus assyrischer Sicht, auf das den Assyrern als Vasallenkönigreich untergeordnete Bīt Baḫiāni und sieht deshalb Haddayisʿi als den Gouverneur des Landes an. Deren zweite blickt von innen, d.h. aus aramäischer Sicht, auf den Herrscher von Gūzāna, Sikāni und Azran, der hier als „König“ tituliert wird. Somit liegt kein Widerspruch zwischen beiden Sichtweisen, sondern eine Komplementarität vor. Diese erklärt sich auf der historisch-politischen Ebene mit dem Umstand, dass Bīt Baḫiāni seit Adad-nerāri II. (911–891 v. Chr.) zu einem derart treuen assyrischen Vasallen geworden war, dass die Assyrer das Königshaus in seiner Stellung belassen konnten.[24] Diesem Vasallitätsverhältnis widerspricht nicht, dass Haddayisʿi im Laufe seiner Herrschaft seine Macht auch über die Regionen von Sikāni und Azran ausdehnen konnte. Hierauf verweisen die Anfertigung einer zweiten, d.h. der jetzt bekannten Statue, und die Redaktionsgeschichte der Bilingue.[25]

Dass König Haddayisʿi von königlicher Abstammung war, zeigt sich an der Nennung seiner Vorfahren:

(6) Haddayisʿi, der König von Gūzāna, der Sohn
(7) des Sesnūri, des Königs von Gūzāna.

Hieraus wird deutlich, dass bereits der Vater des Königs Haddayisʿi, Sesnūri, (erste Hälfte des 9. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.) König von Bīt Baḫiāni war und insofern sein Sohn Haddayisʿi kein Usurpator war. Damit wird die Legitimation des Haddayisʿi auf dem Thron des Königreiches unterstrichen.[26] Der Vater Sesnūri ist als assyrischer Vasallenkönig aus assyrischen Quellen unter dem Namen Šamaš-nūrī bekannt.[27]

Allerdings wird nicht geklärt, wie Haddayisʿi auf den Thron von Bīt Baḫiāni gelangt ist: Weder wird ausgesagt, dass Hadad ihn zum König gemacht habe,[28] noch dass der Dynastiegott und der Assyrerkönig ihn auf den Thron gebracht hätten,[29] bzw. nur der Assyrerkönig dies getan habe.[30] Klar sind nur die königliche Abstammung des Haddayisʿi und (implizit) die assyrische Genehmigung seiner Herrschaft. Zu diesem Procedere gibt es weitere vergleichbare Aussagen aus den zeitgenössischen Königreichen der Aramäer.[31]

3.3 Königtum und Götterwelt

Dem König als dem Sachwalter der Götter auf Erden kam die entscheidende Mittlerposition zwischen Göttern und Menschen zu. Die in der Inschrift des Königs Haddayisʿi genannten Gottheiten sind Hadad (Zeile 1, 5–6, 12, 15–17), Šuwala (Zeile 18) und Nergal (Zeile 23). Dazu treten die in Zeile 4 und 14 kollektiv genannten Götter, d.h. das Pantheon des Königreichs Bīt Baḫiāni.

Der Wettergott Hadad[32] nimmt in dieser Inschrift die Stellung des höchsten Gottes ein und er ist deshalb auch der direkte Adressat der Gebete des Königs Haddayisʿi, der zudem den Gott Hadad als theophores Element in seinem Namen trägt. Diesem Gott schreibt er in hymnusartiger Rede die Erfahrung von etlichen Wohltaten für sich und sein Haus in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart sowie die Erwartung einer guten Zukunft zu (Zeile 7–15). Aus diesem Grund bezeichnet er den Gott als „barmherzig“ (*rḥmn*)[33] und das Gebet zu Hadad als „gut“ (*ṭb*) (Zeile 5). Der König selber stellt den Segensmittler zwischen Götter- und Menschenwelt da.

---

[24] Zu diesem Vorgang und zu Bīt Baḫiāni als assyrischem Vasallenkönigreich vgl. mit unterschiedlicher Akzentsetzung die Darstellungen bei Lipiński, 2000: 128f; Yamada, 2000: 69; Dornauer, 2010: 53–59; Fuchs, 2011: 356; Novák, 2013: 272–276; Younger, 2016: 258–266; Dušek / Mynářová, 2016: 33–36; Mynářová / Dušek, 2019: 62–68.

[25] Dazu zuletzt Crouch / Hutton, 2019: 9–13.

[26] Vgl. zu diesem Thema die Untersuchung von Dick, 2011.

[27] Vgl. u.a. Abou-Assaf / Bordreuil / Millard, 1982: 103–105; Lipiński, 1994: 23f; Younger, 2016: 261f.

[28] So etwa die Inschrift von Tel Dan (KAI 310, 4) im Hinblick auf König Hazael von Damaskus und die Inschrift aus Luʿaš (KAI 202, 3–4) im Hinblick auf König Zakkur von Hamath und Luʿaš. Vergleichbar ist auch die Inschrift des Königs Panamuwa I. von Samʾal (KAI 214, 2–3, 8–9).

[29] So etwa eine Inschrift aus Samʾal (KAI 216, 4–6) im Hinblick auf König Bar-Rakkab.

[30] So im Falle des Königs Panamuwa II. von Samʾal (KAI 215, 6–7).

[31] So bei Kulamuwa von Samʾal (KAI 24, 9).

[32] Zum Kult des Gottes Hadad in Bīt Baḫiāni vgl. bes. Müller-Kessler / Kessler, 1995 und Schwemer, 2001: 612–618.

[33] Zu aramäisch *rḥmn* vgl. Gzella, 2016e: 706.

Die Göttin Šuwala (Zeile 18) weist einen Bezug zur Unterwelt auf. Šuwala ist seit der Ur-III-Zeit und dann vor allem im spätbronzezeitlichen und eisenzeitlichen Syrien belegt. Des Weiteren steht ihr Name in etymologischem Zusammenhang mit dem hebräischen Terminus für die Unterwelt (*šeʾol*).[34]

In den Bereich der Unterwelt gehört auch der Inschrift nach Šuwala auftretende Gott Nergal, der für Seuche und Pest steht (Zeile 23). Die Sequenz von Šuwala und Nergal ist bereits in einem spätbronze-zeitlichen Ritual aus Emar belegt.[35]

3.4 Der König als Stifter

Die enge Verbindung von Königtum und Götterwelt, insbesondere die Verbindung des Königs Haddayisʿi mit Hadad als dem höchsten Gott des Pantheons von Bīt Baḫiāni, zeigt sich des Weiteren an seiner Rolle als Stifter. Der König als Stifter von Statuen und Kultgegenständen tritt in der Inschrift von Tell Fekheriye zweimal hervor.

Zentral ist der Aspekt, dass der König dem Gott Hadad seine Beterstatue errichtete (Zeile 1–10), die ihn permanent vor dem Angesichts des Gottes in Beterstellung repräsentiert. Vom Aufstellen seiner Statue vor Hadad versprach sich König Haddayisʿi seine Lebenskraft, die Länge seiner Tage, den Reichtum seiner Jahre, das Wohlergehen seines Hauses, seiner Nachkommenschaft und Untertanen und das Verschwinden der Krankheit sowie die Erhaltung seines Thrones, die Länge seines Lebens und die Akzeptanz seiner Worte bei Göttern und Menschen (Zeile 7–15).

Im weiteren Verlauf der Inschrift wird die Austilgung des königlichen Namens von den Tempelgeräten erwähnt (Zeile 16–17). Welche Geräte im Einzelnen mit dem Terminus *mʾnyʾ zy bt* gemeint sind, aus welchem Material (Stein, Metall) sie bestanden, in welcher Anzahl sie existierten, lässt die Inschrift offen. Man kann z.B. an Libationsschalen oder Weihrauchgefäße denken,[36] auf die der Name ihres Stifters, d.h. des Königs Haddayisʿi, eingraviert war.

Diese Anbringung des Königsnamens auf den Tempelgeräten bewirkt, dass, solange der Tempel Bestand hat und Kulte in ihm praktiziert werden, der König namentlich vor dem Gott Hadad kommemoriert ist. Der Name repräsentiert also den Stifter der Weihgabe, König Haddayisʿi. Dieser Akt der Namensgebung gehört in das aus Mesopotamien gut bekannte Thema „Selbsterhaltung durch den ‚geschriebenen Namen'".[37]

Im Kontext dieser Überlegungen zum König als Stifter fällt gleichzeitig auf, dass die Inschrift vom Tell Fekheriye den König nicht als Bauherrn nennt. Das Fehlen dieses in Königsinschriften oft belegten Motivs des *roi bâtisseur* in dieser Inschrift ist dahingehend zu interpretieren, dass König Haddayisʿi zumindest bis zur Fertigstellung seiner Beterstatue mit ihrer Widmung an den Gott Hadad keine entsprechenden Baumaßnahmen an dessen Tempel unternommen hatte. Andernfalls hätte König Haddayisʿi es kaum unterlassen, diesen wichtigen Zug der Königsideologie zu erwähnen.

3.5 Die königlichen Totenopfer

Im vorangehenden Abschnitt wurde deutlich, dass die Eingravierung des Königsnamens auf den Tempelgeräten für eine dauerhafte Kommemorierung des Königs im Kult sorgte. Wird nun von einem feindlichen König der Name des Haddayisʿi von den Gegenständen des Hadad-Tempels entfernt (Zeile 16–17), dann ergeht folgender Fluch über den Feind:

(17) Mein Herr Hadad möge sein Brot und sein Wasser nicht annehmen aus
(18) seiner Hand. Šuwala, meine Herrin, möge sein Brot und sein Wasser nicht annehmen aus seiner Hand.

Die in diesem Ritus genannten Gaben von Brot und Wasser stellen die grundlegenden Gaben für die Totenspeisung dar.[38] Der Gott Hadad, der die Opfergaben an alle Götter verteilt (Zeile 3–4), hat auch die Verfügungsgewalt über die Totenopfer. Dies lässt auch an die vom Thronfolger in Samʾal erwartete Anrufung des Gottes Hadad, die zusammen mit der Namensnennung des verstorbenen Königs Panamuwa erfolgen

[34] Zur Göttin Šuwala vgl. Lipiński, 1994: 31–33; 2009a; 2009b: 134, 246f; Niehr, 2014b: 348f.
[35] Vgl. Lipiński, 2009b: 134.
[36] Zu aramäisch *mʾn* vgl. Gzella, 2016c.
[37] Dazu Radner, 2005: 114–175 und 129–155 zu den Inschriften auf Gebäuden und Weihgaben.
[38] Vgl. Greenfield / Shaffer, 1985: 52f und Van der Toorn, 1996: 165f.

soll (KAI 214,15–22), denken.[39] Ebenso weist diesen Bezug zum Gott Hadad die Inschrift auf der Stele des Katumuwa aus Samʾal auf, da hier u.a. die Götter „Hadad Qrpdl“ und „Hadad der Weingärten“ auftreten und auch die Frage der Totenopfer geregelt wird. Diese Verbindung von Hadad-Gottheiten und Totenopfern sowie weitere Züge der Kutamuwa-Inschrift sowie auch die Ikonographie der Stele zeigen auf, dass Katumuwa als Vasall des Königs Panamuwa II. (ca. 740–733 v. Chr.) Charakteristica des königlichen Totenkultes von Samʾal, wie sie sonst aus dem Königshaus bekannt sind, übernommen hatte.[40]

Wenn laut der Inschrift vom Tell Fekheriye der Gott Hadad die Gaben von Brot und Wasser nicht annimmt, dann kann auch der Ahnenkult des feindlichen Königs nicht vollzogen werden, woraus sich gravierende Probleme für diesen König und seine Herrschaft ergeben, da sein Königtum somit zum Erliegen kommt. Weitere Probleme für den feindlichen König resultieren aus den über ihn verhängten Flüchen (Zeile 18–23), die nun behandelt werden.

3.6 Die Feinde des Königs

Die Inschrift lässt keinen Zweifel daran, dass es sich bei den Feinden des Königs Haddayisʿi von Sikāni ebenfalls um Könige handelt. So spricht die Zeile 22 von „seinen Menschen“ und Zeile 23 nennt „sein Land“. Aber auch noch ein anderes Indiz verweist auf den königlichen Feind.

Das Motiv des Hungers und der Not ist charakteristisch für den von einem altorientalischen König verhängten Fluch über seinen Gegner, dessen Land und seine Bevölkerung. Dieser Nichtigkeitsfluch erklärt sich damit, dass der König zuständig war für die Versorgung der Bewohner seines Landes. Er war der Hirte, der sein Volk auf die Weide führen und ihm damit Leben spenden sollte.[41] Die Rede von Weideland, der Fruchtbarkeit des Landes und des Wohlergehens des Volkes nimmt deshalb auch eine wichtige Rolle in der Inschrift des Königs Haddayisʿi ein (Zeile 2–5, 8–9). Litt das Volk aber aufgrund von Nichtigkeitsflüchen und der daraus resultierenden Notzeit unter einer schweren Hungersnot, so waren die idealen Verhältnisse der königlichen Herrschaftsausübung nicht mehr gegeben, so dass sich hierdurch eine grundlegende Schwäche in der königlichen Autorität aufzeigte.[42]

In der Inschrift des Königs Haddayisʿi wird aus diesem Grund dem feindlichen König folgendes angedroht:

(18) Er möge
(19) säen und nicht ernten. Und tausend (Maß) Gerste möge er säen und ein halbes Maß möge er ernten davon.
(20) Und hundert Schafe mögen säugen ein Lamm und nicht werde es satt. Und hundert Kühe mögen säugen
(21) ein Kalb und nicht werde es satt. Und hundert Frauen mögen stillen ein Kind und nicht werde es satt.
(22) Und hundert Frauen mögen im Ofen Brot backen und ihn nicht füllen. Und aus den Abfallgruben mögen seine Menschen Gerste sammeln, sie mögen sie essen.
(23) Und die Pest, die Geißel des Nergal, sei nicht ausgerottet aus seinem Land.

Mit der durch den Fluch für Tiere und Menschen ausgelösten Notzeit wird dem feindlichen König seine Herrschaftsbasis entzogen und sein Reich dem Untergang geweiht.

Eine Profilierung dieses Gegners des Königs Haddayisʿi sowie seiner legitimen Nachfolger erfolgt in der Inschrift von Tell Fekheriye durch die Gegenüberstellung von König Haddayisʿi und dem feindlichen König:

1. Hadad als Helfer des Königs Haddayisʿi – Hadad als Gegner des Feindes
2. Dynastie des König Haddayisʿi – Nichtannahme der Totenopfer des Feindes
3. Wohlergehen des Landes – Hungersnot im Feindesland
4. Gesundheit der Bewohner des Landes – Pest im Feindesland

[39] S.o. 3.1.
[40] Dazu ausführlich Niehr, 2014c.
[41] Vgl. Morrow, 2017: 118–120, wozu unbedingt Amadasi Guzzo, 1984 für den Bereich der zeitgenössischen phönizischen Königsideologie hinzuzufügen ist.
[42] Zu den altorientalischen Nichtigkeitsflüchen vgl. bes. Greenfield / Shaffer, 1985; Sommerfeld, 1993; Podella, 1993; Steymans, 1995: 34–194; Ramos, 2016; Morrow, 2017; Quick, 2018: 68–158.

Hiermit sind in sehr deutlicher Weise das Positive auf König Haddayisʿi und das Negative auf seinen Gegner, der in dieser Inschrift auch nicht explizit den Königstitel trägt, verteilt.

Auffälliger Weise fehlt in diesem Fluch jegliche kriegerische Dimension, die den König als Feldherr zeichnen würde, so wie es etwa die Inschriften der Könige Zakkur von Hamath (KAI 202), Mescha von Moab (KAI 181) und Hazael von Damaskus (KAI 310) tun. Ein Kriegsfall kommt deshalb nicht in den Blick, da ein solcher unter dem Schutz der assyrischen Oberhoheit auch eher unwahrscheinlich ist.[43] Dafür aber trägt der Gott Hadad den Titel „Krieger" (*gbr*; Zeile 12),[44] so dass er in einem eventuellen Kampfgeschehen als Kriegsgott, der dem König Haddayisʿi voranzieht, auftritt.[45]

3.7 Zeit und Raum

Einige Königsinschriften aus dem zeitgenössischen Syrien-Palästina arbeiten zur Hervorhebung der Leistungen des Königs mit der Gegenüberstellung von schlechter Vergangenheit und positiver Gegenwart sowie der Aussicht auf eine gute Zukunft.[46] Dies zeigen etwa die Inschriften der Könige Kulamuwa von Samʾal (KAI 24), Mescha von Moab (KAI 181), Zakkur von Hamath (KAI 202) und Hazael von Damaskus (KAI 310). Auch das Alte Testament setzt bei seiner Gegenüberstellung der Herrschaft der Omriden mit der Zeit der Nimsiden (1Kön 16–2Kön 15) eine derartige Epochengliederung voraus. Im Unterschied dazu verzichtet die Inschrift auf der Statue des Königs Haddayisʿi auf diese Gegenüberstellung von schlechter Vergangenheit und positiver Gegenwart. Aber: Es wird durchaus eine gute Zukunft für König Haddayisʿi erwartet (Zeile 6–10) und dem Feind eine schlechte Zukunft für den Fall einer *damnatio memoriae* des Königsnamens Haddayisʿi verheißen (Zeile 12, 18–23).

Was den durch die Inschrift eröffneten Raum angeht, so ist folgendes Verständnis festzustellen. Der durch die Inschrift eröffnete Raum setzt ein mit dem Tempel, in dem die dem Gott Hadad gestiftete Beterfigur errichtet wurde (Zeile 1, 12–16). Der Tempel als Sitz des Gottes Hadad stellt die Verbindung zwischen Himmel und Erde dar. Hadad wird in diesem Kontext auch als Kanalinspektor von Himmel und Erde angesprochen (Zeile 1–2).

Diese enge Verbindung von Himmel und Erde spielt auch weiterhin eine Rolle, da Hadad den Ländern und den Göttern Speise und Trank zukommen lässt (Zeile 2–4) und er selber in Sikāni thront (Zeile 5–6). In Anschluss hieran, d.h. an den Tempel von Sikāni, wird das Königtum des Stifters Haddayisʿi genannt (Zeile 6–10).

Noch einmal wird der Tempel des Gottes Hadad genannt, da Hadad die Totenopfer des feindlichen Königs nicht annehmen soll (Zeile 16–18). Hierauf folgt die Nennung der Unterweltsgöttin Šuwala (Zeile 17–18), deren Sitz in der Unterwelt zu denken ist. Die Flüche über den feindlichen Herrscher beziehen sich auf die irdischen Verhältnisse (Zeile 18–23).

Insgesamt kommen in der Inschrift vom Tell Fekheriye ein vertikales (Himmel, Erde, Unterwelt) und ein horizontales (Tempel, Stadt, Umland) Raumkonzept zum Ausdruck, mit dem der gesamte göttliche und menschliche Raum abgedeckt wird.

Das hierin greifbare kosmologische Modell lässt sich zurückführen auf das für das Mesopotamien des 1. Jahrtausends v. Chr. ermittelte Raumverständnis mit dem Tempel im Zentrum der Stadt und dem dadurch gegebenen Konnex von Himmel, Erde und Unterwelt (Abb. 2). Im Raum der Stadt etabliert der König die Ordnung, die durch die von außen kommenden Feinde einer permanenten Bedrohung ausgesetzt ist. Der Kult der Götter erhält diese königliche Ordnung aufrecht und stellt ein Bollwerk gegen den Feindeseinfall dar.[47] Es zeigt sich also ein klarer mesopotamischer Kultureinfluss, der grundsätzlich zu dieser assyrisch-aramäischen Bilingue, die stark der mesopotamischen Kultur verpflichtet ist, passt.

---

[43] Darauf hat Dion, 1985: 145f aufmerksam gemacht.

[44] Zu aramäisch *gbr* und seinen militärischen Konnotationen vgl. Gzella, 2016b.

[45] Vgl. hierzu etwa auch die Darstellung des Kriegsgottes Hadad auf der Inschrift von Tel Dan (KAI 310, 5).

[46] Zu diesem Motiv vgl. etwa Amadasi Guzzo, 1984: 110f; Suriano, 2007: 171–173; 2014: 102–106; Green, 2010: 120–122; Becking, 2017: 130–136.

[47] Dazu ausführlich Pongratz-Leisten, 1994: 7–36.

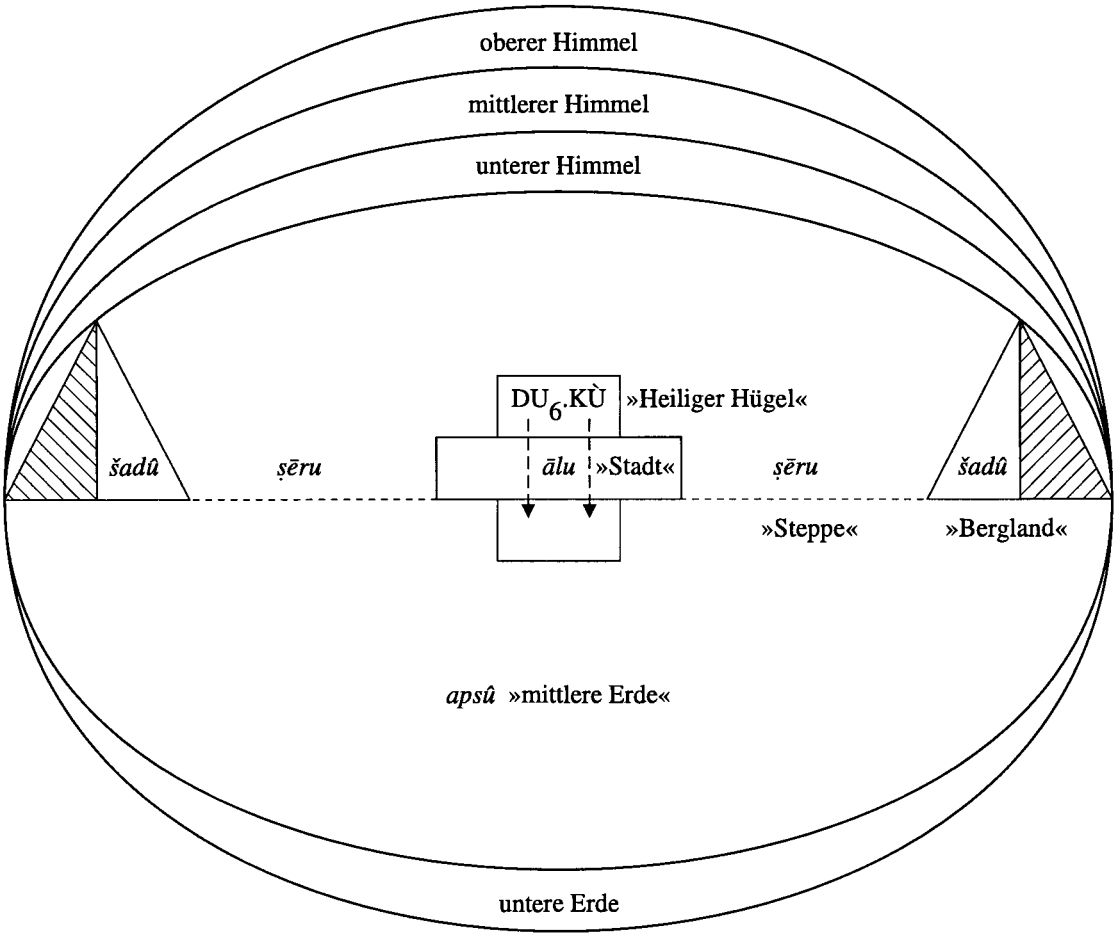


Abb. 2: Modell für das Raumverständnis in Mesopotamien. Aus: Pongratz-Leisten, 1994: 36, Abb. 5.

3.8 Die königliche Beterstatue und ihr Aufstellungsort

Die mit ihrem Podest ca. 2m hohe Beterstatue des Königs Haddayisʿi[48] gehört in eine größere Gruppe von Königsdarstellungen, die als „König vor Gott mit verschränkten Händen" bekannt ist.[49] Der durch die Beterstatue repräsentierte König trägt das Schalgewand Nr. 3, welches für assyrische Hofbeamte charakteristisch ist.[50]

Im aramäischen Text wird die Statue mit den Termini *dmw* und *ṣlm* bezeichnet (Zeile 1, 12).[51] Dabei sind die Eingangsworte *dmwtʾ zy hdysʿy* wichtig für das rechte Verständnis der Statue, da diese einen relativen Nominalsatz bilden, der als „Die Statue, die Haddayisʿi ist" aufzufassen ist.[52] In diesen Worten kommt also nicht ein possessiver Charakter zum Ausdruck, sondern es geht darum, dass die Statue ihren Stifter Haddayisʿi repräsentiert. Sie ist zur Kommunikation mit dem Gott Hadad konzipiert: „Sie ist kein starres Objekt in der Relation Weihende/r—Gott, sondern ein sehr aktives Objekt, das der Aufrechterhaltung der Kontaktzone zwischen beiden Kommunikanten dient".[53]

Das Errichten einer solchen Beterstatue war nicht den Königen alleine vorbehalten, hat aber eine besondere Relevanz im Kontext der Königsideologie. Es liegt nämlich mit der Beterstatue kein Portrait des Königs Haddayisʿi vor, sondern die Statue muss als Repräsentant des Königtums von Bit Baḫiāni verstanden

[48] Vgl. zur Statue bes. Abou-Assaf / Bordreuil / Millard, 1982: 5–12; Magen, 1986: 43; Orthmann, 2002: 93f; Kühne, 2009: 48.
[49] Vgl. Magen, 1986: 40–45.
[50] Vgl. Magen, 1986: 43 und zum Schalgewand Nr. 3 vgl. noch Braun-Holzinger, 2009–2011: 129f mit Abb. 1 (links).
[51] Zur aramäischen Terminologie vgl. Gzella, 2016a und 2016d und zum „Bild" im Alten Orient vgl. bes. Bonatz, 2002a; 2002b und Bahrani, 2003.
[52] Vgl. dazu Lipiński, 2010: 231f mit weiteren Beispielen.
[53] Bonatz, 2002b: 61.

werden.[54] Man spricht deswegen auch von einem Rollenportrait.[55]

Damit kommt die für die Königsideologie grundlegende Unterscheidung von *body natural* und *body politic* des Königs zum Tragen. Die Relevanz dieser Unterscheidung wurde in der grundlegenden Arbeit „The King's Two Bodies" von E. H. Kantorowicz erläutert. Steht der *body natural* für den individuellen Amtsinhaber, so der *body politic* für das den jeweiligen Inhaber überdauernde Amt. Diese vor allem aufgrund mittelalterlicher Quellen zu greifende politische Theologie[56] lässt sich auf den Alten Orient zurückführen, wo ihr eine nicht zu unterschätzende Bedeutung für die Untersuchung der schriftlichen und epigraphischen Quellen zum Thema des Königtums zukommt.[57]

Die enge Verwobenheit von *body natural* und *body politic* des Königs zeigt sich auch in der Inschrift vom Tell Fekheriye.[58] So sind die Nennung der Lebenskraft, der Länge der Tage und des Reichtums der Jahre auf den *body natural* des Königs Haddayisʿi zu beziehen (Zeile 6–10). Mit der Nennung von Haus und Nachkommenschaft (Zeile 8) wird der Bereich des *body natural* des Königs im Hinblick auf den *body politic* überschritten. Dieser kommt weiterhin mit der Nennung der Erhaltung des Thrones (Zeile 13) zum Ausdruck, da diese Stabilität die Lebenszeit des Königs Haddayisʿi im Hinblick auf seine Nachkommen übersteigt. Des Weiteren zeigt sich der *body politic* in der Errichtung der Beterstatue und der Anbringung des Namens des Königs auf ihr (Zeile 1, 10, 15–16), sowie der Anbringung des Königsnamens auf den Weihgeräten im Tempel (Zeile 16–17).

Grundsätzlich ist für den Aufstellungsort einer Beterstatue von einem Tempel auszugehen, in dem diese vor einem Gott errichtet wurde. Dies ergibt sich für die Beterstatue des Königs Haddayisʿi auch aufgrund der Inschrift, die deutlich macht, dass es sich dabei um den Tempel des Wettergottes Hadadsikāni in Sikāni, dem heutigen Tell Fekheriye, handelt (Zeile 1–10). Allerdings konnte der archäologische Nachweis hierfür noch nicht erbracht werden.

Die Beterstatue mit ihren Inschriften wurde am 22. Februar 1979 während landwirtschaftlicher Arbeiten auf dem Tell Fekheriye aufgefunden (Abb. 3). Als genauer Fundort ist der südwestliche Bereich der Akropolis der antiken Stadt Sikāni zu bestimmen, der allerdings nicht weiter ausgegraben wurde, so dass der dort zu vermutende Tempel des Gottes Hadad archäologisch bislang nicht nachgewiesen ist.[59]

4. AUSWERTUNG

Text und Bild der Statue des Königs Haddayisʿi von Bīt Baḫiāni vermitteln einen guten Eindruck von der Königsideologie eines Königreiches im Khaburdreieck in der zweiten Hälfte des 9. Jahrhunderts v. Chr. Diese ließ sich anhand von 8 Motiven (der Königsname und seine Funktion; der Königstitel und die königliche Abstammung; Königtum und Götterwelt; der König als Stifter; die königlichen Totenopfer; die Feinde des Königs; Zeit und Raum; die königliche Beterstatue und ihr Aufstellungsort) veranschaulichen.

Im Hinblick auf das grundlegende Verhältnis von Königtum und Götterwelt bei den Phöniziern und somit auf die Grundlagen der Königsideologie des antiken Libanon hat M. G. Amadasi Guzzo festgehalten:

> Ainsi ce que la divinité est pour le roi, le roi l'est envers son peuple: un bon souverain «fait vivre» son peuple, c'est à dire rend prospère son pays; de même la divinité montre sa puissance en «faisant vivre» le roi, c'est à dire en lui accordant la prospérité. Dans la pratique souverain et sujets ont—et c'est cela que sousentend la formule—des obligations bien établies, l'un envers les dieux, les autres envers le roi, pour conserver cette vie qui correspond au bien être et à la subsistance.[60]

---

[54] Vgl. dazu generell Magen, 1986: 40–45. Zum Thema des *ṣalam šarrūti* („Bild des Königtums") im Unterschied zum Portrait eines assyrischen Königs vgl. Magen, 1986: 44f; Bahrani, 2003: 121–148; Winter, 2010; Oshima, 2018: 243–246.

[55] Vgl. Keel, 2018: 31–34.

[56] Die grundlegende Studie hierfür ist Kantorowicz, 1957.

[57] Dazu ausführlich Kühn, 2018.

[58] Siehe auch Kühn, 2018: 163–165.

[59] Vgl. die Angaben bei Abou-Assaf / Bordreuil / Millard, 1982: 2–4 und Pruß / al Masīḥ Bagdo, 2002: 312f mit Abb. 1. Zur archäologischen Erforschung des Tell Fekheriye vgl. Pruß / al Masīḥ Bagdo, 2002; Bonatz et al., 2008; Bonatz, 2013.

[60] Amadasi Guzzo, 1984: 118.

Diese Einsicht gilt ohne Abstriche auch für den Bereich der zeitgenössischen Königsideologie unter König Haddayisʿi von Bīt Baḫiāni.

Andere Möglichkeiten der literarischen Umsetzung der Königsideologie sind nicht realisiert worden: So die Gegenüberstellung von Vergangenheit und Gegenwart, die Darstellung des Königs als Bauherr, als Krieger und als Geber von Recht und Gerechtigkeit sowie seine Sorge für Recht und Gerechtigkeit. Dies hängt damit zusammen, dass auf der dem Gott Hadadsikāni gewidmeten Beterstatue eine Widmungsinschrift und keine königliche Memorialinschrift, die alle Taten des Königs auflistete, verzeichnet ist.

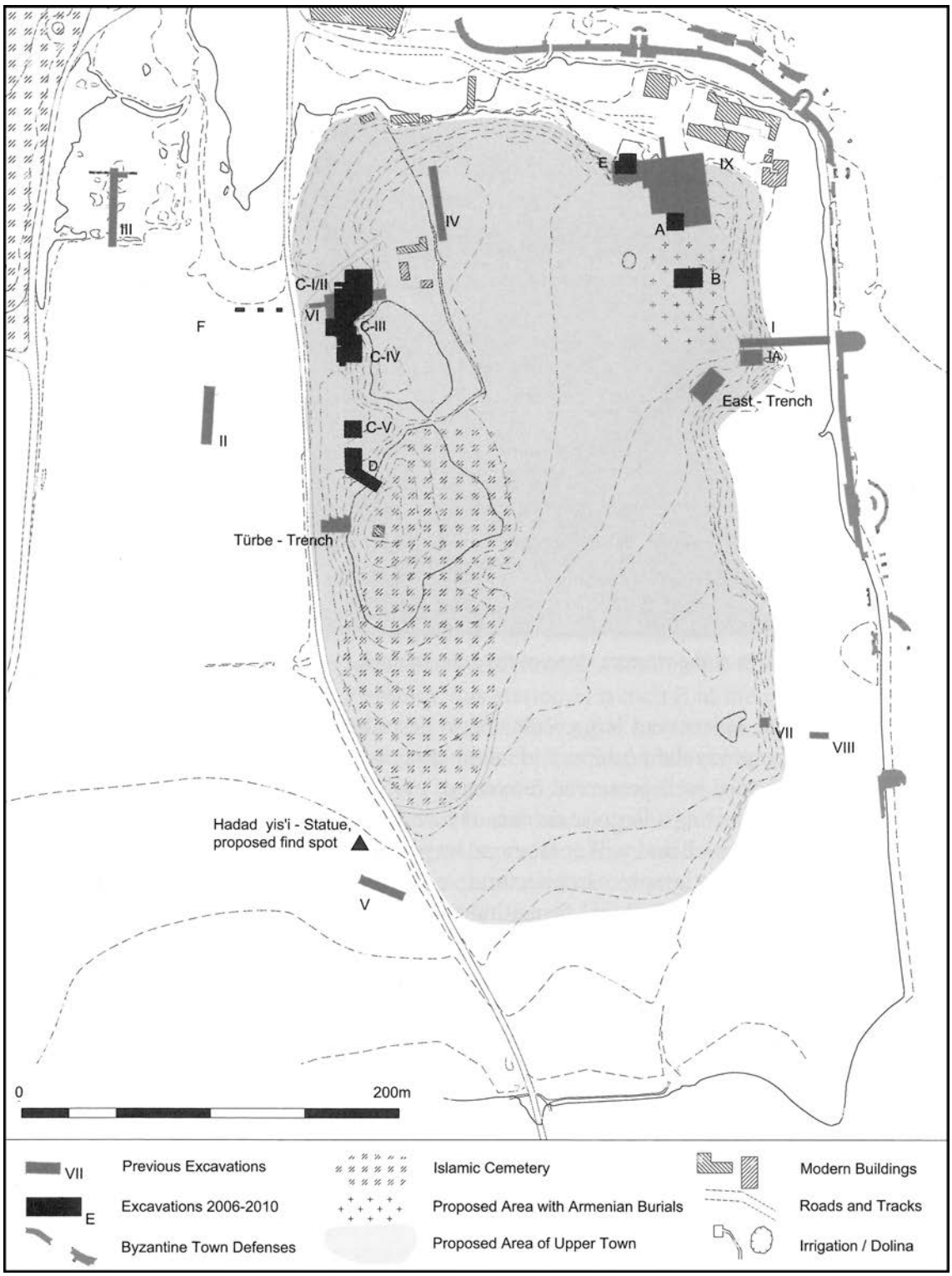


Abb. 3: Tell Fekheriye. Aus: Bonatz, 2013: 213, Abb. 1.

BIBLIOGRAPHIE

Abou-Assaf, A., 1981: „Die Statue des HDYSʿY, König von Guzana". MDOG 113, 3–22.

Abou-Assaf, A. / Bordreuil, P. / Millard, A. R., 1982: *La statue de Tell Fekherye et son inscription bilingue assyro-araméenne*. Études Assyriologiques 7. Paris.

Amadasi Guzzo, M. G., 1984: „Le roi qui fait vivre son peuple dans les inscriptions phéniciennes". WO 15, 109–118.

Bahrani, Z., 2003: *The Graven Image: Representation in Babylonia and Assyria*. Philadelphia.

Becking, B., 2017: „A Voice from across the Jordan: Royal Ideology as Implied in the Moabite Stela". In C. Levin / R. Müller (Hg): *Herrschaftslegitimation in vorderorientalischen Reichen der Eisenzeit*. ORA 21. Tübingen. Pp. 125–145.

Bonatz, D., 2002a: „Was ist ein Bild im Alten Orient? Aspekte bildlicher Darstellung aus altorientalischer Sicht". In M. Heinz / D. Bonatz (Hg): *Bild—Macht—Geschichte: Visuelle Kommunikation im Alten Orient*. Berlin. Pp. 9–20.

— 2002b: „Agens Bild—Handlungszusammenhänge altorientalischer Bilder". In M. Heinz / D. Bonatz (Hg): *Bild—Macht—Geschichte: Visuelle Kommunikation im Alten Orient*. Berlin. Pp. 53–70.

— 2013: „Tell Fekheriye: Renewed Excavations at the ‚Head of the Spring'". In D. Bonatz / L. Martin (Hg): *100 Jahre archäologische Feldforschungen in Nordost-Syrien—eine Bilanz*. Schriften der Max Freiherr von Oppenheim-Stiftung 18. Wiesbaden. Pp. 209–234.

Bonatz, D. et al., 2008: „Bericht über die erste und zweite Grabungskampagne in Tell Feḫerīye 2006 und 2007". MDOG 140, 89–135.

Bordreuil, P., 1993: „Statue masculine à inscription bilingue assyro-araméenne au nom d'un personnage de Guzana". In Institut du Monde Arabe (Hg): *Syrie—Mémoire et Civilisation*. Paris. Pp. 260–263.

Braun-Holzinger, E. A., 2009–2011: „Schalgewand". RlA 12, 129f.

Crouch, C. L. / Hutton, J. M., 2019: *Translating Empire: Tell Fekheriyeh, Deuteronomy, and the Akkadian Treaty Tradition*. FAT 135. Tübingen.

Dick, M. B., 2011: „Royal Dynasticism as Divine Legitimization". In G. Eidevall / B. Scheuer (Hg): *Enigmas and Images: Studies in Honor of Tryggve N. D. Mettinger*. ConBOT 58. Winona Lake. Pp. 163–202.

Dietrich, M. / Loretz, O., 2006: „Ug. *arbdd* / altaram. *ʾrmwddt* ‚Erhaltung (der Ordnung), Stabilität'. Erwägungen zu einem Begriff für Stablilisierung (sic!) der Ordnung im Nordwestemitischen der Späten Bronzezeit und Eisenzeit". In G. del Olmo Lete / L. Felíu / A. Millet Albà (Hg): *Šapal tibnim mû illakū*: *Studies Presented to Joaquín Sanmartín on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday*. AuOrS 22. Barcelona. Pp. 183–193.

Dion, P-E., 1985: „La bilingue de Tell Fekherye: Le roi de Gozan et son dieu; la phraséologie". In A. Caquot / S. Légasse / M. Tardieu (Hg): *Mélanges bibliques et orientaux en l'honneur de M. Mathias Delcor*. AOAT 215. Kevelaer/Neukirchen-Vluyn. Pp. 139–147.

— 1997: *Les Araméens à l'Âge du Fer: Histoire politique et structures sociales*. ÉB NS 34. Paris.

Donner, H. / Röllig, W., 2002: *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften* I. 5. Aufl. Wiesbaden.

Dornauer, A., 2010: „Die Geschichte von Gūzāna im Lichte der schriftlichen Zeugnisse". In N. Cholidis / L. Martin (Hg): *Tell Halaf: Im Krieg zerstörte Denkmäler und ihre Restaurierung*. Tell Halaf V. Berlin. Pp. 47–67.

Dušek, J. / Mynářová, J., 2016: „Tell Fekheriye Inscription: A Process of Authority on the Edge of the Assyrian Empire". In J. Dušek / J. Roskovec (Hg): *The Process of Authority: The Dynamics in Transmission and Reception of Canonical Text*s. DCLS 27. Berlin/New York. Pp. 9–39.

Edmonds, A. J., 2019: „A People without Borders? Tracing the Shifting Identities and Territorialities of the Ahlameans". In J. Dušek / J. Mynářová (Hg): *Aramaean Borders: Defining Aramaean Territories in the 10th–8th Centuries B.C.E.* CHANE 101. Leiden/Boston. Pp. 26–62.

Fales, F. M., 1983: „Le double bilinguisme de la statue de Tell Fekherye". Syria 60, 233–250.

— 2011: „Die Ausbreitung Assyriens gegen Westen und seine fortschreitende Verwurzelung: Der Fall der nordwestlichen Jezira". In J. Renger (Hg): *Assur—Gott, Stadt und Land: 5. Internationales Colloquium der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 18–21. Februar 2004 in Berlin*. CDOG 5. Wiesbaden. Pp. 211–237.

Fales, F. M. / Grassi, G. F., 2016: *L'aramaico antico: Storia, grammatica, testi commentati*. Fonti e Testi. Raccolta di Archeologia e Storia dell'arte. Udine.

Fuchs, A., 2011: „Zur Geschichte von Guzana“. In N. Cholidis / L. Martin (Hg): *Die geretteten Götter aus dem Palast vom Tell Halaf*. Regensburg/Berlin. Pp. 353–358.

Gianto, A. / Dubovský, P. (Hg), 2018: *Changing Faces of Kingship in Syria-Palestine 1500–500 BCE*. AOAT 459. Münster.

Green, D., 2010: *“I Undertook Great Works”: The Ideology of Domestic Achievements in West Semitic Royal Inscriptions*. FAT II/4. Tübingen.

Greenfield, J. C. / Shaffer, A., 1983: „Notes on the Akkadian-Aramaic Bilingual Statue from Tell Fekherye“. Iraq 45, 109–116.

— 1985: „Notes on the Curse Formulae of the Tell Fekherye Inscription“. RB 92, 47–59.

Gropp, D. M. / Lewis, T. J., 1985: „Notes on Some Problems in the Aramaic Text of the Hadd-Yithʿi Bilingual“. BASOR 259, 45–61.

Gzella, H., 2015: *A Cultural History of Aramaic: From the Beginnings to the Advent of Islam*. HdO I/111. Leiden/Boston.

— 2016a: „*dmī*“. ThWAT 9, 217f.

— 2016b: „*gbr*“. ThWAT 9, 157–160.

— 2016c: „*mʾn*“. ThWAT 9, 399–401.

— 2016d: „*ṣlm*“. ThWAT 9, 635–638.

— 2016e: „*rḥm*“. ThWAT 9, 702–706.

— 2016f: „*šm*“. ThWAT 9, 769–774.

Kantorowicz, E. H., 1957: *The King’s Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology*. Princeton.

Kaufman, S. A., 1982: „Reflections on the Assyrian-Aramaic Bilingual from Tell Fakharye“. Maarav 3/2, 137–175.

Keel, O., 2018: „Portraits altorientalischer Herrscher? Individualität oder Rolle“. In S. Kipfer (Hg): *Visualizing Emotions in the Ancient Near East*. OBO 285. Fribourg/Göttingen. Pp. 27–54.

Knapp, A., 2015: *Royal Apologetic in the Ancient Near East*. SBLWAW SS 4. Atlanta.

Kühn, D., 2005: *Totengedenken bei den Nabatäern und im Alten Testament: Eine religionsgeschichtliche und exegetische Studie*. AOAT 311. Münster.

— 2018: *Die „Zwei Körper des Königs“ in den westsemitischen Kulturen: Ugarit, aramäische Königreiche, Phönizien, Ammon, Moab, Israel und Juda*. Kasion 4. Münster.

Kühne, H., 2009: „Interactions of Aramaeans and Assyrians on the Lower Chabur“. Syria 86, 43–54.

Leonhard, C., 1995: „Die literarische Struktur der Bilingue vom Tell Fakhariyeh“. WZKM 85, 157–179.

Levin, C. / Müller, R. (Hg), 2017: *Herrschaftslegitimation in vorderorientalischen Reichen der Eisenzeit*. ORA 21. Tübingen.

Lipiński, E., 1994: *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*. OLA 57. Leuven.

— 2000: *The Aramaeans: Their Ancient History, Culture, Religion*. OLA 100. Leuven/Paris/Sterling.

— 2009a: „Šuwala“. In O. Drewsnowska (Hg): *Here and There across the Ancient Near East: Studies in Honour of Krystyna Łyczkowska*. Warschau. Pp. 115–120.

— 2009b: *Resheph: A Syro-Canaanite Deity*. OLA 181 / StPhoen 19. Leuven/Paris/Walpole.

— 2010: *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics III: Maʿlānā*. OLA 200. Leuven/Paris/Walpole.

Magen, U., 1986: *Assyrische Königsdarstellungen—Aspekte der Herrschaft*. BF 9. Mainz.

Merlo, P., 2014: „Literature“. In H. Niehr (Hg): *The Aramaeans in Ancient Syria*. HdO I/106. Leiden/Boston. Pp. 109–125.

Morrow, W., 2017: „Famine as the Curse of Kings: Royal Ideology in Old Aramaic Futility Curse Series“. In C. Levin / R. Müller (Hg): *Herrschaftslegitimation in vorderorientalischen Reichen der Eisenzeit*. ORA 21. Tübingen. Pp. 111–124.

Müller-Kessler, C. / Kessler, K., 1995: „Zum Kult des Wettergottes von Guzana“. In A. Erkanal et al. (Hg): *In Memoriam İ. Metin Akyurt Bahattin Devam Anı Kitabı*. Istanbul. Pp. 239–244.

Mynářová, J. / Dušek, J., 2019: „The Tell Fekheriye Inscription and the Western Assyrian Border in the Late 9th Century B.C.E.“. In J. Dušek / J. Mynářová (Hg): *Aramaean Borders: Defining Aramaean Territories in the 10th–8th Centuries B.C.E.* CHANE 101. Leiden/Boston. Pp. 63–77.

Niehr, H., 2014a: „Religion“. In H. Niehr (Hg): *The Aramaeans in Ancient Syria*. HdO I/106. Leiden/Boston. Pp. 127–203.

— 2014b: „Unterwelt, Unterweltsgottheiten. D. Nordwestsemitisch“. RlA 14, 348–350.

— 2014c: „The Katumuwa Stele in the Context of Royal Mortuary Cult“. In V. R. Herrmann / J. D. Schloen (Hg): *In Remembrance of Me: Feasting with the Dead in the Ancient Middle East*. OIP 37. Chicago. Pp. 57–60.
— 2018: „Kingship in Samʾal“. In A. Gianto / P. Dubovský (Hg): *Changing Faces of Kingship in Syria-Palestine 1500–500 BCE*. AOAT 459. Münster. Pp. 51–79.
— 2020a: „Zur Königsideologie der aramäischen Herrscher von Damaskus“. In J. Baldwin / J. Matuszak (Hg): *Altorientalistische Studien zu Ehren von Konrad Volk*. dubsar 17. Münster. Pp. 283–312.
— 2020b: „Strategies of Legitimation of the Aramaean Kings in Ancient Syria: Three Case Studies on Damascus, Hamath and Yādiya/Samʾal“. In E. Wagner-Durand / J. Linke (Hg): *Tales of Royalty—Notions of Kingship in Visual and Textual Narration in the Ancient Near East*. Berlin. Pp. 165–183.
Noth, M., 1928 / 1980: *Die israelitischen Personennamen im Rahmen der gemeinsemitischen Namengebung*. Hildesheim/New York.
Novák, M., 2013: „Gōzān and Gūzāna. Anatolians, Aramaeans, and Assyrians in Tell Halaf“. In D. Bonatz / L. Martin (Hg): *100 Jahre archäologische Feldforschungen in Nordost-Syrien—eine Bilanz*. Schriften der Max Freiherr von Oppenheim-Stiftung 18. Wiesbaden. Pp. 259–280.
Orthmann, W., 2002: *Die aramäisch-assyrische Stadt Guzana: Ein Rückblick auf die Ausgrabungen Max von Oppenheims in Tell Halaf*. Schriften der Max Freiherr von Oppenheim-Stiftung 15. Saarbrücken.
Oshima, T. M., 2018: „The King’s Godly Image as the Perfect Physiognomy of the Holder of the Kingship“. In A. Berlejung / J. E. Filitz (Hg): *The Physicality of the Other: Masks from the Ancient Near East and the Eastern Mediterranean*. ORA 27. Tübingen. Pp. 231–259.
Parker, S. B., 1999: „The Composition and Sources of Some Northwest Semitic Royal Inscriptions“. SEL 16, 49–62.
Podella, T., 1993: „Notzeit-Mythologem und Nichtigkeitsfluch“. In B. Janowski / K. Koch / G. Wilhelm (Hg): *Religionsgeschichtliche Beziehungen zwischen Kleinasien, Nordsyrien und dem Alten Testament: Internationales Symposion Hamburg 17.–21. März 1990*. OBO 129. Freiburg/Göttingen. Pp. 427–454.
Pongratz-Leisten, B., 1994: Ina Šulmi Īrub. *Die kulttopographische und ideologische Programmatik der* akītu-*Prozession in Babylonien und Assyrien im I. Jahrtausend v. Chr*. BaF 16. Mainz.
Pruß, A. / al Masīḥ Bagdo, A., 2002: „Tell Fekheriye: Bericht über die erste Kampagne der deutsch-syrischen Ausgrabungen 2001“. MDOG 134, 311–329.
Quick, L., 2018: *Deuteronomy 28 and the Aramaic Curse Tradition*. Oxford.
Radner, K., 2005: *Die Macht des Namens: Altorientalische Strategien zur Selbsterhaltung*. SANTAG 8. Wiesbaden.
Ramos, M., 2016: „A Northwest Semitic Curse Formula: The Sfire Treaty and Deuteronomy 28“. ZAW 128, 205–220.
Rollston, C. A., 2010: *Writing and Literacy in the World of Ancient Israel: Epigraphic Evidence of the Iron Age*. SBLABS 11. Atlanta.
Sader, H., 1987: *Les États araméens de Syrie depuis leur fondation jusqu’à leur transformation en provinces assyriennes*. BTS 36. Beirut/Wiesbaden.
Salo, R. S., 2017: *Die judäische Königsideologie im Kontext der Nachbarkulturen*. ORA 25. Tübingen.
Schwemer, D., 2001: *Die Wettergottgestalten Mesopotamiens und Nordsyriens im Zeitalter der Keilschriftkulturen: Materialien und Studien nach den schriftlichen Quellen*. Wiesbaden.
Schwiderski, D., 2003: „Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte und Religionsgeographie der akkadisch-aramäischen Bilingue vom Tell Feḫerīje“. In E. Schwertheim / E. Winter (Hg): *Religion und Region: Götter und Kulte aus dem östlichen Mittelmeerraum*. Asia Minor Studien 45. Bonn. Pp. 31–47.
Sommerfeld, W., 1993: „Flüche und Fluchformeln als Quelle für die altorientalische Kulturgeschichte“. In M. Dietrich / O. Loretz (Hg): *Mesopotamica—Ugaritica—Biblica: Festschrift für Kurt Bergerhof zur Vollendung seines 70. Lebensjahres am 7. Mai 1992*. AOAT 232. Kevelaer/Neukirchen-Vluyn. Pp. 447–463.
Steymans, H. U., 1995: *Deuteronomium 28 und die adê zur Thronfolgeregelung Asarhaddons: Segen und Fluch im Alten Orient und in Israel*. OBO 145. Freiburg/Göttingen.
Suriano, M. J., 2007: „The Apology of Hazael: A Literary and Historical Analysis of the Tel Dan Inscription“. JNES 66, 163–177.
— 2014: „The Historicality of the King: An Exercise in Reading Royal Inscriptions from the Ancient Levant“. JANEH 1, 95–118.

Töyräänvuori, J., 2018: *Sea and the Combat Myth: Northwest Semitic Political Mythology in the Hebrew Bible*. AOAT 457. Münster.

Van der Toorn, K., 1996: *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria and Israel: Continuity and Change in the Forms of Religious Life*. SHANE 7. Leiden/New York/Köln.

Winter, I. J., 2010: „Art *in* Empire: The Royal Image and the Visual Dimensions of Assyrian Ideology". In I. J. Winter (Hg.): *On Art in the Ancient Near East I: On the First Millennium B.C.E.* CHANE 34/1. Leiden/Boston. Pp. 71–108.

Xella, P., 2003: „Il re". In J. Á. Zamora (Hg): *El hombre fenicio: Estudios y materiales*. Serie Arqueológica 9. Rom. Pp. 23–32.

Yamada, S., 2000: *The Construction of the Assyrian Empire: A Historical Study of the Inscriptions of Shalmaneser III (859–824 BC) Relating to His Campaigns to the West*. CHANE 3. Leiden/Boston/Köln.

Younger, K. L., 2016: *A Political History of the Arameans: From Their Origins to the End of Their Polities*. SBLABS 13. Atlanta.

YAHWEH AND HIS ASHERAH IN THE THREE PITHOI INSCRIPTIONS FROM KUNTILLET ʿAJRUD: A RE-EVALUATION

Martin Leuenberger

1. INTRODUCTION

Contrary to the biblical description of Yahweh as the one and only god, religious-historical research of the last decades has developed a different, and now widely accepted, picture for Israel and Judah in the monarchical era. Yahweh was part, and then chief, of an (admittedly small and very limited) pantheon, and in particular, he had a wife at his side—the famous, but somewhat elusive, Asherah.

In what follows, as a small tribute to Sakkie Cornelius from Tübingen,[1] I will focus on this numinous figure and her relation to Yahweh according to the famous pithoi inscriptions from Kuntillet ʿAjrud. The big picture for Asherah in monarchical Israel and Judah, as it is currently prevalent in research, has been broadly established and intensely discussed at least since and in the wake of the monumental works of Judith Hadley, Steve A. Wiggins, and Christian Frevel, followed notably by contributions from Ian D. Wilson, Erin Darby, and many others.[2] Yet, several fundamental issues, as well as uncountable questions of detail, are still controversial. Thus, how to deal in a methodologically reflected way with the pertinent archaeological, iconographic, epigraphic, and biblical sources remains an important task in recent discussions, still requiring manifold clarifications. In the present context, I have to skip further elaborating hermeneutical, methodological, and material preliminaries and restrict myself to two short comments:[3] First, with regard to methodology, my contribution is based on a transmitter group-specific model that intends to evaluate, in a paradigmatic manner, the varying geographic, historical, sociological, and tradition-historical contexts of the sources regarding Asherah. It aims at developing a differentiated religious-historical matrix of Asherah's profile, her functions, and relations during the Israelite and Judean state period. Second, with regard to the source material, this reconstruction, in my view, has to consider six main areas or categories of sources: inscriptions, theophoric personal names, iconography, Judean Pillar Figurines, archaeology, and biblical texts (fig. 1).[4]

Of course, the crucial problem is how to analyse and interpret the incidental, often incomplete and/or fragmentary findings, first for themselves, and then how to relate them to each other, constructing as comprehensive a model as possible. Thus, in the case of Asherah, as in many others, *how* we reason, justify, and argue for our reconstructions is, at the very least, just as important as *what* we reconstruct.

To this end, I will focus specifically on the famous pithoi inscriptions from Kuntillet ʿAjrud and then put them into the larger context. In recent research, they have been and still are much debated—and rightly so—since these extra-biblical *texts*, securely datable to the early 8th century BCE, provide (together with the third inscription from Khirbet el-Qom dating to ca. 700 BCE) *the most solid and*

---

[1] The scientifically and personally esteemed colleague spent several sabbaticals in Tübingen. I enjoyed and profited greatly from the inspiring discussions with him and his lovely wife Magna here and also in Stellenbosch, accompanied by an excellent glass of wine and Amarula or a few Swiss chocolate truffles. *Ad bonam salutem*!

[2] See Wiggins, 1993; 2007; Frevel, 1995; Hadley, 2000; Wilson, 2012; Darby, 2014, and the comprehensive bibliography compiled by Charles Conroy at https://www.cjconroy.net/bib/asherah.htm.

[3] See, for more details of the intended religious-historical modelling, Leuenberger, 2014: 251f; forthcoming: ch. 2.1.

[4] See also, with a somewhat different categorisation, the classical, in Frevel's words, "Vier-Säulen-Konzept" (Frevel, 1995: 13–22, esp. 22).

precise data on Asherah.[5] With the final edition, published in 2012, the available source material has significantly improved and allows for a re-evaluation (see below 2.1). Therefore, this case is still particularly illuminating both in terms of methodology and source material. In my view, it allows and demands as "thick" a reconstruction as possible in terms of content.

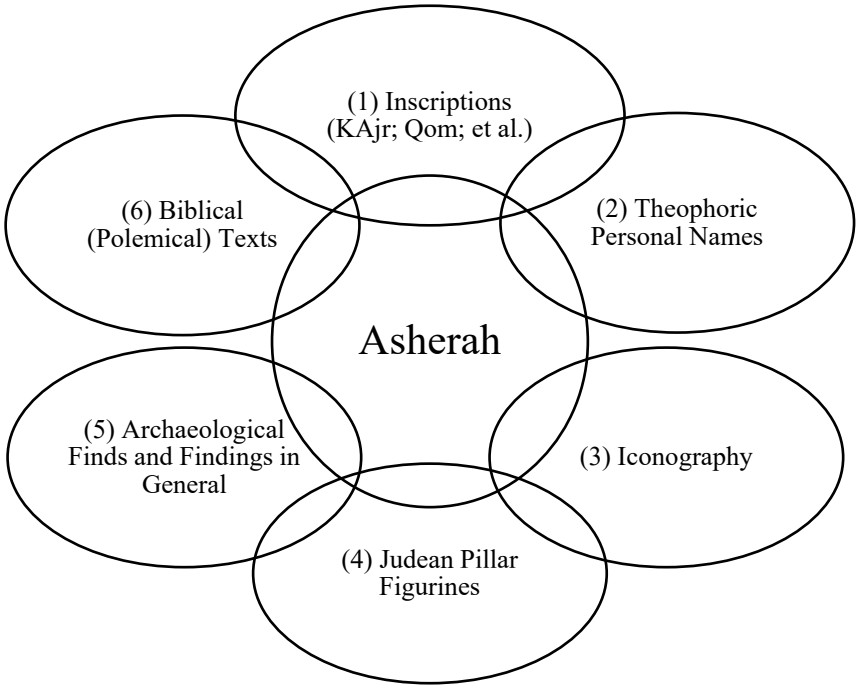


Fig. 1: Relevant sources for a religious-historical reconstruction of Asherah.

2. THE THREE PITHOI INSCRIPTIONS FROM KUNTILLET ʿAJRUD AND THEIR VALUE FOR A RELIGIOUS-HISTORICAL RECONSTRUCTION OF ASHERAH

2.1 Epigraphy

Among the most famous findings from Kuntillet ʿAjrud, an Israelite caravanserai deep in the Negev from the early 8th century BCE, are the ink inscriptions (and drawings)[6] on two pithoi. Immediately after their discovery in 1975/76,[7] they created quite a furore in the field that continues to resonate up to the present. Fortunately, with the "final edition", edited by the excavator Zeʾev Meshel,[8] some of the source material has been brought to a new level, although there remain quite a few serious problems. The number and quality of the images are limited and the documentation unfortunately is not complete in several respects; notably, *in situ*-photographs, data on the finding dates, the state of the material, its extension, precise finding context,

[5] I do not see how this "overrates" ("überbewertet") the inscriptions, as Frevel warns (1995: 18f; and 2019b: ch. 1), although here also, a transmitter group-specific model has to come into play (see below 2.4 with n. 31).

[6] Pertinent in the present context are, of course, the two "standing figures", which every now and again have been interpreted as an "illustrating" picture of Yahweh and his Asherah (see, e.g., Schmidt, 1995: 97–105; 2015: 68–81; Thomas, 2016). Even considering the recent images with partially changed features, this is, however, very unlikely in my view, due to their androgyny, their Bes-features, and the accompanying sitting figure playing the lyre (see also Berlejung, 2017: 71–74, preferring lion-aspects). In addition, regarding the image composition, the differing position and size of the two figures, and, diachronically, the probable later addition of the left figure would need clarification. The same applies to the methodological problem of whether and how to combine text and image (see Leuenberger, 2008: 129–133). Just to avoid misunderstandings, I add that in other, more convincing instances, I indeed reckon with such images of Yahweh and (his) Asherah (see esp. Tell Beit Mirsim: Jeremias, 1993; Uehlinger, 1997: 149–152; Berlejung, 2019: 76, and, as an overview, Cornelius, 2009 and Berlejung, 2017: 74–88).

[7] See the preliminary edition by Meshel, 1978. This has been the reference work for decades, but it does not allow for a critical analysis and reconstruction.

[8] Meshel, 2012.

etc. are missing. The publication, however, is indeed "final", since the artefacts, being already in a bad condition, had been returned to Egypt and were lost in the tumults of the Arab spring. This particularly holds true for the pithoi inscriptions, which means that the photographs of the excavated finds definitely represent the best source basis.[9] Despite these problems, the final edition and its material allows for some fascinating possibilities to improve our reading of the inscriptions, notably by overlaying the electronic originals of the photographs in their maximum resolution, which Dr. Meshel kindly made available to me. With the help of modern digital image processing software, I seek to evaluate them anew: Superimposing the photos with their differing angles, lightings, and scales, and splitting them into their spectral colours optimises the legibility and allows for improved material text reconstructions. Such procedures possess a certain potential not only for Old Hebrew inscriptions, but also for the adjoining northwest-Semitic epigraphy, where the sources' state and publication often present similar problems.

Regarding Asherah, the *three attestations of blessing provided by Yahweh from Samaria resp. Teman and his Asherah can be verified*. Methodologically, it is important that the new photographs, in several instances, allow for both falsifications as well as verifications, as I will illustrate, only selectively, not being able to present here a detailed commentary. In the present context, of course, the combined blessing by Yahweh and his Asherah is crucial; however, after recent discussions with Christian Frevel,[10] who disputes the attestation of Yahweh from Teman, I want to add a few important observations in this respect as well.

(1) In inscription 3.1 on pithos A, the photographs on the one side clearly reveal the assumption that line 1 mentions king Jehoash of Israel to be wrong.

On the one hand, as the following photographs show (fig. 2), neither *ʾ[šy]w*, often read as Ashyo = (king) Jehoash of Israel, nor *hm[l]k* can be read,[11] but rather: *ʾmr · ʾ[..]w [·] h..m ·*, which is best rendered as "utterance/message of A[…], the […]", where *h..m* is probably something like a functional title of the aforementioned person.[12]

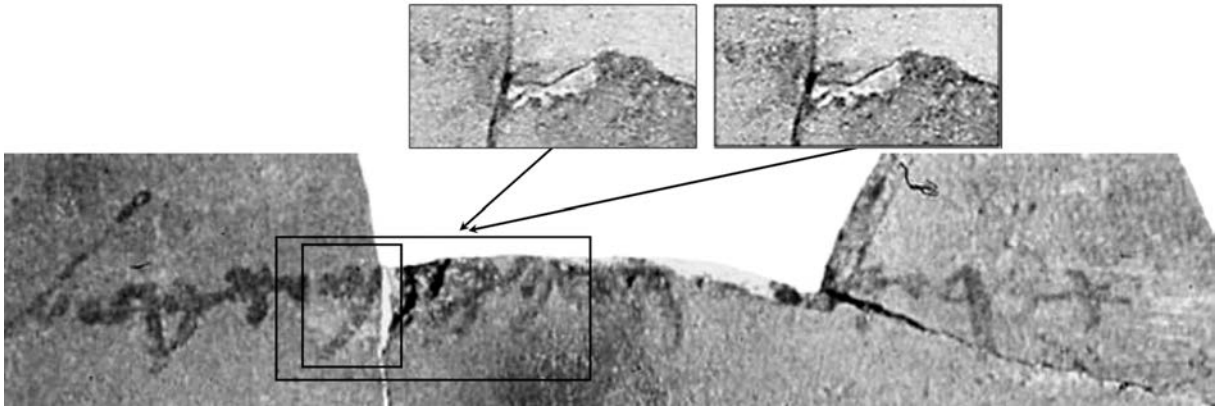


Fig. 2: Line 1 of inscription 3.1 (digital photographs © Z. Meshel, processed by M. Leuenberger).

On the other hand, the blessing at the end of line 1, *brkt · ʾtkm*, "I bless you [pl.] (herewith)", namely, *lyhwh · šmrn · wlʾšrth*, "by Yahweh from Samaria and his Asherah" (line 2), can now definitely be confirmed (fig. 3). Although the fragments still cannot be joined directly, the thematic nexus can be established and the "divine couple" (see below) providing the blessing (for a group) is attested beyond any doubt.

[9] Should the artefacts reappear, we can only speculate at the moment whether phase contrast x-rays, currently still in their infancy, could further improve the readability.

[10] Papers delivered at a conference on Yahweh's desert origins in Bochum (Frevel, forthcoming a) and at the IOSOT-meeting in Aberdeen in 2019 culminated in the evaluation that "the testimony to the phrase *yhwh tmn* remains uncertain and its spelling is striking" (Frevel, forthcoming b: ch. 3).

[11] See Meshel, 2012: 87: *ʾ[-]◦◦[-]m̊ [-]k*. Recently, e.g., Puech (2014: 165, 189) has related this reading to king Jehoash. The photographs, however, clearly show that the final letter is a *m*. This excludes a reference to king Jehoash. This falsification is an important example of the methodological progresses that are possible on the new epigraphical basis.

[12] A concrete explanation remains difficult. One option might be to read *hʾlm*: "the dark/black" as proposed by Erhard Blum (oral communication).

Fig. 3: Inscription 3.1 (digital photographs © Z. Meshel, processed by M. Leuenberger).

Fig. 4: Inscription 3.6:5–6 (digital photograph © Z. Meshel).

(2) The same holds true for inscription 3.6 on pithos B, where lines 5–7 (fig. 4) present a blessing (to an individual), this time by Yahweh from Teman and his Asherah (followed by blessing, protection, and presence exclusively from Yahweh in lines 7–10). (5) *brktk ly*(6)*hwh tm̊n* (7) *wlʾš̊[rt]h̊* · : "I bless you [sg.] (herewith) by Yahweh from Teman and his Asherah". Again, the operative unit of a locally specified Yahweh and his Asherah is given, whereas Yahweh is localised in Teman (whatever that may signify).

(3) Finally, the intricate case of inscription 3.9 on pithos B, which would require a much more precise analysis, also exhibits the same core structure in line 1. Unfortunately, the beginning is not legible on any photograph (fig. 5).

However, superimposing all these available digital images electronically, ensures that the rest of line 1, which alone is relevant in the present context, is quite legible, as fig. 6 indicates: *[… b]rktk · lyhwh htmn · wlʾšrth* · : "I bless you [sg.] (herewith) by Yahweh from Teman and his Asherah". This verifies again the reading of Yahweh from Teman (see below, with n. 17).

In sum, this epigraphic re-evaluation, based on the best available electronic photographs, validates several aspects:

- It is undisputed that the issue of *blessing* is the dominant theme.

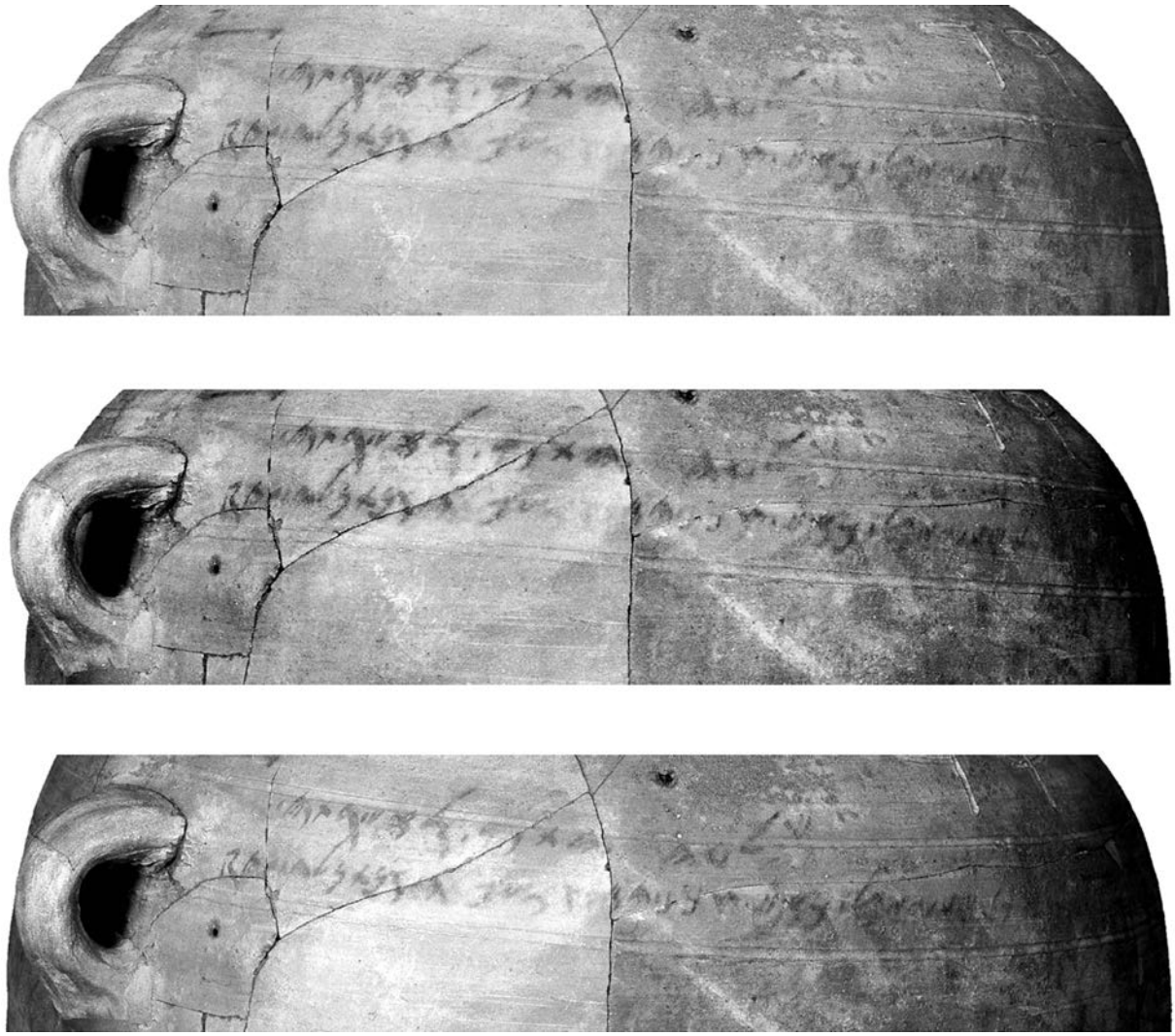


Fig. 5: Inscription 3.9 (digital photographs © Z. Meshel).

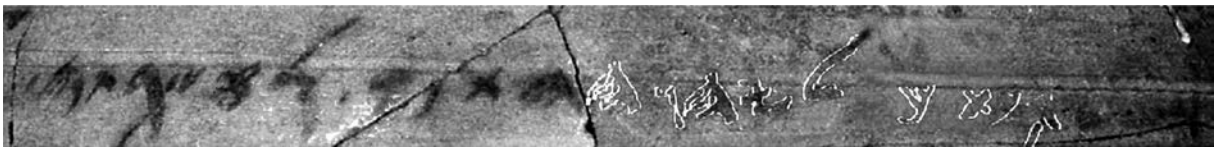


Fig. 6: Inscription 3.9 (digital photographs © Z. Meshel, processed by M. Leuenberger).

- The blessing is provided typically by Yahweh and his Asherah *in cooperation*. A glimpse at Khirbet el-Qom,[13] about a century later and representing a Judean context, confirms the continuing relevance of blessing, as well as the basic cooperation of the divine couple. Now, however, Yahweh alone blesses (the deceased Uriyahu), while Asherah was responsible for saving him during his life: *(2) brk · ʾryhw · lyhwh (3) wmn̊ṣryh · lʾšrtn̊ · hwšʿ lh*: "(2) Blessed is/be Uriyahu by Yahweh. (3) And from his enemies—by his Asherah he saved him" (Qom 3:2–3).[14]

[13] Excavated in 1967, published by Dever, 1969–1970; see Renz, 1995a: 202–211; Leuenberger, 2008: 138–149.

[14] See also Yahweh as the only protector in Kuntillet ʿAjrud inscription 3.6 and the complete absence of Asherah in the later inscription from Ketef Hinnom. These data allow us to reconstruct a theological-historical development whereby Asherah was first marginalised and then (at least nominally) eliminated.

- With regard to form and genre, it is undisputed that, in Kuntillet ʿAjrud, we are dealing with a common introductory element of a letter. The *Sitz im Leben* of the blessing is a communication from sender to receiver over time, in which the former executes performatively (by having the "letter" read) a blessing of the latter in the name and authority of Yahweh and his Asherah:[15] *brktk*/*brkt ʾtkm*, "I bless you [sg./pl.] (herewith)".
- Particular to Kuntillet ʿAjrud is the fact that Yahweh is specified locally as Yahweh from Samaria or Yahweh from Teman. This notion, properly called *polyyahwism*, is now definitely verified and, in my view, highly remarkable with regard to Yahweh's theological history. In the pre-Josianic and Israelite context of Kuntillet ʿAjrud during the early 8th century BCE, the question of Yahweh's internal structure, as it emerges in the geographical allocations to Samaria and Teman, is obviously crucial and relevant. Although I cannot go into too many details here, I want to point out at least two aspects. First, the private blessings referring to the state god Yahweh of Samaria exhibit a *porosity* of the different levels of religion. This fluidity not only comprises official and private religion,[16] but is probably also of inter-regional relevance, as is evidenced by the Judean spelling "Tayman(ite)" with diphthong (in *yhwh hty[mn]* or *yhwh hty[mn]y* of the [more official?] plaster inscription 4.1.1:1 in Phoenician script).[17] Secondly, the inscriptions from Kuntillet ʿAjrud feature more or less the same propositions for Yahweh from Samaria *and* Yahweh from Teman. Clear differences are not discernible, and thus the inscriptions do not permit us to reconstruct different competencies or profiles for Yahweh in Kuntillet ʿAjrud, whereas later, in (Judean) Khirbet el-Qom, a local specification lacks or even falls away completely (paving the way for the exilic and postexilic standard case in monolatrous and monotheistic contexts).

2.2 Philology

Having established a solid epigraphic basis, the (blessing) propositions can be analysed and evaluated using the approach mentioned in the introduction. I concentrate on the difficult relationship between Yahweh and (his) Asherah, which constitutes the main statement with respect to the initiator of the blessing. Regarding the inner structure of Yahweh, however, the indications just given must suffice here.

In the first instance, the expression *ʾšrth*: "his [that is, Yahweh's] Asherah" poses Hebraistic problems, because a *double determination* by the proper name "Asherah" and by personal suffix referring to Yahweh contradicts the grammatical rules.[18] Consequently, there have been attempts to understand the suffix either (a) as a duplicated feminine ending (e.g., Ziony Zevit; Diethelm Conrad; Andreas Angerstorfer) or (b) as a marker of the *casus obliquus*, the dependent case (see, especially, Josef Tropper). This, however, is linguistic-historically anachronistic for the state period.[19] (c) Also, the conclusion that Asherah must be a generic term referring to a cult pole (e.g., André Lemaire; Othmar Keel / Christoph Uehlinger; John A. Emerton; Otto Kaiser; now Émile Puech), is based on a too formalistic language system.[20] Even in Biblical Hebrew, a few instances of determined proper names are attested, be it by the article (such as הַיַּרְדֵּן, "the Jordan", and a number of comparable [place-] designations) or by construct-conjunctions (see esp. יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת, "Yahweh of hosts", as a syntactic analogy to Yahweh

[15] I would insist that this is the function of the written inscription, regardless whether "these graffiti commemorate blessings that were spoken during ritual activity in the shrine area" (Mandell, 2012: 144).

[16] See in detail Jeremias / Hartenstein, 1999: 111–119; Leuenberger, 2008: 134, n. 96.

[17] In this regard, see Meshel, 2012: 105–107; Blum, 2013: 49–50. It would be worthwhile to elaborate further on the article (see also inscription 3.9:1) and the alternative reading with the final *y*, interpreting *htmny* as an attribute.

[18] See, e.g., Ernst, 1995: 35: "Ein Nomen ist nie doppelt determiniert" (so also GKC §125d; JM §137). Regarding Kuntillet ʿAjrud, Kaiser (2013: 29–30, n. 95) simply states: "Da ein Eigenname nicht mit einem Suffixpronomen versehen werden kann, ist nicht von der Göttin Aschera die Rede". For the following discussion, see also my short evaluation in Leuenberger, 2008: 121, n. 35 (with literature).

[19] In this regard, see the detailed discussion of Müller, 1992: 32–33.

[20] See Koch, 1988: 99–100 or Puech, 2014: 166. A subvariant is advocated by Sass, who relates *ʾšrth* to a temple (especially, Sass, 2014: 62 [see already Koch, 1988: 97–98]; see also Sass, 2014: 62–65 on the probability that Yahweh had a consort). Additionally, the allocation of the cult pole—even in the Deuteronomistic polemics—to the *goddess* Asherah advises against this interpretation, the more so as Asherah, in Kuntillet ʿAjrud, is assigned explicitly to the god *Yahweh*.

from Samaria/Teman). This cumulative evidence is significant and cannot simply be invalidated by referring to appellative backgrounds.[21]

This Hebraistic pass has been taken up in Semitics, advancing the sometimes fierce, and not entirely ideology-free, discussion. Paolo Xella, in particular, has provided matching analogies for "Yahweh and his Asherah", that is, for the paradigm (m)DN[1] + (f)DN[2] with third-person masculine singular suffix from the North-West Semitic language area, where, in Ebla, even place names are attested.[22] The genre of offering lists leaves no doubt that the recipients are gods.

Taken together, this Semitic and religious-historical background corroborates that *Asherah in the Kuntillet ʿAjrud inscription is indeed the proper name of a goddess*. A number of more far-reaching arguments bolster this interpretation. First, the *brk*-related syntactical parallelism between Yahweh and Asherah suggests that they both belong to the same category "deity". Secondly, the biblical language usage makes it probable that the one who blesses, indicated adverbially with *l*, is a person, whereas object-like sources are expressed in the construct state or in a prepositional phrase with *mn*.[23] Thirdly, in the Israelite religious-historical context, it seems likely to reckon with a "polyasherism" corresponding to the polyyahwism and requiring an analogous determination specifying which Asherah is involved.[24] Fourthly, further epigraphic and iconographic religious-historical analogies (notably from Edomite Ḥorvat Qitmit and from Ammon) favour this interpretation, the most important case being the dedicatory inscription(s) from Ekron *lʾšrt*, "for Asherah", obviously referring to a personal numinous entity (however without mentioning a male counterpart).[25]

2.3 Meaning

Now, what exact meaning does this philological explanation imply? The decisive point of the syntagm "Yahweh and his Asherah" is obviously the female deity's position in a hierarchical relation. She is second to the first-mentioned male deity. This gives us a double perspective:

(1) Looking *inwards*, in terms of the internal divine relations, the syntagm defines the goddess quasi excessively by marshalling all available linguistic (special-)means. She is, so to speak, "the Yahweh from Samaria/Teman his Asherah".

One can ask whether the syntagm is also indicative of *two cult statues assigned to each other*, as, for example, Uehlinger does.[26] I, for one, am sceptical about this. On the one hand, we are dealing here with blessing-statements without a cult-relation, unlike the offering lists in the North-West Semitic analogies. On the other hand, the reference to two cult stelae in the slightly younger local sanctuary of Yahweh in Arad must also be assessed critically. The Judean provenance in contrast to the North Israelite origin of Kuntillet ʿAjrud is less important in this context. Rather, the current archaeological state of research is relevant: While it was accepted for a long time that two massebahs—one for Yahweh, and one for his Asherah—were used simultaneously,[27] precise stratigraphic analyses have shown that in the crucial late 8th century stratum IX, only one massebah was in use, while the second, older massebah (from Stratum X) was meticulously immured in the wall behind the cella.[28] The premature correlation with Kuntillet

---

[21] See, in a broader frame, esp. Stolz, 1997. More specifically, JM §131o, n. 1 (interpreting יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת as an ellipsis) concedes that, here, Yahweh "could have been used as a nomen regens", so that the case "indicates *that a proper noun can also take a suffix pronoun*" (my emphasis).

[22] Xella, 1995: 604–607 (with literature on the debate). Especially significant are the examples "Rasap of Adani … and his Adamma (d*ra-sa-ap ʾà-da*-NIki *wa* d*a-dam-ma-sù*)" from Ebla and in Ugarit "Gaṯru … and his ʿAnat (*l gṯr ... l ʿnth*)" (KTU 1.43 11–13), "… for my Asherah (*l ʾṯrty*)" (KTU 2.31 42), and "our Keret (*krtn*)" (KTU 1.16 I 39). Müller (1992: 29) adds *ʾṯrt ṣrm wʾlt ṣdynm*: "die Ascherah der Tyrener und (die ?) Göttin der Sidonier" (KTU 1.14 IV 38–39).

[23] See Müller, 1992: 28.

[24] See Freedman, 1987: 246–249; see also, more cautiously, Emerton, 1999: 327–328.

[25] For references and further evidence, see Leuenberger, 2008: 26.

[26] Uehlinger, 1998: 741, following Xella, 1995: 610.

[27] See, e.g., the image in Zwickel, 1997: fig. 129. Interestingly, until recently (at least as of October 2014), the Israel Museum in Jerusalem also presented this view—in contrast to the reconstruction on the site—but finally has adapted to the current knowledge (see https://www.imj.org.il/en/collections/369406).

[28] See concisely Köckert, 2010: 377–378, referring to Herzog, 2002: 52–58. For the entire discussion, see also Herzog, 2010. A third massebah, presumed by Yohanan Aharoni, is in fact most probably just a bigger stone within the wall construction (see Herzog, 2002: 63).

ʿAjrud should therefore be revised. In general, it is important to consider carefully the specifically elaborated religious symbol systems as they are documented by the different epigraphic and archaeological sources for the layers of religion spanning from private piety via local traditions to official state religion.

(2) The situation *ad extra* is just as clear as the internal hierarchical relation is: Yahweh and his Asherah ensure the blessing *together* so that they operate in unison and in unity of action and function.

Thereby, however, the entire performance of the blessing is executed—in a traditionally patriarchal fashion—under the aegis and dominance of Yahweh, while Asherah occupies an auxiliary position. At Kuntillet ʿAjrud, this is unequivocally demonstrated by the immediate continuation of the blessings guaranteed by Yahweh and his Asherah. Yahweh alone, as the exclusive subject, can substantiate the blessings' performances. Only he is asked and gives (inscription 3.9:2) or blesses, protects, and is with the receiver (inscription 3.6:7–10)!

This feature can be highlighted more clearly in a religious- and theological-historical long-term perspective of the *moyenne durée*. It can be traced selectively in Old Hebrew inscriptions and in a more comprehensive, but, literary-historically, more difficult way in the Hebrew Bible. Using the model of a *comparatisme différentiel* (Jean-Pierre Vernant), it is, for a start, quite instructive to adduce the structurally analogous processes concerning *Yahweh's relationship with El and Baal*. In the case of El, a smooth and harmonious *identification* under/with a Yahwistic imprint takes place, while in the case of the typologically and functionally very closely related Baal, we see a sharp and conflict-prone *demarcation*, especially in the Northern Kingdom. With regard to Asherah, one can describe the corresponding process concisely as an *absorption*. Already since the second millennium BCE, the goddess Asherah[29] has a clearly traceable, close affinity to fertility, prosperity, and well-being in the Levant. Therefore, it is entirely plausible, that Yahweh, as part of his identification with El, also takes over El's spouse, Asherah, and her blessing capability, as we saw in the inscriptions from Kuntillet ʿAjrud. Here, Yahweh is obviously able to provide the blessing in a way that is convincing and effective for the persons involved, only in a close joint venture with Asherah.

Subsequently however, an expansion of Yahweh's capabilities takes place, which in fact leads not only to an absorption of Asherah, but to her (nominal) elimination. Regardless of all regional, sociological, and transmitter group-specific differentiations, Yahweh is seizing more and more of Asherah's blessing power. In official Judean religion of the late monarchical period, and from the exile onwards, also in private religion, Yahweh operates completely without Asherah. He fully executes her blessing function and the goddess eventually disappears in the course of Yahweh's growing and prevailing monolatric authority culminating in the strictly monotheistic exclusivity of Yahweh.

2.4 Evaluation

The critical re-evaluation of the final edition of the pithoi inscriptions from Kuntillet ʿAjrud with the latest electronic tools enables a material text (re)constitution, which works in a methodologically transparent way based on the best photographs and thus establishes valid standards for future research. In principle, this re-examination has confirmed Yahweh and his Asherah as guarantors of a blessing. Additionally—in the sense of Reinhard Koselleck's "veto right of the sources"—falsifications also resulted and new insights have arisen. In this respect, it becomes clear how important it is at present to develop a careful source criticism and evaluation, not only for biblical exegesis, but also for epigraphy, archaeology, and any historical investigation into matters of ancient Israel.

In terms of meaning, the divine notion of "Yahweh and his Asherah" has been clarified with the help of philological and religious-historical perspectives, both with regard to the hierarchical internal relations of the divine couple as well as the external unity of action and function. The focus of the blessings is on providing provisions for everyday life and travelling protection, which corresponds to the location of

[29] See Smith (2011), although he assumes a withdrawal of Asherah already since the Early Iron Age in the Levant. He therefore understands Asherah in the Kuntillet ʿAjrud inscriptions as a cult symbol (Smith, 1990: 48; 2011: 213–217). In my view, this withdrawal also requires a multidimensional modelling.

the site and the mobile addressees.[30] (1) On the one hand, in this context, interesting religious-sociological interactions become evident, when Yahweh of Samaria, who is, at the same time, both the local and the official state god of Israel, now also provides private blessings, notably far from the homeland. On the journey between Samaria and Teman, the authors know themselves to be under the protection of their national god, Yahweh from Samaria and Teman (this second term probably functions analogously, but its meaning is somewhat more difficult). (2) On the other hand, the private religion gains more prominent contours as well. Because there is no trace of reflection or even justification at all in the statements on blessing provided by Yahweh and his Asherah, it is reasonable to conclude that these (occasional and only by chance preserved) inscriptions reflect quite traditional, common, and fairly representative forms of private religion (at least in Israel around 800 BCE). Its core structure is polytheistic with Yahweh and his Asherah as the dominant couple at the heart of a very limited pantheon. This pantheon can be determined with the help of other sources and has contemporary analogies in the areas of the territorial states of Ammon, Moab, and Edom in the East, and the important Aramaean states in the North, as well as those of the Phoenician and Philistine coastal cities in the West. Last, but not least, the same structure can also be assumed in the fraternal state of Judah in the South.

Overall, Kuntillet ʿAjrud represents a fragmentary, but at the same time "thickly describable" segment of the material history of the culture, religion, and theology of ancient Israel. The serendipity of this find allows us deep insights into the practiced private religion of North-Israelite itinerant tradespeople, and is—far from "overrated"—indeed "of invaluable value for the reconstruction of the religious history of ancient 'Israel' and the monotheism debate", as Angelika Berlejung states.[31]

3. ASHERAH DURING THE (JUDEAN) STATE PERIOD

In a next step, the profile of Yahweh's wife, hitherto delineated partially, should be traced more broadly for Israel and Judah and be integrated into the full picture of the history of religion and theology. Due to space limitations, this cannot be done here in detail, but an elaboration would need to treat—notably for the Southern Kingdom of Judah—the following material: (1) *Other inscriptions*, such as the one from Khirbet el-Qom in Judah and Phoenician Ekron, have to be included, as well as (2) *theophoric personal names* on the level(s) of private religion(s). (3) Here, with regard to the material findings, the notorious *Judean Pillar Figurines* also need to be considered, since they are probably at least involved in a cultic Asherah-context.[32] (4) Even if the *temple of Arad* is relevant only for Yahweh (and his material representation in the cultic sphere), but not for his Asherah, the question of connections to local or regional forms of religion is methodologically important for Asherah as well. (5) In addition, potential *Asherah-iconography* on different religious levels and contexts needs to be discussed cautiously. As Cornelius has pointedly noted regarding "the way in which goddesses have been identified in Palestinian iconography in the past", we must admit, "[n]ot every woman, lion or tree is to be linked with Ašerah. Her iconography still remains a mystery".[33] Moreover, even concentrating on the core-material, the *competence* of the goddess is disputed. Erin Darby and Shawna Dolansky deduce from the overall Asherah-iconography a competence in "healing and protection"[34] in contrast to fertility and blessing. At least in Kuntillet ʿAjrud inscription 3.6:7–8, however, blessing and protection do not mark an opposition at all but are rather combined as two aspects of well-being,

---

[30] It is interesting, but speculative to consider with Boertien (2007) whether one can make a link to textiles found in Kuntillet ʿAjrud (and Deir ʿAlla), since an attribution to Asherah rests solely on the contextual proximity of the sites (and the שַׁעַטְנֵז of Lev 19:19; Deut 22:11; Exod 24:4–8 do not help either).

[31] My translation of Berlejung, 2011: 315: "für die Rekonstruktion der Religionsgeschichte des alten 'Israel' und die Monotheismusdebatte von unschätzbarem Wert". See also above n. 5.

[32] This holds true even when the figurines are interpreted as worshippers (so, e.g., Cornelius, 2009: 84, since "there are no symbols of divinity" [p. 83]) and not as a goddess (I presently still prefer this option. See Kletter, 1996: 80–81; Köckert, 2005: 8–9; and Wilson, 2012: 265–268 with a good overview [see also Darby 2014]. Wilson interprets them as "a Judean attempt to maintain ethnic identity in the face of Assyrian imperialism" [2012: 261, 272–275]).

[33] Cornelius, 2009: 93.

[34] Darby, 2014: 404, 406. Dolansky (2016: 19–20) also refers to a "symbol of divine protection". Both Darby and Dolansky postulate this same profile for the Judean Pillar Figurines (which they ultimately still interpret as Asherah-representations; see Dolansky 2016: 11–18; and more reserved Darby, 2014: 34–60, 398–399).

so that, again, we need to differentiate carefully. (6) Finally, the *biblical texts* also add important insights when evaluated critically, providing not only (later) official perspectives, but also allowing for several religious-historical inferences. Here, all these complex issues are only mentioned to emphasise the methodological and thematic potential of these multifarious sources, which at present are still far from exhausted!

Therefore, without pre-empting a detailed examination of all these findings, the overall judgment that Matthias Köckert dared to formulate fifteen years ago, still seems plausible: "During the monarchical period, Asherah was a goddess, who received in the Northern Kingdom as well as in Judah natural veneration alongside Yahweh".[35] The explorations above intend to illustrate that, in lucky cases, this view can be substantiated and fleshed out much more thoroughly by "thick descriptions". At present, however, a detailed elaboration of this model and its validation by a reconstruction of a comprehensive transmitter group-specific matrix for Asherah, which integrates all the various geographical, historical, sociological, and tradition-historical components that can be deduced from the available source material, remain a desideratum.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Berlejung, A., 2011: "Phönizische und hebräische Texte". TUAT 6, 305–319.

— 2017. "The Origins and Beginnings of the Worship of YHWH: The Iconographic Evidence". In J. van Oorschot / M. Witte (eds.): *The Origins of Yahwism*. Berlin/New York. Pp. 67–92.

— 2019: "Geschichte und Religionsgeschichte des antiken Israel". In J. C. Gertz (ed.): *Grundinformation Altes Testament: Eine Einführung in Literatur, Religion und Geschichte des Alten Testaments*. UTB 2745. 6th ed. Göttingen. Pp. 59–192.

Blum, E., 2013: "Die Wandinschriften 4.2 und 4.6 sowie die Pithos-Inschrift 3.9 aus Kuntillet ʿAǧrūd". ZDPV 125, 21–54.

Boertien, J. H., 2007: "Asherah and Textiles". BN 134, 63–77.

Cornelius, I., 2009: "In Search of the Goddess in Ancient Palestine Iconography". In M. Pietsch / F. Hartenstein (eds.): *Israel zwischen den Mächten: Festschrift für Stefan Timm zum 65. Geburtstag*. AOAT 364. Münster. Pp. 77–98.

Darby, E., 2014: *Interpreting Judean Pillar Figurines: Gender and Empire in Judean Apotropaic Ritual*. FAT II/69. Tübingen.

Dever, W. G., 1969–1970: "Iron Age Epigraphic Material from the Area of Khirbet el-Kôm". HUCA 40–41, 139–204.

Dolansky, S., 2016: "Re-figuring Judean 'Fertility' Figurines: Fetishistic Functions of the Feminine Form". In R. D. Miller (ed.): *Between Israelite Religion and Old Testament Theology: Essays on Archaeology, History, and Hermeneutics*. CBET 80. Leuven. Pp. 5–30.

Emerton, J. A., 1999: "'Yahweh and his Asherah': The Goddess or the Symbol?" VT 49, 315–337.

Ernst, A. B., 2013: *Kurze Grammatik des Biblischen Hebräisch*. 3rd ed. Neukirchen-Vluyn.

Freedman, D. N., 1987: "Yahweh of Samaria and his Asherah". BA 50, 241–249.

Frevel, C., 1995: *Aschera und der Ausschließlichkeitsanspruch YHWHs: Beiträge zu literarischen, religionsgeschichtlichen und ikonographischen Aspekten der Ascheradiskussion*. BBB 94/1–2. Weinheim.

— forthcoming a. "The Early History of God—Reflections on the Rise of Yahwism in Israel and Judah". Paper delivered at the 2019 conference "The Desert Origins of God: Yahweh's Emergence and the Materiality of Desert Cult in the Southern Levant and Northern Arabia".

— forthcoming b. "YHWH's Emergence in the South—Some Reflections on Regionalization and the Early History of Yahwism in Judah". Paper delivered at the 2019 conference of the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament.

Hadley, J. M., 2000: *The Cult of Asherah in Ancient Israel and Judah: Evidence for a Hebrew Goddess*. University of Cambridge Oriental Publications 57. Cambridge.

Herzog, Z., 2002: "The Fortress Mound at Tel Arad: An Interim Report". TA 29, 3–109.

[35] My translation of Köckert, 2005: 13: "Aschera war in der Königszeit eine Göttin, die im Nordreich und in Juda selbstverständliche Verehrung neben Jahwe genoss".

— 2010. “Perspectives on Southern Israel’s Cult Centralization: Arad and Beer-sheba”. In R. G. Kratz / H. Spieckermann (eds.): *One God—One Cult—One Nation: Archaeological and Biblical Perspectives*. BZAW 405. Berlin/New York. Pp. 169–199.

Jeremias, J., 1993: “Thron oder Wagen? Eine außergewöhnliche *Terrakotte* aus der späten Eisenzeit in Juda”. In W. Zwickel (ed.): *Biblische Welten: FS für M. Metzger zu seinem 65. Geburtstag*. OBO 123. Freiburg. Pp. 41–59 and Plates 1–7.

Jeremias, J. / Hartenstein, F., 1999: “‘JHWH und sein Aschera’: ‘Offizielle Religion’ und ‘Volksreligion’ zur Zeit der klassischen Propheten”. In B. Janowski / M. Köckert (eds.): *Religionsgeschichte Israels: Formale und materiale Aspekte*. VWGTh 15. Gütersloh. Pp. 79–138.

Kaiser, O., 2013: *Der eine Gott Israels und die Mächte der Welt: Der Weg Gottes im Alten Testament vom Herrn seines Volkes zum Herrn der ganzen Welt*. FRLANT 249. Göttingen.

Kletter, R., 1996: *The Judean Pillar-Figurines and the Archaeology of Asherah*. BAR International Series 636. Oxford.

Koch, K., 1988: “Aschera als Himmelskönigin in Jerusalem”. UF 20, 97–120.

Köckert, M., 2005: “Wandlungen Gottes im antiken Israel”. BThZ 22, 3–36.

— 2010. “YHWH in the Northern and Southern Kingdom”. In R. G. Kratz / H. Spieckermann (eds.): *One God—One Cult—One Nation: Archaeological and Biblical Perspectives*. BZAW 405. Berlin/New York. Pp. 357–394.

Leuenberger, M., 2008: *Segen und Segenstheologien im alten Israel: Untersuchungen zu ihren religions- und theologiegeschichtlichen Konstellationen und Transformationen*. AThANT 90. Zürich.

— 2014: “Jhwh, ‘der Gott Jerusalems’ (Inschrift aus Ḫirbet Bet Layy 1,2): Konturen der Jerusalemer Tempeltheologie aus religions- und theologiegeschichtlicher Perspektive”. EvT 74, 245–260.

— 2015. *Segen*. UTB 4429/Themen der Theologie 10. Tübingen.

— forthcoming. *Gott in Zion: Zionstheologien im alten Israel*.

Mandell, A., 2012: “‘I Bless you to Yhwh and his Asherah’—Writing and Performativity at Kuntillet ʿAjrud”. Maarav 19, 131–162.

Meshel, Z., 1978: *Kuntillet ʿAjrud—A Religious Centre from the Time of the Judaean Monarchy on the Border of Sinai*. Israel Museum Catalogue 175. Jerusalem.

— 2012: *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teiman): An Iron Age II Religious Site on the Judah-Sinai Border*. Jerusalem.

Müller, H-P., 1992: “Kolloquialsprache und Volksreligion in den Inschriften von Kuntillet ʿAǧrūd und Ḫirbet el-Qōm”. ZAH 5, 15–51.

Puech, É., 2014: “Les inscriptions hébraïques de Kuntillet ‘Ajrud (Sinaï)”. RB 121, 161–194.

Renz, J., 1995: *Handbuch der althebräischen Epigraphik, 1: Text und Kommentar*. Darmstadt.

Sass, B., 2014: “On Epigraphic Hebrew ʾŠR and *ʾŠRH, and on Biblical Asherah”. Trans 46, 47–66, Plates IV–V.

Schmidt, B. B., 1995: “The Aniconic Tradition: On Reading Images as Viewing Texts”. In D. V. Edelman (ed.): *The Triumph of Elohim: From Yahwisms to Judaisms*. CBET 13. Kampen. Pp. 75–105.

— 2015: “Kuntillet ʿAjrud’s Pithoi Inscriptions and Drawings: Graffiti or Scribal-Artisan Drafts?” Maarav 20, 53–81.

Smith, M. S. 1990. *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel*. San Francisco.

— 2011. “The Blessing God and Goddess: A Longitudinal View from Ugarit to ‘Yahweh and ... his asherah’ at Kuntillet ʿAjrud”. In G. Eidevall / B. Scheuer (eds.): *Enigmas and Images: Studies in Honor of Tryggve N. D. Mettinger*. ConBOT 58. Winona Lake. Pp. 213–226.

Stolz, F., 1997: “Determinationsprobleme und Eigennamen”. TZ 53, 142–151.

Thomas, R., 2016: “The Identity of the Standing Figures on Pithos A from Kuntillet ʿAjrud: A Reassessment”. JANER 16, 121–191.

— 2017: “The Meaning of ‘Asherah’ in Hebrew Inscriptions”. Semitica 59, 157–218.

Uehlinger, C., 1997: “Anthropomorphic Cult Statuary in Iron Age Palestine and the Search for Yahweh’s Cult Images”. In K. van der Toorn (ed.): *The Image and the Book: Iconic Cults, Aniconism, and the Rise of Book Religion in Israel and the Ancient Near East*. CBET 21. Leuven. Pp. 97–155.

— 1998: “‘… und wo sind die Götter von Samarien?’ Die Wegführung syrisch-palästinischer Kultstatuen auf einem Relief Sargons II. in Ḫorṣābād/Dūr-Šarrukīn”. In M. Dietrich / I. Kottsieper (eds.):

"Und Mose schrieb dieses Lied auf": Studien zum Alten Testament und zum Alten Orient. FS für O. Loretz zur Vollendung seines 70. Lebensjahres mit Beiträgen von Freunden, Schülern und Kollegen. AOAT 250. Münster. Pp. 739–776.

Wiggins, S. A., 1993: *A Reassessment of 'Ashera': A Study According to the Textual Sources of the First Two Millennia BCE*. AOAT 235. Kevelaer/Neukirchen-Vluyn.

— 2007: *A Reassessment of Asherah with Further Considerations of the Goddess.* 2nd ed. Gorgias Ugaritic Studies 2. Piscataway.

Wilson, I. D., 2012: "Judean Pillar Figurines and Ethnic Identity in the Shadow of Assyria". JSOT 36, 259–278.

Xella, P., 1995: "Le dieu et 'sa' deesse: l'utilisation des suffixes pronominaux avec des théonymes d'Ebla à Ugarit et à Kuntillet ʿAjrud". UF 27, 599–610.

Zwickel, W., 1997: *Die Welt des Alten und Neuen Testaments: Ein Sach- und Arbeitsbuch*. Stuttgart.

THE HORIZONTAL DIMENSION OF THE ANCIENT AND BIBLICAL VIEW OF THE WORLD

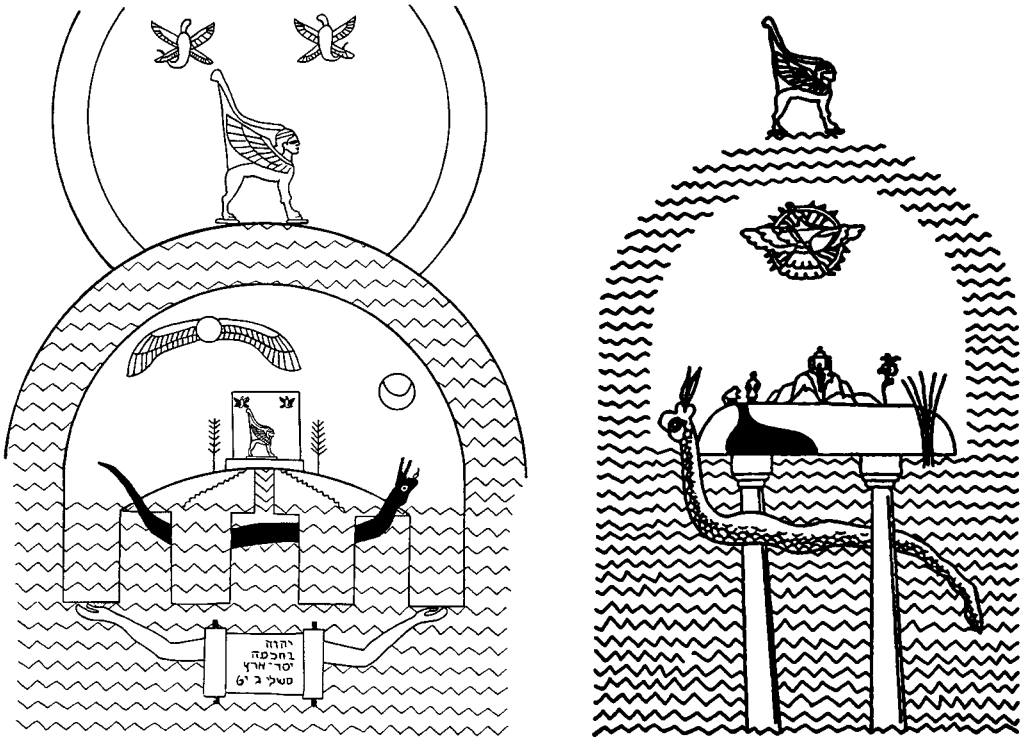
Izaak J. de Hulster

1. INTRODUCTION

Izak (Sakkie) Cornelius works mainly in South Africa and Germany. Before turning to the contents of his work, his "location" in both the southern and the northern hemisphere exhibits an awareness of the extensiveness of the earth. My contribution corroborates the extensiveness of the earth, as included in Cornelius's observations concerning "the" ancient and biblical view of the world. However, by studying "the end(s) of the earth" in the Hebrew Bible and therefore the אִיִּים, I offer to him an extension of his visual reconstruction by emphasising the islands.

2. VISUALISING THE "BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW"

Cornelius has published an article with a drawing that represents a reconstruction of "the" ancient and biblical view of the world (fig. 2). He developed this drawing with the collaboration of Ferdinand Deist. Their reconstruction was inspired by a drawing of Othmar Keel (fig. 1).



Figs. 1 and 2: Visual representations of the reconstructions of the cosmic geography in the ancient Near East and the Hebrew Bible (both drawings without numbers and legend). Sources: Keel, 1985: 161; Cornelius, 1994: 218, fig. 10.

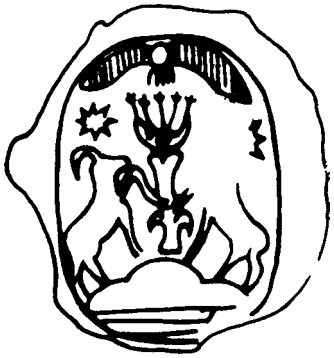


Fig. 3: Bulla from Akko (IAA 73-196; Akko 144 in Keel, 1997a: 580–581), surface find (between 700 and 400 BCE). © Stiftung BIBEL+ORIENT Freiburg CH.

A bulla from Akko is an example of an image from antiquity that parallels the basic structure of these drawings (fig. 3).[1] In my opinion, both modern reconstructions put an emphasis on the vertical axis in the worldview, accentuating the "earth" amidst the waters beneath and the waters above the earth. *Beyond* the waters above the earth, there is a representation of God's dwelling. In earlier publications, I have criticised the "neo-platonic" mirroring between the temple and the heavenly dwelling of God and emphasised the *beyond* of God's supposed dwelling place.[2] In the reconstruction of Cornelius and Deist, this mirroring is either absent or at least less explicit; the reconstruction has a cherub throne above the waters but it does not represent the throne in the temple. Moreover, Cornelius and Deist represent God within creation as "a combination of the sun god and the storm god with a bow".[3] I have also praised Cornelius and Deist for their attention to living beings, as they depict an animal, a human, and a bird (in a tree).[4]

As a complement to this aspect of "the" biblical cosmic geography, I examine, in the following section, the concept of "the end(s) of the earth" in the Hebrew Bible. My examination takes a step towards a more balanced representation of the cosmic geography that forms the background of a good number of Hebrew Bible texts.

3. "THE END(S) OF THE EARTH" AND ISLANDS

The Hebrew Bible has different expressions that refer to the end (or ends) of the earth. Besides indicating regions far away, these phrases can also be used as a merism for the whole earth.[5] The most concrete geographical conceptualisation of the ends of the earth is their identification with islands. This is explicit in Isa 41:5: "The coastlands [islands] have seen and are afraid, the ends of the earth tremble; they have drawn near and come" (NRSV). The NRSV translates אִיִּים with coastlands; here, the translation "islands" is preferable, as I argue below.

---

[1] The bulla depicts a mountain with a palm tree, flanked by caprids, with a star above them (possibly two in symmetry), and the winged sun disk at the top.

[2] De Hulster, 2012: 42–45; 2015: 49–50.

[3] Cornelius, 1994: 203. Cf. my take on the presence and activity of God in creation in, for example, de Hulster, 2015: 58. Note that in Cornelius and Deist's original publication, the drawing has numbers referring to explanations.

[4] See de Hulster, 2015: 54. This observation has been borrowed by Dietrich (2017: 8–9).

[5] קְצוֹת הָאָרֶץ: Isa 40:28; 41:5, 9; Job 28:24. קְצֵה הָאָרֶץ or קְצֵה אֶרֶץ: Deut 13:8; 28:49, 64; Isa 5:26; 42:10; 43:6; 48:20; 49:6; 62:11; Jer 10:13; 12:12 (2x); 25:31, 33 (2x); 51:16; Pss 46:9; 61:2; 135:7; Prov 17:24. Note that Isa 42:10 indicates the whole earth but, unlike a merism, it uses a singular. אַפְסֵי אָרֶץ: Deut 33:17; 1 Sam 2:10; Isa 45:22; 52:10; Jer 16:19; Mic 5:4; Zech 9:10; Pss 2:8; 22:27; 59:13; 67:7; 72:8; 98:3; Prov 30:4. כַּנְפוֹת הָאָרֶץ: Isa 11:12; 24:16; Ezek 7:2; Job 37:3; 38:13 (sometimes *four* "corners"). קְצֵה תֵּבֵל: Deut 4:32; 30:4; Isa 13:5; Ps 19:4; Neh 1:9. Note that such a merism could also be expressed differently. For instance, the black obelisk of Shalmaneser III depicts two kings, Jehu from the House of Omri and Sua from Gilzanu. These two kings were depicted as representative of the most south-western and north-eastern parts of the subjected districts, respectively (Keel / Uehlinger, 1994: 391–420). Likewise, the Egyptians placed victory stelae in one end of the "empire", telling about a victory at the other end; they also took both an Asian and a Nubian to represent the two ends of the Pharaoh's kingdom (Wimmer, 2008: 195).

אִיִּים is the common Classical Hebrew word for islands or coastlands. Islandology puts these two meanings and their alleged distinction into perspective by emphasising that at the core of the matter is the relation between land and water. This also holds for the use of אִיִּים.[6] The word was used for concrete regions, such as the Levantine coastland of the Philistines and the Phoenicians,[7] as well as the islands of Cyprus and Crete.[8] The plural אִיִּים also occurs in the combinations אִיֵּי הַיָּם ("islands of the sea") and אִיֵּי הַגּוֹיִם ("islands of the nations"). Both combinations, like the lexicalisation "wild animals" (Isa 13:22; 34:14; Jer 50:39), are associated with regions far away. Despite this association of distance and possibly wildness, the Hebrew Bible seems to assume that these regions are inhabited and ruled by local kings (e.g., Ezek 27:35; Zeph 2:11). This implies that there is culture and order in these regions. The following section briefly illustrates this in reference to the so-called Babylonian *mappa mundi*.

4. *nagû* AND THE BABYLONIAN WORLD MAP (BM 92687)

The most important ancient parallel to "the" Hebrew Bible worldview is the so-called Babylonian world map (fig. 4). This sixth century BCE drawing provides a concept of the world comparable to today's world maps, depicting cities, countries, waterways, oceans, and islands. Like our modern maps, the map is inscribed with explanations, such as the names of cities or the kind of terrain. Fig. 4 has replaced the words inscribed on the Babylonian map with numbers and gives the explanation as a legend below the map.[9]

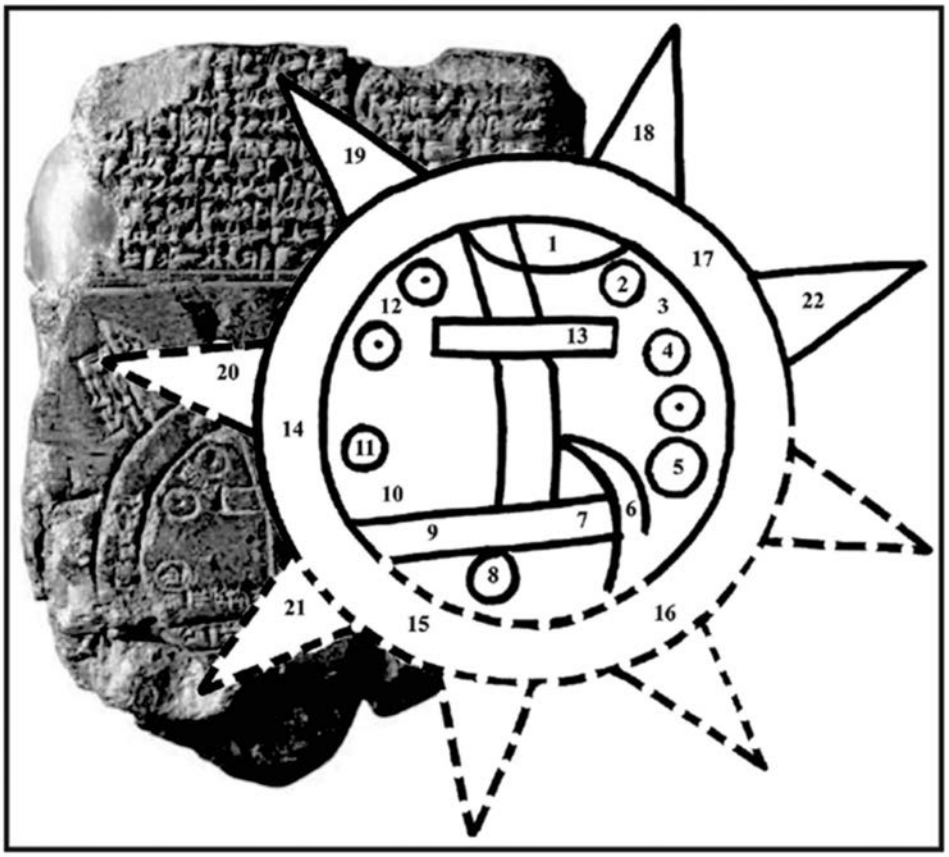


Fig. 4: Tablet with Babylonian world map (BM 92687), 12,2cm × 8,2cm (sixth century BCE).
Source: De Hulster, 2015: 48, fig. 1:2.

Legend: 1. Mountain; 2. city; 3. Urartu; 4. Assyria; 5. Der; 6. [undecipherable]; 7. swamp; 8. Susa; 9. channel; 10. Bit Yakin; 11. city; 12. Habban; 13. Babylon; 14–17. Ocean; 18. Great Wall, six leagues in between where the Sun is not seen; 19. district, six leagues in between; 20. [dist]rict; 21. [dis]trict; 22. district, eight leagues.

[6] Cf. de Hulster, forthcoming.

[7] Isa 20:6; 23:1–6. Note that, in this period, Tyre was in fact an island (in the sense of land surrounded by water).

[8] Jer 2:10; 47:4. In addition, it also occurs in the sense of "wild animals" (of the islands?) in Isa 13:22; 34:14; Jer 50:39.

[9] I produced the line drawing based on various photos and Horowitz, 2011: 20–42. Cf. Finkel, 2014: 261–297.

Given the scope of the present contribution, the focus is on the triangles framing the drawing. These triangles are inscribed with the word *nagû*. The common translation of *nagû* is "district" or "province". With a few exceptions, especially in relation to the sea, the word is lexicalised as "island" as well.[10] Such a district may well be an island, but it is perhaps not necessary to add the lexicalisation "island" for *nagû*. In other words, it is not necessary to hypothesise the existence of two homonyms, *nagû* ("district") and *nagû* ("island"); rather, the meaning of *nagû* is "district", but it can refer to an island (compare modern states, such as Barbados, Nauru, or Iceland, that happen to be islands).

Interestingly, one of the examples of the meaning "district" noted by CAD appears in the inscriptions of Babylonian kings: *ašarrāni šadî nasûti u na-gi-i bērūti* ("kings of far-away mountains and remote districts").[11] Given the ancient cosmography, these remote districts may well be islands.[12] Therefore, the caption of fig. 4 retains the translation "district" and does not follow the additional lexicalisation "island". This underlines the probable association of such regions somewhere in the sea—or regarded as beyond the sea—with islands. Also, the abovementioned references to the kings of the islands seems to imply that—although largely belonging to the unknown—they were thought to be districts and countries ruled in an orderly manner by kings. At the same time, these islands, these insular kingdoms, were beyond the ruling power of the empire at the centre of the map. Their depiction as triangles may identify them as mountain-islands. Keel speaks about "Inselberge", or, in Hallett's translation, "island-mountains".[13]

5. GEOGRAPHICAL AWARENESS

It is possible to contextualise this map in light of other maps, such as the three-metre long regional map on a wall painting from Çatal Höyük (6200 BCE), the Nuzi map (2400 BCE; Harvard University SMN 4172), architectural plans (such as Gudea's Ningirsu temple, 2120 BCE; Musée de Louvre OA2), field plans (e.g., the one from Ur III, ca. 2050 BCE; Eski Şark Eserleri Müzesi, Istanbul ES 1107), and city maps (e.g., Nippur 1400 BCE; University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, CBS 10434), as well as topographic lists (like those in third-millennium Mesopotamia). Egypt provides similar examples. The Turin papyrus with the mining map of Hammamat (ca. 1250 BCE; Museo Egizio, Turin Collezione Drovetti [1824] C. 1879 + 1969 + 1899)[14] and the so-called "world map of Seti I" (this is how O'Connor describes Karnak's northern wall).[15] Ancient Greece also used maps, but no surviving example is known today. Maps and descriptions reflect various power relations, economic, political, military, and cosmological.[16] In sum, "a rudimentary cartographic sense of one kind or another was widespread in the classical world".[17]

The examples above reflect a cartographic sense; likewise, the Babylonian *mappa mundi* also shows a geographical awareness in the sense of a structured space. Furthermore, it conveys a sense of the extensiveness of the earth. Several Hebrew Bible passages similarly reflect an explicit or implicit horizontal cosmic geography, a sense of ordered space: in addition to the islands, discussed above, there is, for instance, the phrase "the land" and its description as "from Dan to Beersheva", Judah and Israel as geographic entities and their border(s), especially in several stories about travelling (1 Kings 13 and 19), when speaking about

[10] CAD 11, 121–123.

[11] CAD 11, 122.

[12] Note that mountains are also considered borders and liminal spaces. Cf. the Nuzi map (clay tablet, Semitic Museum, Harvard University SMN 4172) mentioned in the next section and depictions of mountains at the horizon, both in Egypt (papyrus, British Museum EA 10470,7; dated 1292–1190 BCE) and in Mesopotamia (cylinder seal, BM 89110; 2350–2150 BCE; published, e.g., in Boehmer, 1965: Taf. XXXIV.409). The mountains in the papyrus and seal are specifically associated with the sunrise; on the papyrus with the sun, on the seal with the Akkadian sun god. One might even consider the possibility that this phrase (i.e., "mountains and remote districts") is a hendiadys. In that case, the sun would rise at the islands as the ends of the earth. Cf. the Hebrew Bible phrase "From the rising of the sun to its setting" (Ps 113:3). For specific peoples, the sun might rise at the mountains on the horizon, or set in the desert (as indicated by the iconographic evidence).

[13] Keel, 1972: 19–24; 1997b: 22–29.

[14] Rochberg, 2012: 9–46 (with references).

[15] O'Connor, 2012: 55–59.

[16] Rochberg, 2012: 34.

[17] Talbert, 1994: 305.

travel (Abraham, exodus, Song of Ascents, etc.), and the impossibility to travel (e.g., longing in exile). Geography as a sense of structured space is also reflected in the descriptions of the shares for the tribes. Moreover, the Hebrew Bible mentions four compass points or wind directions.[18] Beyond the known world, there is a sense "beyond the sea", as in Deut 30:12–13:

> It is not in heaven, that you should say, "Who will go up to heaven for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?" Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, "Who will cross to the other side of the sea for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?" (NRSV)

What was beyond the known world, the so-called *oikumene*, was deemed *exokeanismos* by the Greeks, pejoratively connoted with *hubris*. In Roman literature, the edges of the earth served as a setting for fantasy *geographia*, but there were also warnings against unravelling this "unknown" (e.g., in Seneca's writings).[19]

Hubris is also association of the sea in the Hebrew Bible, as in Isa 2:12, 16–17:

> For the LORD of hosts has a day against all that is proud and lofty, against all that is lifted up and high; … against all the ships of Tarshish, and against all the beautiful craft. The haughtiness of people shall be humbled, and the pride of everyone shall be brought low; and the LORD alone will be exalted on that day. (NRSV)

However, as far as the sea is concerned, a verse like Prov 31:14, "She is like the ships of the merchant, she brings her food from far away" (NRSV), also sees the sea as a possibility.[20] Whereas the former quotation mentioned the ships of Tarshish,[21] the latter, from the wisdom of Lemuel's family, might have implied similar ships. The ships of Tarshish were a nautical innovation of the Phoenicians, as these ships could transport much more volume and cross the open sea. Whereas the name Tarshish may have moved westwards during history, it was finally associated with the end of the Mediterranean. The Phoenicians even sailed beyond Gibraltar on the Atlantic, to England and possibly even south of the Equator.[22]

The authors of Isa 11:11–12 and 66:18–20 turn the theme of human *hubris* in relation to the islands into praise for God's salvation. This implies that these regions fall within the sphere of God's influence. Therefore, notwithstanding the common vertical orientation, the islands should also be represented in visual reconstructions of "the" ancient and biblical worldview.

6. EXTENDING THE DRAWING PUBLISHED BY CORNELIUS

As a token of appreciation for Sakkie Cornelius's work, I conclude by offering the drawing in fig. 5. This drawing slightly extends the one he developed together with Ferdinand Deist by including the islands, the ends of the earth. Having discussed the islands as island-mountains, I have taken the mountain in the middle of their drawing as the model for shaping the islands. Given that Cornelius and Deist correctly depicted the inhabitants of the earth, and in light of the above considerations about the inhabitants of the islands, I also included humans, animals, trees, and birds. From an islandological perspective the capacity of flying would suggest that the birds can be anywhere because water is not an obstacle for them. Speaking of water, apparently the big "snake" or Leviathan (from Ps 104:26) is there to represent all the water animals. In order to keep the islands with their inhabitants visible in this reconstruction, they are depicted somewhat beyond the left and right borders of the initial drawing.

---

[18] The four winds also found iconographic expression in Mesopotamia. Cf. Wiggermann, 2007: 142.

[19] Romm, 1992. Cf. also Zimmermann, 2018: 305–331.

[20] About the sea in the Bible, cf. Van Popta, 1975.

[21] Like Isa 23:1, 14; 60:9; Ezek 27:25; Ps 48:7; 2 Chr 9:21; 20:36–37.

[22] Smith, 2012: 63–66, 173–174, with references; cf. for ancient navigation: Kowalski, 2012; Beresford, 2013; and for ancient geography, see, e.g., Sonnabend, 2007 and Dueck, 2012.

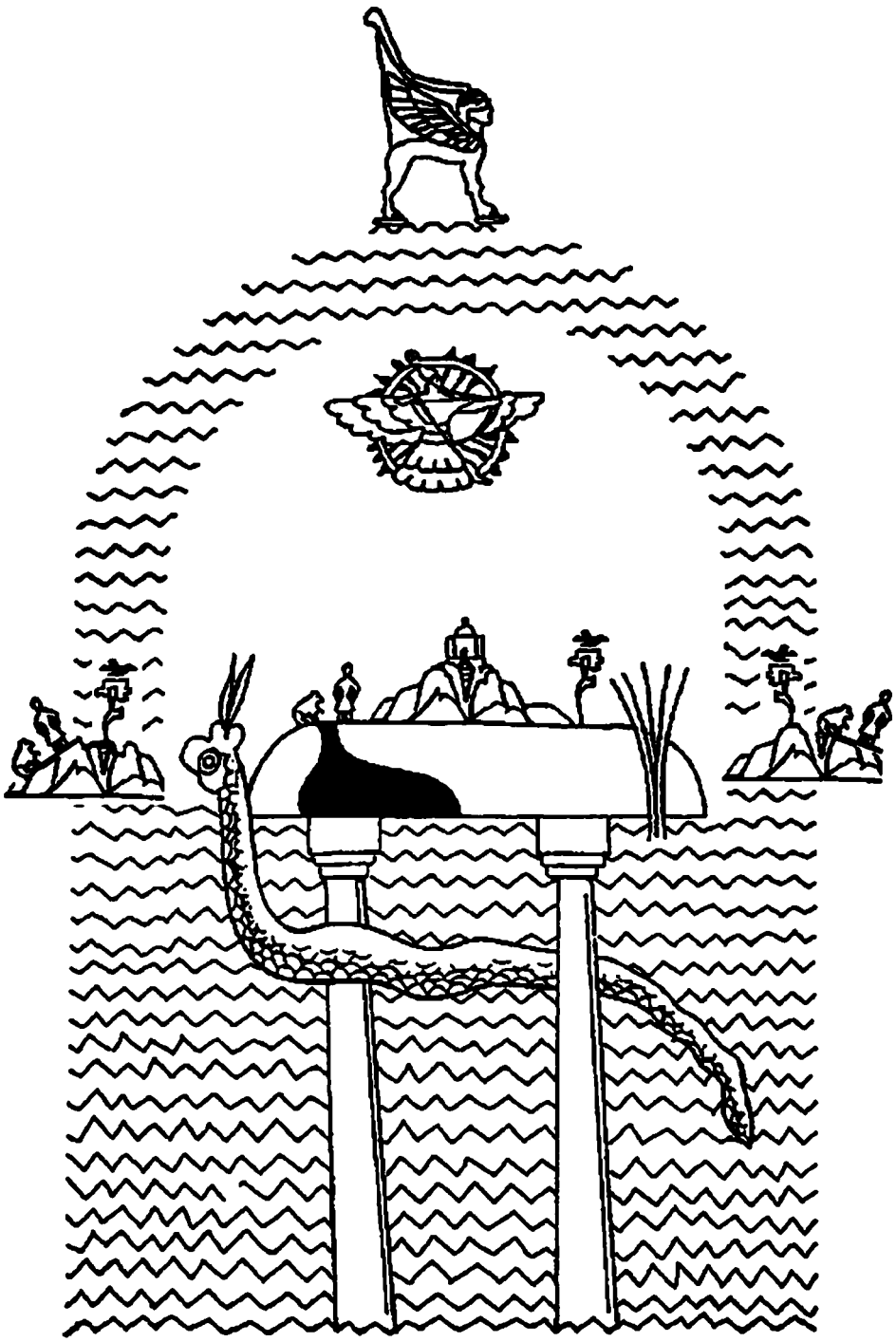


Fig. 5: Revised version of fig. 2. Source: Cornelius, 1994: 218, fig. 10, modified by I. J. de Hulster.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Beresford, J., 2013: *The Ancient Sailing Season*. MNS 351. Leiden.

Boehmer, R. M., 1965: *Die Entwicklung der Glyptik während der Akkad-Zeit*. Berlin.

Cornelius, I., 1994: "The Visual Representation of the World in the Ancient Near East and the Hebrew Bible". JNSL 20/2, 193–218.

De Hulster, I. J., 2012: "God en de kosmos in Genesis 1". ACEBT 27, 35–49.

— 2015: "Picturing Ancient Israel's Cosmic Geography: An Iconographic Perspective on Genesis 1:1–2:4a". In I. J. de Hulster / B. A. Strawn / R. P. Bonfiglio (eds.): *Iconographic Exegesis of the Hebrew Bible / Old Testament: An Introduction to Its Method and Practice*. Göttingen. Pp. 45–61.

— 2017: "Nacht im Psalter". In M. Kőszeghy / N. Móricz / P. Verebics (eds.): *Ein pralles Leben: Alttestamentliche Studien. Für Jutta Hausmann zum 65. Geburtstag und zur Emeritierung*. ABG 56. Leipzig. Pp. 71–86.

— forthcoming: "Lexical Note on אי—from the Perspective of Islandology (Island Studies)".

Dietrich, J., 2017: "Welterfahrung (AT)". WiBiLex, https://www.bibelwissenschaft.de/stichwort/34744/.

Dueck, D., 2012: *Geography in Classical Antiquity*. Key Themes in Ancient History. Cambridge.

Finkel, I., 2014: *The Ark before Noah: Decoding the Story of the Flood*. London.

Horowitz, W., 2011: *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography*. Mesopotamian Civilizations 8. Winona Lake.

Keel, O., 1972: *Die Welt der altorientalischen Bildsymbolik und das Alte Testament: Am Beispiel der Psalmen*. Zürich.

— 1985: "Das sogenannte altorientalische Weltbild". BK 40/4, 157–161.

— 1997a: *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel: Von den Anfängen bis zur Perserzeit. Katalog Band I: Von Tell Abu Farağ bis ʿAtlit*. OBO SA 13. Fribourg/Göttingen.

— 1997b: *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms*. Trans. T. J. Hallett. Winona Lake.

Keel, O. / Uehlinger, C., 1994: "Der Assyrerkönig Salmanassar III. und Jehu von Israel auf dem Schwarzen Obelisken aus Nimrud". ZKT 116: 391–420.

Kowalski, J-M., 2012: *Navigation et géographie dans l'Antiquité gréco-romaine: La terre vue de la mer*. Antiquité, synthèses 14. Paris.

O'Connor, D., 2012: "From Topography to Cosmos: Ancient Egypt's Multiple Maps". In R. J. A. Talbert (ed.): *Ancient Perspectives*. Chicago. Pp. 47–79.

Rochberg, F., 2012: "The Expression of Terrestrial and Celestial Order in Ancient Mesopotamia". In R. J. A. Talbert (ed.): *Ancient Perspectives*. Chicago. Pp. 9–46.

Romm, J. S., 1992: *The Edges of the Earth in Ancient Thought: Geography, Exploration, and Fiction*. Princeton.

Smith, A. M., 2012: *Phoenician Ships: Types, Trends, Trade and Treacherous Trade Routes*. Unpublished MA Thesis, University of South Africa.

Sonnabend, H., 2007: *Die Grenzen der Welt: Geographische Vorstellungen der Antike*. Darmstadt.

Talbert, R. J. A., 1994: "Review of *The Edges of the Earth in Ancient Thought: Geography, Exploration, and Fiction* by J. S. Romm". AJP 115/2, 304–306.

Van Popta, W. E., 1975: *De Bijbel en de zee*. Amsterdam.

Wiggermann, F. A. M., 2007: "The Four Winds and the Origins of Pazuzu". In C. Wilcke / J. Hazenbos (eds.): *Das geistige Erfassen der Welt im Alten Orient: Sprache, Religion, Kultur, und Gesellschaft*. Wiesbaden. Pp. 125–165.

Wimmer, S. J., 2008: "Von Nubien bis Syrien: Zur ramessidischen Stele von Tell eš-Šihâb". In F. Adrom et al. (eds.): *Ägyptische Weltsichten*. ÄAT 68. Wiesbaden. Pp. 190–196.

Zimmermann, M., 2018: *Die seltsamsten Orte der Antike: Gespensterhäuser, Hängende Gärten und die Enden der Welt*. München.

LOOKING AGAIN AT THE NAKEDNESS OF NOAH

Gideon R. Kotzé

1. INTRODUCTION

"Genesis 9.18–27, which tells of Noah's drunkenness, Ham's crime, the cursing of Canaan and the blessing of Shem and Japheth, is truly one of the strange stories of the Bible".[1] This peculiar passage is not only infamous in the history of biblical interpretation, having been used for nefarious reasons, such as the justification of slavery, racial segregation, job reservation, the oppression and exploitation of Africans and African Americans, as well as the condemnation of same-sex relations;[2] it is also well-known for the details in the episode that defy easy explanation and whose meanings modern readers continue to debate.[3] Two of the curious details that have sparked much discussion and differences of opinion are the nature of Ham's offence against Noah and Noah's cursing of Canaan instead of Ham. These issues should be seen together, but in this contribution, I shall focus my attention primarily on the first one: What did Ham do to Noah to warrant the terrible curse on his youngest son?

At first glance, Ham's offence appears to be that he saw Noah's private parts while he was passed out and exposed and, instead of covering up his father's faux pas, he revealed it in public to his brothers. Ham's apparent "voyeurism", however, does not seem like a big deal to many modern readers and, therefore, they see in it more serious offences in order to account for Noah's curse.[4] I mention here only four classic and contemporary explanations of the crime in question by way of illustration. The first one is the view that Ham castrated his father. It is found, for example, in rabbinic texts (*b.Sanh.* 70a; *Gen. Rab.* 36, 7; *Tanḥ.* 49–50) and the translation of Gen 9:24–25 in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan alludes to it as well:[5]

> ואיתער נח מן חמריה וידע באשתעות חלמא ית דעבד ליה חם בריה דהוא קליל בזכותא דגרם ליה דלא יוליד בר רביעיי ואמר ליט כנען דהוא בריה רביעיי עביד משעבד יהי לאחוי
>
> When Noah awoke from his wine, he knew by being told in a dream what had been done to him by Ham his son, who was slight in merit because he was the cause of his not begetting a fourth son. And

[1] Day, 2013: 137. The episode in Gen 9:20–27 about the inebriation and self-exposure of Noah, the deeds of his sons towards him, and his reactions to these deeds when he had sobered up, is framed by vv. 18–19 and vv. 28–29. These verses link the episode to the flood narrative, bring the story of Noah to an end, and look forward to the Table of Nations in Chapter 10.

[2] Cf., e.g., Wittenberg, 1991: 46; Haynes, 2002; Whitford, 2009; Day, 2013: 151–152; Goldenberg, 2003; 2017; Gnuse, 2015: 68–87.

[3] Speiser (1982: 62) notes that the passage "supplies more questions than answers".

[4] Day, 2013: 138. Cf. the comment of Von Rad (1961: 137) that "the narrator [possibly] suppressed something even more repulsive than mere looking".

[5] According to *Pirqe R. El.* ch. 23, it was Canaan who castrated Noah. Graves / Patai (1963: 121–122) favour this interpretation of the text: "Ham could not be blamed, in justice, for noticing his father's nakedness; and Noah could never have laid such a grave curse upon Ham's innocent son Canaan, even if this involuntary act had been Ham's only fault. The text: 'And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his little son had done unto him,' points to a gap in the narrative, plausibly filled by the midrashic account of his castration. Noah's curse shows that the sinner was little Canaan, not Ham. 'Ham, father of' is clearly an editorial insertion". Baumgarten (1975: 63–71), however, argues cogently that there is no castration tradition underlying Gen 9:20–29 and that the versions of the castration story preserved by later writings were created during the second century CE.

> he said, "Cursed be Canaan, who is his fourth son. A slave reduced to slavery shall he be to his brothers".[6]

A second explanation of Ham's offense is that he sexually assaulted Noah. This view, together with the first one, is mentioned in *b.Sanh.* 70a:

> And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. [With respect to the last verse] Rab and Samuel [differ,] one maintaining that he castrated him (סרסו), whilst the other says that he sexually abused him (רבעו). He who maintains that he castrated him, [reasons thus:] Since he cursed him by his fourth son, he must have injured him with respect to a fourth son. But he who says that he sexually abused him, draws an analogy between "and he saw" written twice. Here it is written, [a]nd Ham the father of Canaan saw the nakedness of his father; whilst elsewhere it is written, And when Shechem the son of Hamor saw her [he took her and lay with her and defiled her]. Now, on the view that he emasculated him, it is right that he cursed him by his fourth son; but on the view that he abused him, why did he curse his fourth son; he should have cursed him himself?—Both indignities were perpetrated.[7]

Some modern readers adopt the second view on the assumption that the phrase ראה ערוה ("to see nakedness"), like גלה ערוה ("to uncover nakedness"), is a euphemism for sexual relations.[8] On this interpretation, Ham had non-consensual sex with his drunken and exposed father.[9] The supposed motivation for the sexual assault was a grab for power. "Apparently Ham aspired to dominance among post-flood humanity and attempted to show his superiority by disgracing his father sexually … If Noah's disgrace involves incest, it does not speak of Ham's homosexual orientation but his hunger for power".[10]

The third explanation also takes as its point of departure the understanding of the phrase ראה ערוה as an idiom referring to sexual intercourse. In light of passages in Leviticus 18 and 20, where the nakedness of a wife is said to be the nakedness of her husband and uncovering someone's nakedness means to have intercourse with them,[11] a number of scholars argue that Ham's offense was that he committed maternal incest; that is, he had sexual relations with his father's wife.[12] Proponents of this view point out that it also provides ready explanations for the curse of Canaan and why Ham is more than once called the father of Canaan:

> [I]f Ham's deed is understood as maternal incest, it becomes possible to explain Canaan's origin as the fruit of that union … Canaan is cursed because his origin was a vile, taboo act on the part of his father. Ham is repeatedly, and apparently superfluously, identified as "the father of Canaan" (vv. 18 and 20) because the narrator wishes to signal the reader that this narrative explains *how Ham became* "the father of Canaan."[13]

These first three explanations fall short, because they do not make clear how the two brothers of Ham, Shem and Japheth, can rectify the situation simply by covering Noah's nakedness with a garment and making sure that they do not accidently catch a glimpse of their father's genitals. A number of scholars therefore adopt the view that, unlike his brothers, Ham failed to fulfil his filial obligation and disrespected his father:[14] "Rather than reporting the nakedness of his father, Ham should have covered him (as his brothers did). The

---

[6] The Aramaic text of the Targum is from the edition of Clarke et al. (1984: 10) and the English translation of the passage is by Maher (1992: 46).

[7] The English translation is quoted by Bergsma / Hahn, 2005: 28. Goldenberg (2005: 257–265) gives helpful explanations of the two rabbinic interpretations of Ham's act in *b.Sanh.* 70a.

[8] The two expressions seem to be equated in Lev 20:17: ואיש אשר יקח את אחתו בת אביו או בת אמו וראה את ערותה והיא תראה את ערותו חסד הוא ונכרתו לעיני בני עמם ערות אחתו גלה עונו ישא ("If a man takes his sister, a daughter of his father or a daughter of his mother, and sees her nakedness, and she sees his nakedness, it is a disgrace, and they shall be cut off in the sight of their people; he has uncovered his sister's nakedness, he shall be subject to punishment" [NRSV]).

[9] Cf., e.g., Phillips, 1980: 41; Levin, 1993: 119; Robertson, 1998: 178–180.

[10] Nissinen, 1998: 53.

[11] Cf., e.g., Lev 18:7, 8, 14, 16; 20:11, 20, 21.

[12] Cf., e.g., Bassett, 1971: 232–237; Bergsma / Hahn, 2005: 34–39; Opferkuch, 2017: 292–293.

[13] Bergsma / Hahn, 2005: 35 (italics in the original).

[14] Cf., e.g., Westermann, 1976: 653; Wenham, 1987: 199–200; Niehr, 2001: 346; Avishur, 2007: 156–157; Dubach, 2009: 268–269; Day, 2013: 139; Bauks, 2019: 379–385.

discussion of nakedness in the Scriptures confirms that Ham's choice to broadcast the news about his father's nudity, rather than cover it, went counter to biblical expectations".[15] There is also evidence from elsewhere in the ancient Near East to suggest that it was the responsibility of younger generations, as a sign of respect, to come to the aid of their elders when the latter are drunk and to make sure that they get home safe with their dignity intact. This seems to be the thrust of the lines in the Ugaritic Aqhat epic which implies that one of the duties of a son is "to grasp his [father's] hand when he is drunk" (a*ḫd . ydh . b škrn*), and "to support him when sated with wine" (*mʿmsh* [k]š*bʿ . yn*).[16] There are noteworthy parallels between this text and KTU 1.114,[17] which recounts how two sons of the god El act the part of dutiful children when they carry their father home after he drank himself into a stupor during his cultic banquet.[18] A comparable idea about the treatment of drunken elders is found in the Egyptian composition, *The Instruction of Amenemope*: "Give a hand to an elder sated with beer, Respect him as his children would" (*imi-ḏr.t n-iʒw iw=f-sʒ.w n-ḥnq.t tr-sw m-nʒy=f-ḫrd.w*).[19] Scholars who explain Ham's offence in Genesis 9 as a lapse of obligation often refer to the passage from the Aqhat epic in connection with their interpretation of the Hebrew text. Their explanations, however, do not always specify exactly how Noah's self-exposure is an act of foolishness and how covering his nakedness would help save him from embarrassment.

Given the criticisms levelled at each of these explanations, none of them has distinguished itself as the most plausible understanding of the passage. The debates of modern readers over the interpretation of Gen 9:21–22 therefore continue. In these debates, material images have thus far not featured prominently as resources of information about ideas that potentially underlie the formulation of the text. So, in an attempt to advance the discussion over the interpretation of Gen 9:21–22, I shall here have another look at the nakedness of Noah through the lens of the larger thought-world of the passage provided by the study of ancient Near Eastern iconography. More specifically, I take this relook at Noah's nakedness to see how the actions of self-exposure, viewing, and laying bare in the episode can make sense when modern readers interpret them as allusions to ideas associated with the public uncovering of male genitals that, presumably, circulated widely and over long stretches of time in the ancient Near East. My presumption about the widespread nature of these ideas is based on scholars' identification of them in material images from different periods and places in the ancient Near East. As a text-critic, I am particularly interested in the potential meaningfulness of debated readings in the extant textual representatives of early Jewish literary writings such as Genesis. My re-examination of Noah's nakedness therefore proceeds on two more assumptions: Firstly, without belabouring questions and proposals regarding the literary development of Genesis as a whole and as part of the Pentateuch or the compositional formation of the so-called Primeval History in Genesis 1–11, and Gen 9:18–29 in particular,[20] I assume that the Hebrew wordings of the passage we know from later textual representatives were transmitted in more or less the same formulations during the period of early Judaism (ca. sixth century BCE to second century CE).[21] Secondly, I assume that ideas about the public uncovering of male genitals that scholars detect in their study of available ancient Near Eastern artefacts would have been familiar in the thought-world of early Judaism. It goes without saying that, in visual representations,

---

[15] Odhiambo, 2013: 163.

[16] KTU 1.17 I 30–31. Cf. also KTU 1.17 II 5–6, 19–20. "Die Beschreibung des guten Sohnes setzt voraus, daß das Oberhaupt der Familie im Tempel an einem kultischen Gelage, das wahrscheinlich zu Ehren der Toten abgehalten wurde, teilgenommen hat und nach ausgiebigem Genuß von Wein nicht mehr in der Lage ist, allein den Weg nach Hause zu gehen" (Loretz, 2006: 438).

[17] Husser, 1995: 117; Dietrich / Loretz, 2000: 461, 487–489; Avishur, 2007: 152–153. "Der voll betrunkene El, der nur noch mit Hilfe zweier anderer Gestalten in seinen Palast zurückfindet (KTU 1.114, 15–22), gilt zu Recht als Prototyp des in KTU 1.17 I 30–31 vorausgesetzten deplorablen Zustandes des betrunkenen Vaters" (Loretz, 2006: 438).

[18] KTU 1.114 15–19: "El took his seat in his feasting house. He drank wine to satiety, new wine until intoxication. El went off to his house; he stumbled off towards his dwelling; Thukamun and Shanim supported him" (*yṯ*b . b *mrzḥ* / *y*št . [y]n . *ʿd* š*bʿ* . *trṯ* . *ʿd škr* / il . hl*k* . *l bth* . *yštql* . / *l ḫẓrh* . *yʿmsn*{.}*nn* . *ṯkmn* / *w šnm*). The translation is by Wyatt (2002: 410).

[19] BM 10474, XXV, 8–9. The transliteration of the Egyptian text is by Laisney (2007: 216) and the English translation is from Lichtheim (2006: 161). Lange (1925: 123) provides a convenient hieroglyphic transcription of the passage.

[20] Cf., e.g., Levin, 1993: 118–120; Vervenne, 1995: 52–54; Witte, 1998: 102–105; Blenkinsopp, 2002: 53, 56–57; Schüle, 2009: 15–19; Schmid, 2012: 27–50; Gertz, 2009: 81–95; 2011: 169–180; 2012: 107–135; 2018: 287–290.

[21] The Hebrew copies of Genesis that were discovered in the caves near Qumran and at other sites in the Judean desert are some of the oldest available manuscripts of the book. Generally speaking, they can be dated to the period of early Judaism. Unfortunately, none of these manuscripts preserve parts of Gen 9:18–27.

uncovered male genitals carry different connotations depending on the context and constellation of features of the material images. Seeing as Ham's observation about his father's self-exposure in Genesis 9 obviously does not put Noah in a positive light, I suggest that ideas associated with negative portrayals of men who are unwillingly put on display in public without their clothes are relevant for my re-examination. Such portrayals are frequently, but not exclusively, found in scenes of material images that involve the transport of prisoners of war. Scenes that include the transport of naked captives are abundant in the iconographic records of more than one ancient Near Eastern culture.[22] They present, *inter alia*, ideas about the powerlessness, loss of status, and humiliation of the prisoners.[23] As a case in point, I single out for comment an example of such prisoner transport scenes from the Levant, the one on a famous ivory plaque from Megiddo.[24]

2. INTERPRETIVE COMMENTS ON THE TRANSPORT OF PRISONERS IN A SCENE OF AN IVORY PLAQUE FROM MEGIDDO

The visual narrative of the plaque is divided into two scenes by a vertical row of three plants in the middle of the image (fig. 1).[25] Whereas the left half of the plaque is occupied by a victory celebration scene with a king sitting on a winged cherub throne (fig. 2a), the scene on the right half of the plaque shows the same king returning victorious from a military expedition in his horse-drawn chariot (fig. 2b).[26] He is protected on all sides by his troops, who surround him (the soldier armed with a shield and spear in the vanguard and the one shouldering a sickle sword[27] at the rear are a merism for the whole army), and by the winged sun disk that hovers above the horses.[28] The winged sun disk does not only point to the protection of the king "from above" and divine authorisation, but also "symbolizes the rising sun as the protector of order and the annihilator of the evil powers of chaos, here represented by enemies".[29] The successful campaign of the king whereby he defeated his foes implies that he upholds the order in the world just as the risen sun is a symbol of the divine maintenance of the cosmic order.[30] The king's absolute victory is signalled not only by the weapons that are stowed away in his chariot,[31] but also by the two naked Shasu nomad prisoners who walk in front of the horses, tethered to them with restraints.[32] With their arms bound behind their backs, they are unable to do

[22] Cf., e.g., ANEP, no. 303, 358–359; Börker-Klähn, 1982: fig. 18d, 20, 22a, 31; Avigad / Sass, 1997: no. 400, 401, 810; Schroer / Keel, 2005: no. 128, 174, 245; Schroer, 2018: no. 1693.

[23] Cf., e.g., Behrens, 1982: 292; Bahrani, 1993: 15; Goelet, 1993: 20; Keller, 1993: 33–34; Biggs, 1998: 65; Asher-Greve / Sweeney, 2006: 137–138; Staubli / Schroer, 2014: 382–383; Pyschny, 2019: 142–144.

[24] Wilson, 1938: 335, fig. 7; Loud, 1939: 13, pls. 2, 2a, b; Barnett, 1982: 25, 26–27, pl. 19a; Schroer, 2011: no. 947; Cornelius, 2013: 51, 54 (photograph). I have selected the Megiddo ivory plaque as a case study simply for its Levantine provenance and not because of the drinking and nakedness motifs, which are also found, in a different connection, of course, in the Genesis passage.

[25] Schmitt, 2001: 44–45; Keel / Uehlinger, 2010: 70. The ivory plaque was a decorative part of a piece of furniture. Staubli, 1991: 64; Cornelius, 2018b: 5.

[26] "What is interesting about this depiction", says Cornelius, "is the combination of the banquet scene and the victory scene. This motif goes back to the so-called 'War and Peace standard' from the 26th century BCE tomb of Ur [ANEP, no. 303–304]" (Cornelius, 1999: 265).

[27] This weapon calls to mind the motif, especially in Egyptian cultural products, of a deity holding out or presenting a scimitar to the king as a sign of god-given victory. Cf., e.g., Cornelius, 1995: 17; Keel, 1999: 207–214, fig. 4–9; 2007: 192; Schmitt, 2001: 46–47.

[28] The winged disk is a well-known and widespread motif that appears in cultural products from all over the ancient Near East. Although the disk is not always linked to the sun or solar deities, the motif is often associated with royalty and protection. Cf., e.g., Ornan, 2005: 207–235; LeMon, 2010: 103–107; Cornelius, 2014: 144–155. In the context of the scene of the Megiddo ivory plaque, the winged sun disk most probably has a protective function (Cornelius, 2014: 148). It is one of the features of the image that exhibit Egyptian influence (Staubli, 1991: 64).

[29] Cornelius, 1990: 31.

[30] The order maintained by the victorious king goes hand in hand with prosperity in both the natural and human environments. This prosperity is indicated not only by the precious material from which the plaque was made, but also by the plants and motifs in the celebration scene on the left half of the image such as the lotus blossom, the birds, and the rhyta (Schmitt, 2001: 46, 47).

[31] The stowed weapons imply that the king has no further need for them. The two soldiers in the scene also carry their weapons in a way that suggests that there are no immediate threats to face.

[32] The prisoners are identified as Shasu nomads by their hairdos, headbands, and facial hair (Staubli, 1991: 64).

anything about their captivity. They are under the complete control of the king. The prisoners have been stripped of their clothes and weapons, which further underscores their subjugation and abasement as captives.[33] Indeed, their tied hands hang parallel to their uncovered, flaccid genitals. This suggests that the exposed nakedness of the prisoners is another symbol of their powerlessness and degraded status. The parading of the naked prisoners in public puts their powerlessness and degraded status on display for all to see and, in so doing, they are shamed.

The transport of naked prisoners in the scene of the Megiddo ivory plaque illustrates how ideas about powerlessness, reduction in status, and humiliation are expressed by representations of the public exposure of male captives' uncovered genitalia. In the following interpretive comments on Gen 9:21–22, I suggest that similar ideas can be associated with the actions of Noah and Ham in the passage.

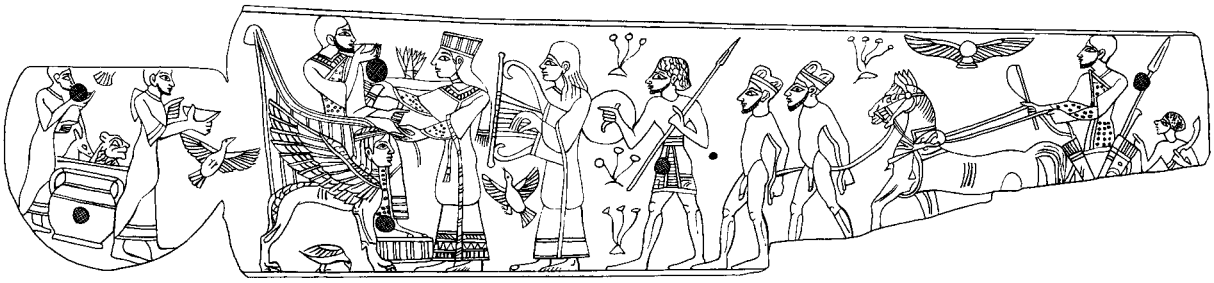


Fig. 1: Ivory plaque, Megiddo (ca. 1250–1150 BCE). © Stiftung BIBEL+ORIENT Freiburg CH.

Fig. 2a: Left half of ivory plaque. © Stiftung BIBEL+ORIENT Freiburg CH.

Fig. 2b: Right half of ivory plaque. © Stiftung BIBEL+ORIENT Freiburg CH.

[33] This representation of the lowly captives contrasts well with the picture of the king's elevation and control: "Während der kanaanäische König von Megiddo in reichem Gewand, durch den Wagen über seine Umwelt erhoben, die geballte Kraft der Pferde dirigierend einherfährt, müssen die Besiegten nackt, wehr- und ehrlos, die Hände auf dem Rücken gebunden, vor den Pferden einhergehen" (Keel, 1980: 215).

3. INTERPRETIVE COMMENTS ON GENESIS 9:21–22

Gen 9:21–22[34]

וישת מן היין וישכר ויתגל בתוך אהלה וירא חם אבי כנען את ערות אביו ויגד לשני אחיו בחוץ

> And he drank of the wine, became drunk, and exposed himself in the midst of his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and announced (it) to his two brothers outside.

Verse 21 relates how Noah, in a state of inebriation after imbibing some wine, got undressed. This deed signifies that he (temporarily) stripped himself of the high status he enjoys as the *pater familias*,[35] the head of the household who has authority over all its members;[36] in other words, by disrobing, Noah invests himself with a lowered status, one befitting powerless captives and servants.[37] Although the verse does not state it explicitly, it is implied (and confirmed by וייקץ נח מיינו ["when Noah awoke from his wine"] in v. 24) that the intoxicated and naked Noah lay passed out in his tent. His unconscious condition makes him vulnerable to the humiliation of having his (temporary and self-inflicted) lowered status exposed, because, in this condition, he is unable to prevent such an exposure. Noah's drunkenness therefore leads to his uncovered nakedness and unconsciousness which point to the complementing ideas of his lowered status and powerlessness to save his honour. It thereby creates the circumstances wherein he might be put to shame. As long as Noah remains out of sight in the privacy of his tent, however, he does not suffer public humiliation. That is where Ham comes in. He shames his father by making Noah's lowered status, as signified by his uncovered genitals, public knowledge and the incapacitated Noah cannot do anything about it.[38] According to v. 22, Ham first becomes aware of Noah's compromising position and then realises the humiliation of his father by broadcasting it outside, in the open, to Shem and Japheth.[39] On this interpretation, Ham's offence is not so much that he saw Noah's nakedness, that is, the temporarily compromised status of the head of the family, but that he, who is not particularly high up in the familial hierarchy, humiliated his father by publicly revealing this status while Noah is passed out and therefore powerless, at that moment, to regain his honour.[40] Ham's two brothers

---

[34] The MT is here quoted from the edition of Tal (2015: 23). In these two verses, the wording of the Samaritan Pentateuch is not substantially different from that of the Masoretic version. Cf. Kennicott, 1776: 14–15; Von Gall, 1914: 14. The translation of the text is my own.

[35] Deist (2000: 263) notes that, in the cultural environment reflected by the Hebrew Bible writings, men "do not have to acquire status. They own it and may only lose it temporarily through uncustomary conduct".

[36] Cf. King / Stager, 2001: 37.

[37] Cf. Dubach, 2009: 268: "In seinem Rausch gibt Noach zeitweillig die Kontrolle über sich selbst ab und begibt sich so in einem Zustand der Status- und Wehrlosigkeit, der in seiner Entblössung zum Ausdruck kommt".

[38] In the thought-world of the Hebrew Bible writings and other early Jewish literature, it was considered shameful if people were unable to stop the disclosure or revelation of what they endeavoured to conceal. Cf. Neumann, 2006: 356.

[39] Whereas the wordings of the verse in the Peshitta (ܘܚܙܐ ܚܡ ܐܒܘܗܝ ܕܟܢܥܢ ܠܥܘܪܬܐ ܕܐܒܘܗܝ ܘܐܬܚܘܐ ܠܬܪܝܢ ܐܚܘܗܝ ܒܫܘܩܐ), Vulgate (*cum vidisset Ham pater Chanaan verenda scilicet patris sui esse nuda nuntiavit duobus fratribus suis foras*), Targum Onqelos (וחזא חם אבוהי דכנען ית עריתא דאבוהי וחוי לתרין אחוהי בשוקא), and Targum Neofiti (דכנענאי [ן]וחמא חם אבוהו ית עריתה דאבוי ותני לתרין אחוי בשוק[ה]) stick close to the essentials of the Hebrew version, there is an interesting plus in the Septuagint translation (καὶ εἶδεν Χαμ ὁ πατὴρ Χανααν τὴν γύμνωσιν τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐξελθὼν ἀνήγγειλεν τοῖς δυσὶν ἀδελφοῖς αὐτοῦ ἔξω). (The excerpts from the ancient translations are based on the following editions: Sperber, 1959; Díez Macho, 1968; Wevers, 1974; Peshiṭta Institute Leiden, 1977; Weber / Gryson, 2007.) In the critical apparatus of the BHQ edition, Tal (2015: 23) evaluates the participle ἐξελθών, which has no counterpart in the extant Hebrew wordings, as a case of harmonisation with the context, while Hendel (1998: 142) calls the reading "an explicating plus". Tov (2015: 50–51) gives it as an example of elements that were added in the Greek translation "to improve its readability from a linguistic and contextual point of view". Rösel (1994: 202) suggests that the plus in the text of LXX Gen 9:22 makes clear that Ham alone, not his brothers, saw the nakedness of Noah. Prestel and Schorch (2011: 176) agree with Rösel on this point. Be that as it may, Harl (1994: 143) correctly notes that "le fils est coupable de divulguer une nudité qui n'aurait pas été condamnable «dans la maison»" and the plus of ἐξελθών implies that Ham, literally and figuratively, crossed a boundary when he went outside—out of the privacy of the home—and made the exposed nakedness of his father (which signifies his lowered status) known in public.

[40] Cf. Fischer, 2018: 526 and Gertz, 2018: 293: "[Es geht] bei dem Vergehen Hams um eine Frage von Scham und Ehre. Verletzt das Entblößen der Scham die Würde und die Integrität der Person, so besteht im Fall Hams das eigentliche Vergehen in der fehlenden Diskretion. Ham erzählt seinen Brüdern von dem Vorfall, macht ihn dadurch erst öffentlich

do not partake in or add to his shaming of Noah. They make every effort not to see their father in his compromised position and thereby avoid participating in the humiliation of Noah. They also cover their unconscious father's nakedness with a garment as the first step on the way to recover Noah's honour. Thanks to the garment, Noah no longer looks the part of a powerless captive or servant. When Noah sobers up and his mental faculties are fully active again, he perceives what Ham had done to him—that his youngest son shamed him (v. 24). He immediately takes another step to regain his honour and proceeds to curse Ham's youngest son, Canaan (cf. Gen 10:6). The curse is a way in which Noah saves face and re-establishes his power and authority as *pater familias* over Ham and his descendants. The curse, in effect, brings shame upon Ham by way of his youngest son, as he, also a youngest son, had brought shame upon Noah. As the very lowest of servants to his brothers, Canaan would be in a position of abject powerlessness in relation to his peers. This reduction in status is, of course, very degrading and, in this way, the youngest son of Ham brings shame on his father, just as Ham, the youngest son of Noah, brought shame on his father.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The ongoing debates over the interpretation of readings in Genesis and other early Jewish literature that modern readers find problematic or difficult to understand are inextricably linked to a larger hermeneutical question: How can we, as audiences who are far removed in time and thought-world from the artefacts, make sense of them as products of ancient cultures? Early Jewish writings such as Genesis are firmly rooted in their ancient Near Eastern cultural and intellectual environment and the texts do not always spell out the connotations and denotations of expressions, which would have been familiar to audiences in antiquity. Modern readers therefore have little choice but to draw on information about the thought-world of the texts in order to explore the communicative potential of debated readings. The relevant information, however, is not always readily available. It has to be inferred from the available resources, especially visual and textual ones. Indeed, material images from the ancient Near East, along with literary works, documentary writings, and inscriptions, are important resources of information about the world of ideas in which the contents of early Jewish literature are embedded.[41] This means that the study of iconography can help modern audiences develop a better understanding of the thoughts, beliefs, and views of the world that informed the formulations of passages in early Jewish writings. Of course, the available visual and textual resources do not "speak for themselves"; they have to be interpreted and the relevant information has to be distilled from the interpretations.[42]

With regard to the debated details in Gen 9:21–22, my relook at the nakedness of Noah and how it pertains to Ham's offence against his father proposes that the events narrated in these verses make good sense when modern readers see in them expressions of ideas about lowered status, powerlessness, and shame that are comparable to those associated with visual representations of men whose genitals are uncovered in public, such as the prisoner transport scene of the Megiddo ivory plaque. In other words, I suggest in this contribution that Genesis 9 and the prisoner transport scenes of material images from the ancient Near East, exemplified by the Megiddo ivory plaque, preserve *independent* and *different* expressions of comparable ideas that evidently circulated widely and over long stretches of time into the period of early Judaism. With this suggestion, I hope to make a positive contribution to the discussions surrounding the interpretation of this peculiar passage in the book of Genesis.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Asher-Greve, J. M. / Sweeney, D., 2006: "On Nakedness, Nudity, and Gender in Egyptian and Mesopotamian Art". In S. Schroer (ed.): *Images and Gender: Contributions to the Hermeneutics of Reading Ancient Art*. OBO 220. Fribourg/Göttingen. Pp. 125–176.

Avigad, N. / Sass, B., 1997: *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*. Jerusalem.

---

und entehrt so den Vater".

[41] Cornelius, 2016: 785; 2017: 195; 2018a: 151–158.

[42] In this regard, Cornelius (2017: 196) aptly remarks that "[j]ust as texts do not speak—they have to be made to speak—the stones do not call out, and both the textual and visual sources 'lie.' Texts and images both have to be interpreted".

Avishur, Y., 2007: *Comparative Studies in Biblical and Ugaritic Languages and Literatures*. Tel Aviv/Jaffa.
Bahrani, Z., 1993: "The Iconography of the Nude in Mesopotamia". Source: Notes in the History of Art 12/2, 12–19.
Barnett, R. D., 1982: "Ancient Ivories in the Middle East". Qedem 14, I–XV, 1–99.
Bassett, F. W., 1971: "Noah's Nakedness and the Curse of Canaan: A Case of Incest?" VT 21, 232–237.
Bauks, M., 2019: "Clothing and Nudity in the Noah Story (Gen. 9:18–29)". In C. Berner et al. (eds.): *Clothing and Nudity in the Hebrew Bible*. London. Pp. 379–387.
Baumgarten, A. I., 1975: "Myth and Midrash: Genesis 9:20–29". In J. Neusner (ed.): *Christianity, Judaism and Other Greco-Roman Cults: Studies for Morton Smith at Sixty*. Part Three. SJLA 12. Leiden. Pp. 55–71.
Behrens, P., 1982: "Nacktheit". LÄ 4, 292–294.
Bergsma, J. S. / Hahn, S. W., 2005: "Noah's Nakedness and the Curse on Canaan (Genesis 9:20–27)". JBL 124/1, 25–40.
Biggs, R. D., 1998: "Nacktheit. A. I. In Mesopotamien". RlA 9, 64–65.
Blenkinsopp, J., 2002: "A Post-exilic Lay Source in Genesis 1–11". In J. C. Gertz / K. Schmid / M. Witte (eds.): *Abschied vom Jahwisten: Die Komposition des Hexateuch in der jüngsten Diskussion*. BZAW 315. Berlin/New York. Pp. 49–61.
Börker-Klähn, J., 1982: *Altvorderasiatische Bildstelen und vergleichbare Felsreliefs*. BaF 4. Mainz am Rhein.
Clarke, E. G. et al., 1984: *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan of the Pentateuch: Text and Concordance*. Hoboken.
Cornelius, I., 1990: "The Sun Epiphany in Job 38:12–15 and the Iconography of the Gods in the Ancient Near East—the Palestinian Connection". JNSL 16, 25–43.
— 1995: "The Iconography of Divine War in the Pre-Islamic Near East: A Survey". JNSL 21/1, 15–36.
— 1999: "The Iconography of Weapons and Warfare in Palestine/Israel c. 1500–1200 BCE". JNSL 25/1, 263–275.
— 2013: "Art, Bronze and Iron Age". In D. M. Master (ed.): *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Archaeology*. Oxford. Pp. 49–57.
— 2014: "'Trading Religions' and 'Visible Religion' in the Ancient Near East". In P. Wick / V. Rabens (eds.): *Religions and Trade: Religious Formation, Transformation and Cross-Cultural Exchange between East and West*. DHR 5. Leiden/Boston. Pp. 141–165.
— 2016: "Iconography, Iconology: II Hebrew Bible/Old Testament". EBR 12, 783–785.
— 2017: "The Study of the Old Testament and the Material Imagery of the Ancient Near East, with a Focus on the Body Parts of the Deity". In L. C. Jonker / G. R. Kotzé / C. M. Maier (eds.): *Congress Volume Stellenbosch 2016*. VTSup 177. Leiden/Boston. Pp. 195–227.
— 2018a: "Introduction to Ancient Near Eastern Iconography". In J. S. Greer / J. W. Hilber / J. H. Walton (eds.): *Behind the Scenes of the Old Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts*. Grand Rapids. Pp. 151–158.
— 2018b: "Thron". WiBiLex, https://www.bibelwissenschaft.de/stichwort/33387/.
Day, J., 2013: "Noah's Drunkenness, the Curse of Canaan, Ham's Crime, and the Blessing of Shem and Japheth (Genesis 9.18–27)". In J. Day (ed.): *From Creation to Babel: Studies in Genesis 1–11*. London. Pp. 137–153.
Deist, F. E., 2000: *The Material Culture of the Bible: An Introduction*. The Biblical Seminar 70. Sheffield.
Dietrich, M. / Loretz, O., 2000: *Studien zu den ugaritischen Texten: I Mythos und Ritual in KTU 1.12, 1.24, 1.96, 1.100 und 1.114*. AOAT 269/1. Münster.
Díez Macho, A., 1968: *Génesis*. Neophyti 1: Targum Palestinense, MS de la Bibliotheca Vaticana 1. Madrid/Barcelona.
Dubach, M., 2009: *Trunkenheit im Alten Testament: Begrifflichkeit—Zeugnisse—Wertung*. BWANT 184. Stuttgart.
Fischer, G., 2018: *Genesis 1–11*. HThKAT. Freiburg/Basel/Wien.
Gertz, J. C., 2009: "Hams Sündenfall und Kanaans Erbfluch: Anmerkungen zur kompositionsgeschichtlichen Stellung von Gen 9,18–29". In R. Achenbach / M. Arneth (eds.): *»Gerechtigkeit und Recht zu üben« (Gen 18,9): Studien zur altorientalischen und biblischen Rechtsgeschichte, zur Religionsgeschichte Israels und zur Religionssoziologie: Festschrift für Eckart Otto zum 65. Geburtstag*. BZABR 13. Wiesbaden. Pp. 81–95.

— 2011: “Source Criticism in the Primeval History of Genesis: An Outdated Paradigm for the Study of the Pentateuch?” In T. B. Dozeman / K. Schmid / B. J. Schwartz (eds.): *The Pentateuch: International Perspectives on Current Research*. FAT 78. Tübingen. Pp. 169–180.
— 2012: “The Formation of the Primeval History”. In C. A. Evans / J. N. Lohr / D. L. Petersen (eds.): *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation*. VTSup 152. Leiden/Boston. Pp. 107–135.
— 2018: *Das Erste Buch Mose (Genesis). Die Urgeschichte Gen 1–11*. ATD 1. Göttingen.
Gnuse, R. K., 2015: “Seven Gay Texts: Biblical Passages Used to Condemn Homosexuality”. BTB 45/2, 68–87.
Goelet, O., 1993: “Nudity in Ancient Egypt”. Source: Notes in the History of Art 12/2, 20–31.
Goldenberg, D. M., 2003: *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*. Princeton/Oxford.
— 2005: “What Did Ham Do to Noah?” In M. Perani (ed.): *“The Words of a Wise Man’s Mouth Are Gracious” (Qoh 10, 12): Festschrift for Günter Stemberger on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday*. Berlin. Pp. 257–265.
— 2017: *Black and Slave: The Origins and History of the Curse of Ham*. Studies of the Bible and Its Reception 10. Berlin/Boston.
Graves, R. / Patai, R., 1963: *Hebrew Myths: The Book of Genesis*. London.
Harl, M., 1994: *La Genèse*. BdA 1. Paris.
Haynes, S. R., 2002: *Noah’s Curse: The Biblical Justification of American Slavery*. Religion in America Series. Oxford.
Hendel, R. S., 1998: *The Text of Genesis 1–11: Textual Studies and Critical Edition*. New York/Oxford.
Husser, J-M., 1995: “Culte des ancêtres ou rites funéraires? A propos du «Catalogue» des devoirs du fils (KTU 1.17:I–II)”. UF 27, 115–127.
Keel, O., 1980: *Die Welt der altorientalischen Bildsymbolik und das Alte Testament: Am Beispiel der Psalmen*. 3rd ed. Zürich/Neukirchen-Vluyn.
— 1999: “Powerful Symbols of Victory—The Parts Stay the Same, the Actors Change”. JNSL 25/2, 205–240.
— 2007: *Die Geschichte Jerusalems und die Entstehung des Monotheismus*. 2 Vols. Göttingen.
Keel, O. / Uehlinger, C., 2010. *Göttinnen, Götter und Gottessymbole: Neue Erkenntnisse zur Religionsgeschichte Kanaans und Israels aufgrund bislang unerschlossener ikonographischer Quellen*. Fribourg.
Keller, S. R., 1993: “Aspects of Nudity in the Old Testament”. Source: Notes in the History of Art 12/2, 32–36.
Kennicott, B., 1776: *Vetus Testamentum hebraicum cum variis lectionibus*. Vol. 1. Oxford.
King, P. J. / Stager, L. E., 2001: *Life in Biblical Israel*. Louisville.
Laisney, V. P-M., 2007: *L’Enseignement d’Aménémopé*. StPohlSM 19. Rome.
Lange, H. O., 1925: *Das Weisheitsbuch des Amenemope, aus dem Papyrus 10,474 des British Museum*. Danske videnskabornes selskab, Historisk-filologiske meddelelser XI, 2. Copenhagen.
LeMon, J. M., 2010: *Yahweh’s Winged Form in the Psalms: Exploring Congruent Iconography and Texts*. OBO 242. Fribourg/Göttingen.
Levin, C., 1993: *Der Jahwist*. FRLANT 157. Göttingen.
Lichtheim, M., 2006: *Ancient Egyptian Literature*. Vol. 2. Berkeley.
Loretz, O., 2006: “Heimführung des betrunkenen Greises/Vaters nach KTU 1.17 I 30–31; Jes 51, 18 und Xenophanes (B I, 17–18)”. UF 38, 437–443.
Loud, G., 1939: *The Megiddo Ivories*. OIP 52. Chicago.
Maher, M., 1992: *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis. Translated, with Introduction and Notes*. ArBib 1B. Collegeville.
Neumann, K., 2006: “Scham”. In A. Berlejung / C. Frevel (eds.): *Handbuch theologischer Grundbegriffe zum Alten und Neuen Testament*. Darmstadt. Pp. 355–357.
Niehr, H., 2001: “עָרָה *ʿārâ*”. TDOT 11, 343–349.
Nissinen, M., 1998: *Homoeroticism in the Biblical World*. Minneapolis.
Odhiambo, N., 2013: “The Nature of Ham’s Sin”. BSac 170, 154–165.
Opferkuch, S., 2017: “Ein Rausch und seine Folgen: Parallelen zwischen der Erzählung von Noah als Weinbauer (Gen 9,20–27) und ihren Auslegungstraditionen und der Bilha-Episode in TestRub 3,11–15”. ZNW 108/2, 281–305.

Ornan, T., 2005: “A Complex System of Religious Symbols: The Case of the Winged Disc in Near Eastern Imagery of the First Millennium BCE”. In C. E. Suter / C. Uehlinger (eds.): *Crafts and Images in Contact: Studies on Eastern Mediterranean Art of the First Millennium BCE*. OBO 210. Fribourg/Göttingen. Pp. 207–235.

Peshiṭta Institute Leiden, 1977: *Preface, Genesis–Exodus*. The Old Testament in Syriac According to the Peshiṭta Version I, 1. Leiden.

Phillips, A., 1980: “Uncovering the Father’s Skirt”. VT 30/1, 38–43.

Prestel, P. / Schorch, S., 2011: “Genesis/Das Erste Buch Mose”. In M. Karrer / W. Kraus (eds.): *Septuaginta Deutsch: Erläuterungen und Kommentare zum griechischen Alten Testament*. Vol. 1. Stuttgart. Pp. 145–257.

Pyschny, K., 2019: “Concepts and Contexts of Female and Male Nudity in the Iconography of the Southern Levant”. In C. Berner et al. (eds.): *Clothing and Nudity in the Hebrew Bible*. London. Pp. 127–161.

Robertson, O. P., 1998: “Current Critical Questions concerning the ‘Curse of Ham’ (Gen 9:20–27)”. JETS 41/2, 177–188.

Rösel, M., 1994: *Übersetzung als Vollendung der Auslegung: Studien zur Genesis-Septuaginta*. BZAW 223. Berlin/New York.

Schmid, K., 2012: “Genesis in the Pentateuch”. In C. A. Evans / J. N. Lohr / D. L. Petersen (eds.): *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation*. VTSup 152. Leiden/Boston. Pp. 27–50.

Schmitt, R., 2001: *Bildhafte Herrschaftsrepräsentation im eisenzeitlichen Israel*. AOAT 283. Münster.

Schroer, S., 2011: *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels und der Alte Orient: Eine Religionsgeschichte in Bildern. Band 3: Die Spätbronzezeit*. Fribourg.

— 2018: *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels und der Alte Orient: Eine Religionsgeschichte in Bildern. Band 4: Die Eisenzeit bis zum Beginn der achämenidischen Herrschaft*. Basel.

Schroer, S. / Keel, O., 2005: *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels und der Alte Orient: Eine Religionsgeschichte in Bildern. Band 1: Vom ausgehenden Mesolithikum bis zur Frühbronzezeit*. Fribourg.

Schüle, A., 2009: *Die Urgeschichte (Genesis 1–11)*. Zürcher Bibelkommentare. Zürich.

Speiser, E. A., 1982: *Genesis*. 3rd ed. AB 1. New York.

Sperber, A., 1959: *The Pentateuch According to Targum Onkelos*. The Bible in Aramaic 1. Leiden.

Staubli, T., 1991: *Das Image der Nomaden: Im Alten Israel und in der Ikonographie seiner sesshaften Nachbarn*. OBO 107. Freiburg/Göttingen.

Staubli, T. / Schroer, S., 2014: *Menschenbilder der Bibel*. Ostfildern.

Tal, A., 2015: *Genesis*. BHQ 1. Stuttgart.

Tov, E., 2015: *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research*. 3rd ed. Winona Lake.

Vervenne, M., 1995: “What Shall We Do With the Drunken Sailor? A Critical Re-Examination of Genesis 9.20–27”. JSOT 68, 33–55.

Von Gall, A. F., 1914: *Der hebräische Pentateuch der Samaritaner*. Vol. 1. Giessen.

Von Rad, G., 1961: *Genesis: A Commentary*. OTL. London.

Weber, R. / Gryson, R., 2007: *Biblia sacra iuxta Vulgatam versionem*. Stuttgart.

Wenham, G. J., 1987: *Genesis 1–15*. WBC 1. Waco.

Westermann, C., 1976: *Genesis 1–11*. 2nd ed. BKAT 1/1. Neukirchen-Vluyn.

Wevers, J. W., 1974: *Genesis*. SVTG 1. Göttingen.

Whitford, D. M., 2009: *The Curse of Ham in the Early Modern Era: The Bible and the Justifications for Slavery*. St. Andrews Studies in Reformation History. Farnham.

Wilson, J. A., 1938: “The Megiddo Ivories”. AJA 42/3, 333–336.

Witte, M., 1998: *Die biblische Urgeschichte: Redaktions- und theologiegeschichtliche Beobachtungen zu Genesis 1,1–11,2*. BZAW 265. Berlin/New York.

Wittenberg, G., 1991: “‘… Let Canaan Be His Slave.’ (Gen 9:26) Is Ham also Cursed?” JTSA 74, 46–56.

Wyatt, N., 2002: *Religious Texts from Ugarit*. 2nd ed. London.

CLAPPING AND SHOUTING IN PSALM 47:2 WITH ATTENTION TO THE ICONOGRAPHY OF APPLAUSE

Joel M. LeMon

This study addresses a basic exegetical question of Ps 47:2 (MT, NRSV: Ps 47:1). Why would "the peoples" be instructed to clap their hands and "shout to God with loud songs of joy" (NRSV) if these same peoples have just been subdued by Yahweh (v. 4)? The discussion proceeds in three parts. First, I summarise the basic structure of the psalm and address the question of the speaker and audience in the two main sections of the text (vv. 2–6, 7–10). Second, I provide a lexical analysis of critical terms in v. 2 (תקעו כף, הריעו, and רנה). Third, I survey the iconography of applause in the ancient Near East.

I argue throughout that contrary to most translations of this passage, Ps 47:2 does not evoke the emotions of joy and happiness in a straightforward and simplistic way. Indeed, these emotions may not be in view at all. Instead, two other interpretations of the people's clapping and shouting are more likely in light of the literary context and the iconography of the ancient Near East. The first alternative is that by calling the nations to clap and shout, Israel is forcing the subdued enemies to produce songs as a means to humiliate them. The second interpretation is that the activities described in Ps 47:2 convey the anguished lament of subjugated peoples. That is, the peoples are commanded to acknowledge Yahweh's kingship by clapping and crying out to Yahweh for deliverance. Based on the evidence available, both interpretations are warranted.

1. THE STRUCTURE OF PSALM 47

Psalm 47 has often been described as a psalm of praise and associated with the enthronement psalms because of its repeated acclaim of God "going up" and God reigning as king.[1] Yet the contours of an Israelite enthronement ritual are difficult to determine, however many tantalising clues this psalm and other psalms present.[2] Thus, the analysis of Ps 47:2 here begins not with the presumption of an enthronement ritual or any other reconstructed ritual setting but with a close examination of the literary structure of the entire psalm.

The structure of Psalm 47 is governed by the two sets of imperative verbs found in v. 2 and vv. 7–8: תקעו ("clap") and הריעו ("shout") appear in v. 2, and the Piel imperative זמרו ("sing praises") is repeated five times in vv. 7–8. Both of these sets of imperative verbs are followed by כי-clauses (vv. 3, 8) that provide motivation and justification for the commands.[3] On the basis of these repeated imperatives and their corresponding motivations, most interpreters understand the psalm to be comprised of two basic parts, which I will refer to simply as Section A, comprising vv. 2–6, and Section B, comprising vv. 7–10.[4]

There are many thematic similarities in these two sections, suggesting a unified composition rather than a pastiche of originally disparate elements. Both sections focus on the kingship of God and reference patriarchal traditions, with Jacob and Abraham appearing in the penultimate lines of each section (vv. 5, 9). Furthermore, "the nations" and "the peoples" appear at several points (vv. 2, 4, 9, 10) in both sections. Despite these

[1] See, e.g., Muilenburg, 1944: 235–256; Caquot, 1959: 311–337; Perdue, 1974: 85–98; Gerstenberger, 1988: 196–197.

[2] A number of ritual and historical contexts have been suggested. See especially Roberts, 1976: 129–132; Schaper, 1994: 262–275; Burnett, 2004: 319–350.

[3] On this feature of psalms of praise, see Goldingay, 2007: 75

[4] See Beuken, 1981: 38–45.

similarities in structure, theme, and vocabulary, the two sections of the psalm seem to have different audiences.[5] That is to say, the imperative verbs in each section call two different communities to praise.

	NRSV (Versification following MT)	MT
Section A (vv. 2–6)	[2] Clap your hands, all you peoples; shout to God with loud songs of joy. [3] For the LORD, the Most High, is awesome, a great king over all the earth. [4] He subdued peoples under us, and nations under our feet. [5] He chose our heritage for us, the pride of Jacob whom he loves. *Selah* [6] God has gone up with a shout, the LORD with the sound of the trumpet.	כל העמים תקעו כף הריעו לאלהים בקול רנה כי יהוה עליון נורא מלך גדול על כל הארץ ידבר עמים תחתינו ולאמים תחת רגלינו יבחר לנו את נחלתנו את גאון יעקב אשר אהב סלה עלה אלהים בתרועה יהוה בקול שופר
Section B (vv. 7–10)	[7] Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises. [8] For God is the king of all the earth; sing praises with a psalm. [9] God is king over the nations; God sits on his holy throne. [10] The princes of the peoples gather as the people of the God of Abraham. For the shields of the earth belong to God; he is highly exalted.	זמרו אלהים זמרו זמרו למלכנו זמרו כי מלך כל הארץ אלהים זמרו משכיל מלך אלהים על גוים אלהים ישב על כסא קדשו נדיבי עמים נאספו עם אלהי אברהם כי לאלהים מגני ארץ מאד נעלה

In Section A, a voice addresses "all the peoples" (כל העמים). They are summoned to "clap a hand" (תקעו כף) in v. 2a and shout to God in v. 2b "with loud sounds of joy" (בקול רנה). These sounds are a response to God's fearsome nature and God's worldwide authority. Describing Yahweh as great king over "all the earth" (כל הארץ) in v. 3 echoes the address to "all the people" (v. 2). The summons is for everyone everywhere.

A shift occurs in vv. 4–5. Rather than describing God's authority over everyone, these verses portray God's specific actions on behalf of a particular people, Israel. Until this point, the voice of the speaker is ambiguous. Yet in v. 4, Israel reveals itself with first-person plural pronouns: "God has subdued peoples (עמים) under us, and nations under our feet". To be clear, the same term for "peoples" appears at the outset of the psalm. In v. 2, the addressees of the imperative verbs are כל העמים. And again in v. 4, the direct object of the verb "to subdue" is עמים. Those who are called to shout and clap are the same ones that have been subdued by Yahweh. Furthermore, these עמים have been subdued for the benefit of a specific community, "the pride of Jacob", that is to say, Israel (v. 5).

The final verse in this section (v. 6) continues to describe the actions of God that motivate the praise of "all the peoples" (v. 2). The portrayal of the awesome kingship of God (v. 3) evokes comparisons with the peoples who are called to praise him. While the peoples are under Israel's feet (v. 4), God is going up (v. 6). The nations are low while God is high.

A shout heralds God's ascent (v. 6). This "shout" (תרועה) is a noun based on the same root of the imperative verb הריעו that appears in v. 2 (√רעה). In that context, applause accompanied the shouting, while in v. 6, the blast of the trumpet plays counterpoint to the voices. Verse 6 can thus be understood as the culmination of Section A since it describes the activity that Israel summons the nations to perform. Verse 6 presents it as a completed action. The calls to shout and make noise (v. 2) have had their effect (v. 6).

Section B begins at v. 7 with its repeated calls for the audience to sing and make music with the Piel masculine plural imperative form of √זמר. Unlike Section A, there is no vocative indicating the addressee of the imperative verbs. In Section A, Israel addresses "all the people", revealing itself as the speaker through

[5] The extensive structural analysis of Beuken (1981: 39–40) confirms this arrangement, though his understanding of v. 2 differs from my own.

first-person plural pronouns in vv. 4–5. In Section B, first-person plural pronouns appear immediately (v. 7). Here Israel calls not to the rest of the world, but instead calls itself to praise.

The universal kingship of God provides the motivation for the singing and music making (vv. 8–10). God is "king of all the earth" (מלך כל הארץ; v. 8) an echo of the description of God in v. 3 as מלך גדול על כל הארץ. The picture of God's kingship becomes increasingly clear as the text describes God high on the throne "over the nations". The last phrase of the psalm "he is highly exalted" (v. 10) again emphasises the height of God relative to the subdued peoples, whose princes are gathered before him.

Along with Beuken, I understand the two sections of the psalm to be addressed to two different audiences.[6] The nations are summoned by the imperative verbs (√תקע and √רעה) in Section A, while Israel summons itself to sing and make music (√זמר) in Section B. This proposal makes the most sense of the fact that God is described as "our king" (מלכנו) in v. 7b and that the princes of the people (v. 10) are still referred to not as Israel's own kings, but as kings who have now come before Yahweh's throne.

Beuken, however, does not address the full implications of the summons to the nations in Section A. Indeed, most interpreters have seen nothing amiss in the idea that the peoples are called to praise Yahweh with joy, even as they are beneath the heel of Israel. Kraus, for example, describes v. 2 as an exultation, one in which all nations rejoice and laud Yahweh as king. He claims, "the hymnic introit … calls on the nations to give homage to King Yahweh with enthusiasm and joy".[7] He underscores the jubilant nature of this praise, explaining that "clapping of hands is an expression of enthusiastic joy … All nations are to join in Israel's laudatory glorification of Yahweh".[8] Most major commentaries and translations present the clapping and shouting in Psalm 47 as the sounds of joyful praise as well.[9] The chart below provides a few examples from common translations.

Translation	Rendering of Ps 47:2
New International Version	Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy.
New American Standard Bible	O clap your hands, all peoples; Shout to God with the voice of joy.
King James Version (AV)	O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph.
JPS Tanakh (1917)	O clap your hands, all ye peoples; Shout unto God with the voice of triumph.
Common English Bible	Clap your hands, all you people! Shout joyfully to God with a joyous shout!

Without offering an alternative to the translation of הריעו לאלהים בקול רנה (v. 2b), some commentators have nevertheless noted the challenges of understanding such a combination of joy, fear, and violent subjugation in the opening verses of Psalm 47. Weiser acknowledges that the "the motivation" of their praise is "strange" but makes sense of the strangeness by asserting that v. 2 is "consistent with the essential nature of the Old Testament idea of God: Yahweh shall be received with shouts of joy just because he is a terrible God".[10] Goldingay takes a different angle, suggesting that the address to the nations in v. 2 is a way by which Israel encourages itself to praise Yahweh.[11]

---

[6] Beuken, 1981: 40.

[7] Kraus, 1993: 466.

[8] Kraus, 1993: 467.

[9] So Caquot (1959: 315): "Vous tous, les peuples, battez des mains! Poussez vers Dieu des cris de jubulation"; Schaper (1994: 262): "Ihr Völker alle, klatscht in die Hände, jauchzt zu Gott mit Jubelgeschrei"; and Alter (2007: 166): "All peoples, clap hands, shout out to God with a sound of glad song"; likewise, Perdue, 1974: 91; Hossfeld / Zenger, 1993: 290; deClaissé-Walford / Jacobson / Tanner, 2014: 430 (entry by deClaissé-Walford).

[10] Weiser, 1962: 376.

[11] Goldingay, 2007: 76. Craigie (1983: 347) also notes the oddity of the call to praise for "the same nations who have been defeated in war (v 4) and whose representatives and chiefs must be envisaged as being actually present in this celebration of God's kingship (v 10)". Looking back at the history of interpretation, one notes that Calvin did not miss the apparent contradiction that "all peoples" are called to praise joyously the "high, terrible" king who has violently placed them under his feet. To make sense of these opposing sentiments—joyous praise and utter subjugation—he

2. LEXICAL ANALYSIS OF CRITICAL TERMS IN PS 47:2

In view of the structure of the psalm and the identity of the voices of the speakers and addressees, I turn now to a lexical discussion of three critical terms in v. 2: the imperative verbs תקעו and הריעו and the noun רנה. Each of these terms appears within a wide range of contexts throughout the Hebrew Bible. Those contexts reveal a correspondingly wide range of emotions that these terms can suggest. Joy and happiness are included among these emotions, but they are by no means the only options, and indeed, not the best option for describing the emotional freight of the terms in this context.

2.1 תקעו כף

The analysis of תקעו כף in Ps 47:2 builds on Fox's study of descriptions of clapping in Mesopotamian and Hebrew literature.[12] Fox demonstrates how clapping hands together or clapping hands against parts of the body to make sound could accompany and represent a complex range of emotions. Her most carefully worked example comes from the Prism Inscription of Esarhaddon in which Esarhaddon narrates his anger, grief, and anguish at his brothers' efforts to keep him from the throne. He describes himself as lamenting, shouting "woe", clapping his hands (*ritti rapāsu)*, and petitioning the gods for help.[13] Fox also highlights two reliefs from the palaces of Ashurnasirpal II and Tiglath-pileser III in which figures clap their hands in what she understands to be a gesture of hostility or anger. She concludes that in ancient Mesopotamia clapping hands "expressed negative as well as positive feelings".[14]

Turning to descriptions of clapping in the Hebrew Bible,[15] Fox identifies a number of occasions in which clapping the hand suggests a "positive" emotion of joy, celebration, or approval. Yet in other cases, she maintains, clapping indicates a "negative" gesture of "anger and anguish"[16] consonant with the Mesopotamian textual material. Fox attempts to categorise different meanings and implications of clapping based on the usage of four different verbal roots: √ספק, √נכה (in Hiphil), √מחא, and √תקע. Fox claims that √מחא and √תקע have positive associations while √ספק and √נכה have negative associations, and are deployed where the gesture of clapping "bespeak[s] anger and other emotions of distress".[17]

She notes that in four texts in Ezekiel (6:11; 21:19, 22; 22:13) where Hiphil of √נכה occurs with the direct object "hand" (כף), each occurrence conveys a range of negative emotions akin to Akkadian *ritti rapāsu*.[18] Yet, when this phrase appears in 2 Kgs 11:22 at the coup of Athaliah and the crowning of Joash, the clapping could be understood with either a positive or negative sense, depending on who is supposed to be doing the clapping.[19] Fox also identifies how clapping described with the root √ספק indicates some form of distress or anguish through four examples (Num 24:10; Job 27:23; 34:37; Lam 2:15) but acknowledges "the precise sentiment is not always clear" in these cases.[20]

For positive descriptions of clapping indicated by √מחא, Fox includes Isa 55:12, Ezek 35:6, and Ps 98:8. She notes, however, that the use of the term in Ezek 35:6 could be understood as a gesture of "mockery" or "malicious glee".[21] Also in Fox's category of positive uses of clapping, she includes Nah 3:19 where תקע כף appears in a context of celebration over the destruction of Assyria: "all who hear the report of you clap their hands over you" (NRSV). Though Fox considers this a case of celebration, the emotional freight of the terms is ambiguous. Given the context, the gesture may suggest *Schadenfreude* or a bitterness tinged with both pity

interprets the text's reference to the king and kingdom Christologically. Thus a new and better kingdom takes the place of problematic kings and kingdoms. See Calvin, 1949: 483.

[12] Fox, 1995: 49–60.

[13] Fox, 1995: 49–51, and especially n. 5.

[14] Fox, 1995: 49.

[15] Fox, 1995: 51–55.

[16] Fox, 1995: 60.

[17] Fox, 1995: 51.

[18] Fox, 1995: 52.

[19] The subject in this case is ambiguous (Fox, 1995: 53).

[20] Fox, 1995: 54.

[21] Fox, 1995: 55.

and delight. Fox also considers Ps 47:2 a positive usage indicating celebration, translating it without explanation: "All the nations clap your hands, shout to God with joy".[22] In a footnote, she acknowledges that תקע כף also indicates joining in an oath "ratifying an agreement" three times in Prov 6:1, 17:18, and 22:26.[23]

It is unnecessary to rehearse all the examples from Fox's categories of "positive" and "negative" expressions of clapping. It suffices instead to note that so-called "negative" associations of clapping seem to be more common throughout the Hebrew Bible and in the Mesopotamian material she accesses. This is the most helpful outcome of Fox's study. Fox's more specific claims about the negative associations of √ספק and √נכה (in Hiphil), and the positive associations of √מחא and √תקע do not adequately account for the nature of the data. Given the ambivalent and contradictory cases, the sample size is too small for such a clear determination. Moreover, the utility of the entire enterprise is limited by the positive-negative binary that Fox employs. Forcing these words into one or the other category obscures the larger context in most occurrences.

A better way to understand the range of words for clapping in the Hebrew Bible is simply to acknowledge that the terms are primarily onomatopoeic, like the words for clapping in most languages, such as the English *clap*, *smack*, *strike*, *thump*, *clasp*, *patter*, *applaud*. As such, the terms for clapping in the Hebrew Bible do not correspond to a well-defined array of emotions. Instead, these words simply reflect the sounds that can be made by hitting the hands together or against various parts of the body. In any case, what is clear from Fox's study is that we should avoid simplistic and anachronistic assumptions that clapping primarily reflects joy, happiness, or approval.[24]

2.2 הריעו

The Hiphil of √רעה is associated with a wide range of emotions in the Hebrew Bible. The basic sense of "cry, cry out, shout" appears in a number of contexts: a war cry (Josh 6:10), a cry of triumph (Isa 44:23), a cry of distress or fear (Judg 7:21), and a cry of pain (Mic 4:9). Psalm 47:2 is one of several psalms containing the verb alongside the preposition ל and a divine name, thus "shout to God" or "cry out to God". The context suggests that the shouting is associated with joy and gladness in three enthronement psalms: Pss 95:1; 98:4, 6; 100:1. Despite the formal similarity with these enthronement psalms, the context of Ps 47:2 is most consistent with the use of the phrase in Ps 66:1, הריעו לאלהים כל הארץ. Both of these texts highlight the terrifying nature of God's activity, and include a description of the foreign nations subjugated before Yahweh, even as they are summoned to cry out to God. Indeed, Ps 66:3 describes the enemies cringing before God's power. As with תקעו כף, some contexts clearly indicate that triumphant joy is associated with the Hiphil of √רעה. Others, however, suggest that the term indicates a cry of pain, distress, and fear.

2.3 רנה

The final critical term in Ps 47:2 is similarly ambiguous, with the capacity to encompass a wide range of emotions. Wagner's study of רנה in the Psalter identifies what he calls "a dichotomy of meaning" in its use.[25] He argues that the verbal form of √רנן conveys a sense of joy when it appears in the Psalter in Qal, Piel, and Hiphil. Yet, in the nominal form רנה, the case is more complex. Wagner's study shows that רנה can certainly convey joy, as it does in Ps 105:43, "He led forth his people with joy; his chosen ones with a shout (ברנה)".[26] But the term also frequently appears in the context of complaint, as in Ps 142:7, "hear my cry (רנתי), for I have become very weak", or Ps 106:44, "He considered them in their distress, when he listened to their cry (רנתם)". One must look to the context to determine the emotional freight of the "ringing cry", a translation that captures something of the onomatopoeic nature of רנה.

---

[22] Fox, 1995: 55.

[23] Fox, 1995: 54–55, n. 22.

[24] On the formalisation of Roman practices of applause in Roman theatre and politics, see Aldrete, 1999.

[25] Wagner, 1960: 435–441. Wagner examines the use of רנה and the verbal root רנן in contexts of joy, cultic praise and thanks, and suffering and lament. He concludes that the noun can signal a shout of joy, a cry made to convince God to act, or a cultic creedal proclamation. He acknowledges that this variety of usages might reflect different meanings in different forms (construct vs. absolute) or that the different usages derive from multiple roots. But he argues finally "that these various usages find their point of contact in the fact that they are loud cries or shouts which are directed to YHWH in an attempt to achieve results" (Wagner, 1960: 440).

[26] See also Ps 118:15.

In sum, all the critical terms in Ps 47:2 could indicate anguish, lament, and petition as easily as they could indicate joy and celebration.

3. THE ICONOGRAPHY OF APPLAUSE IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

Nearly fifty years ago, Keel introduced ancient Near Eastern iconography as a source for interpreting Ps 47:2. In his ground-breaking *Symbolism of the Biblical World,* Keel dedicates several pages to the description of "dancing and jubilation", which includes a discussion of clapping in Egyptian and Mesopotamian iconography.[27] He suggests that clapping in the ancient Near East indicates joy and celebration, and mentions no other associated emotions. He points first to the portrayal of the Egyptian goddess Mert, clapping with two outstretched arms. She is the embodiment of "cultic jubilation" (fig. 1).[28] Keel also makes reference to a number of figures in New Kingdom tomb paintings showing men clapping, dancing, and vaulting.[29]

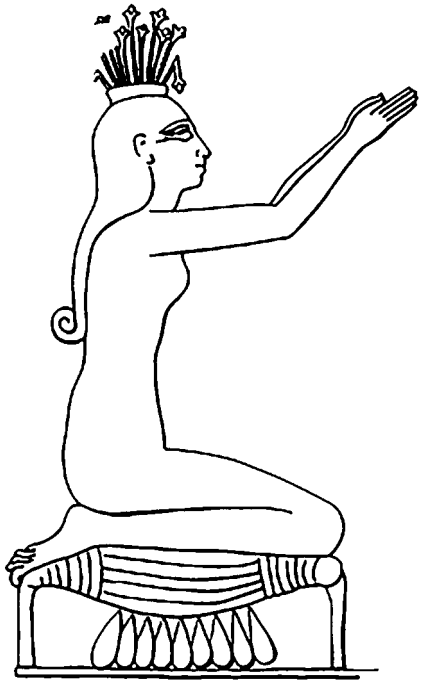


Fig. 1: Mert, an Egyptian goddess of jubilation, clapping her hands, limestone relief, Abydos, temple of Seti I (1317–1301 BCE). Source: Keel, 1997: fig. 446.

Keel then moves to Mesopotamian iconography and discusses reliefs from the Southwest Palace at Nineveh depicting "women and children, clapping their hands in rhythm" in the context of the enthronement of the Elamite king Ummanigash after Ashurbanipal's defeat of another Elamite king, Teumman (fig. 2).[30] Keel draws a direct comparison between this image and Ps 47:2, which, he claims, "calls on all the peoples to clap their hands in celebration of Yahweh's procession to Zion. On such occasions, the participants uttered long shouts of joy".[31] Keel goes on to note that one woman in the relief is clapping her hand to her neck to provide a rhythmic punctuation to her shouts (fig. 3).[32]

[27] Keel, 1997: 335–339.
[28] Keel, 1997: 335.
[29] Keel, 1997: 335, fig. 447, 448.
[30] Keel, 1997: 335.
[31] Keel, 1997: 335–337.
[32] Keel includes both a line drawing of two children and the woman with her hand to her throat and a photographic plate featuring the musicians, women, and children in procession (pl. XXVII). As he does frequently in this volume, Keel uses the text of Ps 47:2 as the caption below the plate.

Fig. 2: The aftermath of the battle at the Ulai river, limestone relief, Room XXXIII, slabs 4, 5, and 6, Southwest Palace of Nineveh, Ashurbanipal (668–631 BCE), British Museum, BM 124802. Source: Paterson, 1915: 65–66. Cf. Barnett / Bleibtreu / Turner, 1998: no. 384b–386b.

Fig. 3: Detail of limestone relief with woman clapping her hand to her throat and children clapping hands, Room XXXIII, Slab 6, Southwest Palace of Nineveh, Ashurbanipal (668–631 BCE), British Museum, BM 124802. Source: Keel, 1997: fig. 447.

Keel's examples from Egyptian art confirm a connection between joy and clapping. Yet, as Fox's study has shown, Mesopotamian textual and iconographic evidence suggests that clapping and shouting reflected a much broader range of emotions, even if we eschew her positive-negative typology.[33] Indeed, the larger iconographic context of the installation of Ummanigash suggests a complex set of emotions are operative within the scene—much more complex than Keel acknowledges in his discussion of the vignette of the women and children clapping.[34]

[33] Moreover, since Fox's study, scholars have explored the question of how, if at all, one can identify various emotions within ancient Near Eastern iconography. Izak Cornelius—to whom this essay is dedicated—is among the leading voices in this area of research. See especially Cornelius, 2017: 123–148. The collected essays in this volume are the results of a workshop at the 2015 *Recontre Assyriologique Internationale* and represent the current state of research.

[34] For a description of the artistic programme of the room, see Reade, 1979: 52–106, esp. 89, 96–101 and Barnett / Bleibtreu / Turner, 1998: 94–100.

Before saying more about this and similar scenes, some methodological reflections are in order about the relationship between literary imagery in the Hebrew Bible and iconographic material from the ancient Near East. To explore the significance of the iconography of applause for the interpretation of Ps 47:2, it is most appropriate to focus on iconographic contexts where there is a high degree of congruence with the psalm. Put differently, iconographic interpretation of this text should draw from pictorial contexts that share a similar constellation of motifs that the text presents, namely, subjugated people shouting and clapping alongside music making.[35] Thus, I limit my discussion here to these types of scenes, though there are a number of other images from Neo-Assyrian art that reflect clapping hands together or clapping hands to parts of the body.[36]

The installation of Ummanigash, accompanied by shouts and clapping from Elamite women and children, appears within a framework of utter horror. The larger context of Room XXXIII in the Southwest Palace depicts the rout of the army of Teumman. In numerous pathetic vignettes, Neo-Assyrian troops dispatch Elamites with efficiency and apparent relish. Elamite bodies are the canvas upon which the Neo-Assyrians portray their dominance.[37] In the upper registers of the slabs, we see the execution and flaying of Elamites as Ashurbanipal keeps watch over his well-ordered ranks. Running along the base of slabs 4, 5, and 6, the river Ulai flows with the Elamite bodies, many missing their heads, along with horses, weapons, and destroyed chariots. There are as many bodies as there are fish in this river of gore.

On the banks of this river stand the women and children clapping and shouting. In Layard's initial description of the scene, he comments on how the gesture of the woman clapping her hand to her throat as "Arab and Persian women still do when they make those shrill and vibrating sounds peculiar to the vocal music of the East. The whole scene, indeed, was curiously illustrative of modern Eastern customs. The musicians portrayed in the bas-relief were probably of that class of public performers who appear in Turkey and Egypt at marriages, and on other occasions of rejoicing".[38] Layard's original interpretation of this scene has stuck, despite the fact that it draws broadly from contemporary analogies in Turkish, Persian, and Arabian cultures. Such anachronisms occlude the more immediate pictorial context.[39] Given that the whole room is filled with scenes of Elamite death, humiliation, and subjugation, it is hard to imagine these Elamite women and children simply expressing their joy, as at a wedding. Perhaps they are being forced to express joy as a means of further humiliation, since all other Elamite bodies in this room are likewise manipulated and put to the work of glorifying the king. In fact, the context suggests a complicated range of emotions are reflected here, not simply joy, and perhaps not joy at all. One could instead understand the claps and shouts as part of a self-abasing forced celebration. Alternately, one could understand this clapping and shouting as a means of expressing pain because of the misery of subjugation at the hands of the Assyrians.

A similar image appears in a relief in the Southwest Palace from the time of Sennacherib (fig. 4). In this relief, Assyrian soldiers are depicted cutting down date palms in the context of the conquest of a Babylonian city.[40] Layard described the scene thus: "Men beating drums, such as are still seen in the same country, and women clapping their hands in cadence to their song, come out to greet the conquerors".[41] Because all that remains of this scene is the line drawing, we cannot be sure whether the men are playing drums or lyres, but it is safe to assume that they are involved in music making in some form. The women's raised hands are consistent with the gesture for clapping that appears in slab 4 of Room XXXIII. Again, it is hard to imagine how the spectre of their destroyed city and the subsequent denuding of the landscape would be cause for

[35] The comparison of constellations of pictorial imagery from the ancient Near East with congruent constellations of literary images in texts is one of the ways in which iconography can be used profitably in the interpretation of the psalms. Iconography can also help to elucidate the meanings of individual lexemes and literary images, as well as larger themes that run through the Psalter. See LeMon, 2009: 152; 2014: 379.

[36] See Goldman, 1990: 41–49; Cifarelli, 1998: 210–228; Calabro, 2014. These works exemplify both the challenges and promise of interpreting gesture within ancient Near Eastern art. To be sure, one should proceed with particular caution when trying to identify static scenes that reflect noises and motion. Representing sound as well as repetitive motions are uniquely challenging for the medium of the plastic arts.

[37] See Bahrani, 2008: 23–54.

[38] Layard, 1853: 451–458, as quoted in Barnett / Bleibtreu / Turner, 1998: 96.

[39] Keel (1992: 358–374) helpfully points out the problematic nature of such readings of ancient Near Eastern images.

[40] Barnett / Bleibtreu / Turner, 1998: 130–132.

[41] Layard, 1853: 588–589, cited in Barnett / Bleibtreu / Turner, 1998: 131.

expressions of joy.[42] Cutting down date palms ruined the conquered people's source of well-being, nourishment, and self-sufficiency. As such, this wanton act of destruction would not be a cause for celebration but a reason for lament.[43] If the Babylonians are greeting their conquerors as Layard suggests, joy would not be the emotion that would accompany this greeting.

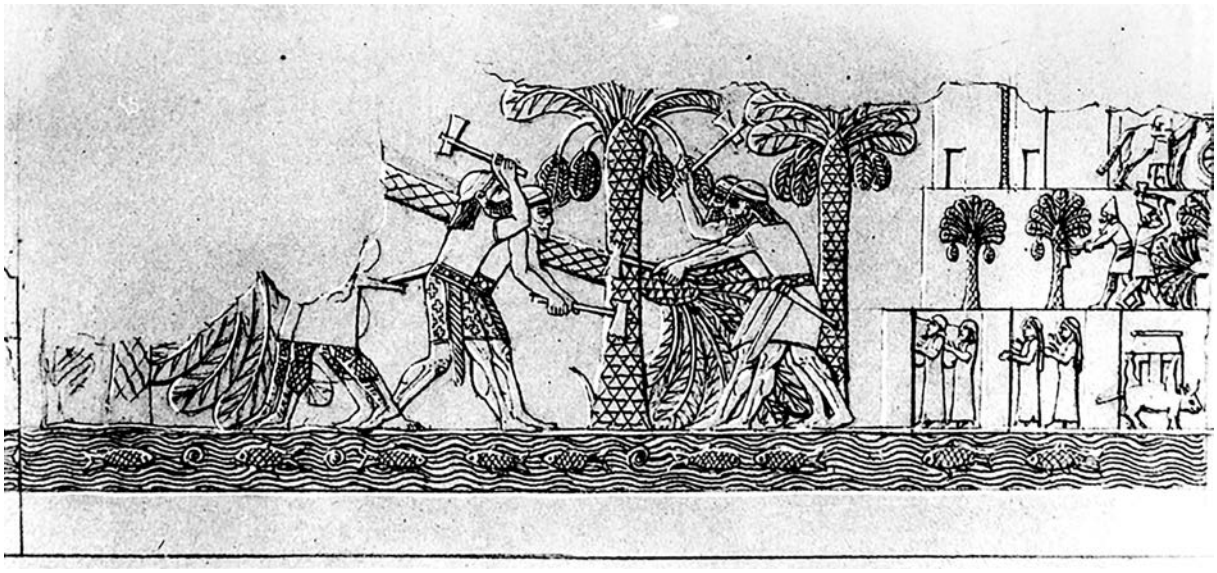


Fig. 4: Assyrian soldiers cutting down palm trees while Babylonians make music and clap, woodcut illustration of limestone relief, Room LXIX, Southwest Palace of Sennacherib (704–681 BCE), Nineveh.
Source: Paterson, 1915: pl. 95. Cf. Barnett / Bleibtreu / Turner, 1998: no. 637.

One other relief from Nineveh presents subjugated peoples within a context of music making, instead of women and children, however, this scene presents soldiers clapping (fig. 5). On the top register of a slab (E) from room V^1/T^1 of the North Palace of Nineveh, subjugated Elamite and Babylonian troops march along to the right with hands upraised. In the register just below them, a four-person band plays lyres, cymbals, and a drum. It is unclear whether the musicians are Elamites or Assyrians. It is also unclear whether the soldiers are clapping or raising their hands in a gesture of submission and subjugation. Indeed, it could be that both submission and clapping are being represented. If it is correct to understand their gestures as clapping, then again joy seems not to be the proper emotion to accompany their subjugation before Ashurbanipal in his chariot in the bottom register of the adjoining slab (F).

This brief exploration of the iconography of applause reveals mixed evidence. The Egyptian scenes seem to associate clapping straightforwardly with joy, as Keel claims, yet these images do not share many points of congruency with Psalm 47 beyond the fact that figures are clapping. Yet, in the Mesopotamian material under consideration, numerous points of congruency appear between Psalm 47 and the reliefs from Nineveh. These images, like the psalm itself, present a complicated picture in which there is not one emotion clearly expressed by the clapping figures. In fact, it is difficult to associate joy with these subjugated figures at all. It is more likely, instead, that the Neo-Assyrian examples either reflect a forced celebration as a form of humiliation or a clapping and shouting as a sign of lament. Thus, these reliefs could provide further examples of clapping as a sign of anguish, following Fox's observations.

[42] See Wright, 2015: 147–166.

[43] Hasel (2008: 67–81) argues that this cutting of date palms occurred subsequent to the capture of the city as an act of wanton destruction rather than as a way to procure native timber for siege weaponry.

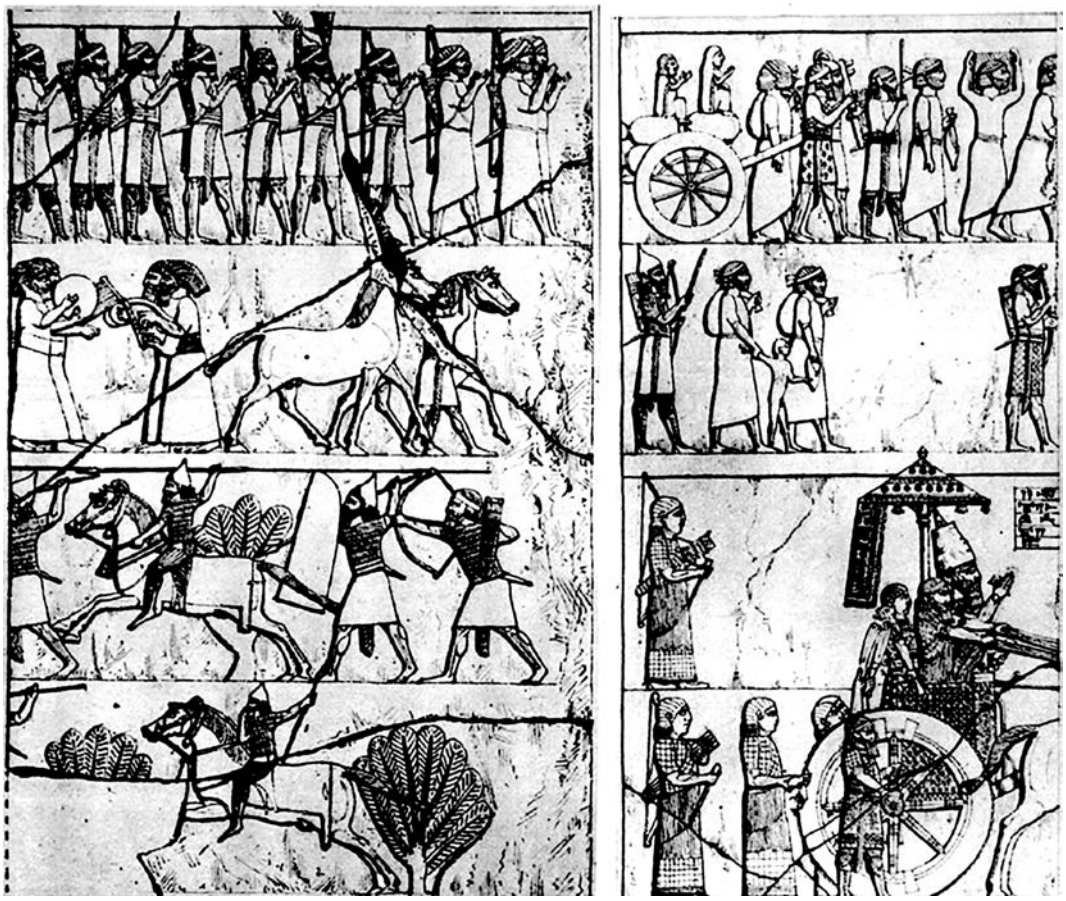


Fig. 5: Defeated warriors in procession above musicians, gypsum alabaster relief, Slabs E and F, Room V^1/T^1, found in Passage R, North Palace of Ashurbanipal (668–631 BCE), Nineveh. Source: Barnett, 1976: pl. LXVIII. Louvre, AO 19908 and AO 19904. Original drawing by W. Boutcher. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

4. CONCLUSION

Given the range of literary, lexical, and iconographical evidence surveyed above, the clapping and shouting required of the nations in Ps 47:2 should not be associated with joy as most modern translations suggest. A more accurate rendering of the verse would be: "Clap your hands, all you people, shout to God with a ringing cry". This translation allows for two alternate interpretations that are amply supported.

The first interpretative option is that the clapping and shouting could be understood as forcing subjugated enemies to sing joyous songs as a means to humiliate them. Psalm 137:3 suggests that the Judean exiles experienced this very means of humiliation at the hands of the Babylonians.[44] Psalm 47:2 can thus be understood as the inverse of Ps 137:3. In Psalm 47, it is Yahweh's people who stand above the nations (v. 4) commanding them to sing (v. 2).

The second option is that the clapping and shouting of the peoples could be understood as the sounds of anguish and lament. Such a reading takes seriously the idea that the subdued people would need to acknowledge Yahweh's lordship and seek Yahweh's grace to survive. Like the *hosannas* ("save us we pray") from the crowd at Jesus's entry to Jerusalem in the Gospels, a literal plea for salvation can also function as an acknowledgement of the power and authority of the one to whom it is addressed (Matt 21:9; Mark 11:9; John 12:13). In the crowd's *hosannas*, pleas for help become indistinguishable from the praise of the one who is powerful enough to receive such cries. Such a mixture of petition and praise may well be at work in Ps 47:2.

[44] With respect to the emotions and music in Psalm 137, there is insufficient evidence to support Berlin's (2017: 339–355) conclusion that lyres can be associated only with joy and not lament.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aldrete, G. S., 1999: *Gestures and Acclamations in Ancient Rome*. Baltimore.

Alter, R., 2007: *The Book of Psalms: A Translation with Commentary*. New York.

Bahrani, Z., 2008: *Rituals of War: The Body and Violence in Mesopotamia*. New York.

Barnett, R. D., 1976: *Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh (668–627 B.C.).* London.

Barnett, R. D. / Bleibtreu, E. / Turner, G., 1998: *Sculptures from the Southwest Palace at Nimrud.* London.

Berlin, A., 2017: "Speakers and Scenarios: Imagining the First Temple in the Second Temple Psalms (Psalms 112 and 137)". In M. S. Pajunen / J. Penner (eds.): *Functions of Psalms and Prayers in the Late Second Temple Period*. BZAW 486. Berlin. Pp. 339–355.

Beuken, W. A. M., 1981: "Psalm 47: Structure and Drama". In B. Albrektson et al. (eds.): *Remembering All the Way: A Collection of Old Testament Studies Published on the Occasion of the Fortieth Anniversary of the Oudtestamentisch Werkgezelschap in Nederland*. OtSt 21. Leiden. Pp. 38–45.

Burnett, J., 2004: "The Pride of Jacob". In B. F. Batto / K. L. Roberts (eds.): *David and Zion: Biblical Studies in Honor of J. J. M. Roberts*. Winona Lake. Pp. 319–350.

Calabro, D. M., 2014: *Ritual Gestures of Lifting, Extending, and Clasping the Hand(s) in Northwest Semitic Literature and Iconography*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, The University of Chicago.

Calvin, J., 1949: *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*. Grand Rapids.

Caquot, A., 1959: "Le Psaume 47 et la Royaute de Yahwe". RHPR 39, 311–337.

Cifarelli, M., 1998: "Gesture and Alterity in the Art of Ashurnasirpal II of Assyria". The Art Bulletin 80, 210–228.

Cornelius, I., 2017: "'The Eyes Have It and the Benign Smile': The Iconography of Emotions in the Ancient Near East from Gestures to Facial Expressions?" In S. Kipfer (ed.): *Visualizing Emotions in the Ancient Near East*. OBO 285. Fribourg/Göttingen. Pp. 123–148.

Craigie, P. C., 1983: *Psalms 1–50*. WBC 19. Waco.

deClaissé-Walford, N. / Jacobson, R. A. / Tanner, B. L., 2014: *The Book of Psalms*. NICOT. Grand Rapids.

Fox, N. S., 1995: "Clapping Hands as a Gesture of Anguish and Anger in Mesopotamia and in Israel". JANES 23, 49–60.

Gerstenberger, E., 1988: *Psalms, Part 1, with an Introduction to Cultic Poetry*. FOTL 14. Grand Rapids.

Goldingay, J., 2007: *Psalms, Vol. 2, Psalms 42–89*. BCOTWP. Grand Rapids.

Goldman, B., 1990: "Some Assyrian Hand Gestures". Bulletin of the Asia Institute 4, 41–49.

Hasel, M. G., 2008: "Assyrian Military Practices and Deuteronomy's Law of Warfare". In B. E. Kelle / F. R. Ames (eds.): *Writing and Reading War: Rhetoric, Gender, and Ethics in Biblical and Modern Contexts*. SBL Symposium 42. Atlanta. Pp. 67–81.

Hossfeld, F-L. / Zenger, E., 1993: *Die Psalmen*. NEchtB 29. Würzburg.

Keel, O., 1992: "Iconography and the Bible". ABD 3, 358–374.

— 1997: *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms*. Winona Lake.

Kraus, H-J., 1993: *Psalms 1–59*. CC. Minneapolis.

Layard, A. H., 1853: *Discoveries in the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon*. London.

LeMon, J. M., 2009: "Iconographic Approaches: The Iconic Structure of Psalm 17". In J. M. LeMon / K. H. Richards (eds.): *Method Matters: Essays on the Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Honor of David L. Petersen*. SBLRBS 56. Atlanta. Pp. 143–168.

— 2014: "Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Psalms". In W. P. Brown (ed.): *The Oxford Handbook of the Psalms*. Oxford. Pp. 377–391.

Muilenburg, J., 1944: "Psalm 47". JBL 64, 235–256.

Paterson, A., 1915: *Assyrian Sculptures: Palace of Sinacherib.* London.

Perdue, L. G., 1974: "'Yahweh is King over All the Earth': An Exegesis of Psalm 47". Restoration Quarterly 17, 85–98.

Reade, J. E., 1979: "Narrative Composition in Assyrian Sculpture". BaghM 10, 52–106.

Roberts, J. J. M., 1976: "The Religio-political Setting of Psalm 47". BASOR 221, 129–132.

Schaper, J., 1994: "Psalm 47 und sein Sitz im Leben". ZAW 109, 262–275.

Wagner, N. E., 1960: "רָנָּה in the Psalter". VT 10, 435–441.

Weiser, A., 1962: *The Psalms: A Commentary*. OTL. Philadelphia.

Wright, J. L., 2015: “Urbicide: The Ritualized Killing of Cities in the Ancient Near East”. In S. M. Olyan (ed.): *Ritual Violence in the Hebrew Bible: New Perspectives*. New York. Pp. 147–166.

FAKE, PSEUDO OR TRUE? CLASSIFYING TWO VOTIVE ANIMAL MUMMIES FROM A SOUTH AFRICAN MUSEUM

Ruhan Slabbert / Liani C. Swanepoel

1. INTRODUCTION

Mummies are usually the first thing that comes to mind when one thinks of Egypt. Human mummies are undeniably the best documented and most popular, but the ancient Egyptians also mummified animals—their numbers exceeding those of humans by countless millions. The multidisciplinary study of animal mummies provides a wealth of information on not only the mummification process itself but also on various aspects of ancient Egyptian culture and society.[1]

South African museums are in the fortunate position to house seven ancient Egyptian animal mummies. They form part of the Social History Collections of Iziko Museums of South Africa in Cape Town (five specimens: four bird mummies and one cat mummy) and the National Museum of Cultural Histories Archaeology Collection of Ditsong National Museum of Cultural History in Pretoria (two specimens: bird mummies).

Cornelius et al. initiated a project devoted to the systematic study of these mummies.[2] To understand their purpose, we assigned them to one of the four[3] broadly established categories:[4]

(1) Pet mummies: beloved pets (dogs, cats, gazelles, monkeys, baboons, etc.) who were buried either with their owners or in individual graves.
(2) Food or victual mummies: prepared and preserved funerary food such as joints of meat and poultry which were placed in tombs to provide sustenance for the deceased in the Afterlife.
(3) Sacred animals: mummies of animals that were believed to hold the spirit or essence of a deity. The animals were worshipped and treated like gods during their lifetime and were mummified and buried with great ceremony upon their death—the Apis, Mnevis, and Buchis bulls and the Ram of Mendes are well-known examples.
(4) Votive mummies: animals that were dedicated as offerings at the shrines of specific deities to whom these animals were sacred.

All seven of the South African animal mummies were categorised as votive animal mummies.[5] Votive mummies, especially prevalent during the Late Period (525–332 BCE) and the Greco-Roman Period (332 BCE–395 CE), are the most abundant type of animal mummy,[6] as well as the most diverse in terms of the species

[1] Diverse aspects such as the climate and environment of ancient Egypt, veterinary practices, animal domestication, religious beliefs, the eating habits of ancient Egyptians, ideas of cultural identity and ethnicity, technological advancements and trade, and economic practices, amongst others. Ikram / Iskander, 2002: IV; Ikram, 2019: 182.
[2] See Cornelius et al., 2012; 2017.
[3] Animal mummies that do not clearly fit into any of the four categories and with an uncertain purpose fall under the general heading of "other". See Ikram, 2012: 3; 2019: 182.
[4] Ikram / Dodson, 1998: 131–135; Ikram / Iskander, 2002: II–III; Ikram, 2005a: 1–15; 2005d: 241–248; 2012: 1–3; 2015: 77–93; 2019: 181–182.
[5] Cornelius et al., 2012; 2017.
[6] Vast animal cemeteries at many sites, such as Tuna el-Gebel, Armant, and Saqqara, have yielded millions of mummies. Ikram, 2005a: 10. See Ikram (2005: xvii–xx) for a map and selected list of the different animal species and cemeteries.

represented—cats, dogs, ibises, fish, raptors, scarab beetles, snakes, crocodiles, baboons, and shrews.[7] The majority of animal mummies in museum collections throughout the world today are votive mummies. These animals were sacrificed (some died a natural death), mummified, and purchased by pilgrims from priests. The mummies were dedicated to their symbolic deity and ultimately entombed in purpose-built catacombs, recycled tombs, pits, or sand dunes. The function of the votive animal mummy is that of an eternal physical expression of a prayer addressed by the pilgrim to the deity.[8]

2. A VOTIVE MUMMY SUBGROUP: FAKE, PSEUDO OR TRUE?

A subgroup within the votive animal mummy category are the so-called ancient "fake", "false" or "amalgam" mummies.[9] These mummies are wrapped to resemble a specific animal (cat, dog, raptor, etc.) and buried in a catacomb. When examined using x-rays, CT-scans, or unwrapping, the bundles are either empty, contain bones of a different species, or even fragments from different animals. Bits of fur or bunches of feathers are also not uncommon. Many examples of votive mummies have turned out to be fakes.[10] Remarkably, the most elaborately wrapped (especially in the Roman Period [30 BCE–395 CE]) mummies often fall into this subgroup.[11] Various reasons are given for this practice:[12]

- The priests were cheating the pilgrims for financial gain.[13]
- The ancient Egyptians believed that a part could signify the whole and that if something was declared to be a certain item, whether by spoken or written word, then it magically became that item through statement and prayer. So, with the correct spells and incantations, the fragments of an animal became complete offerings to the gods. These mummies were most likely not thought of as "fake" by the ancient Egyptians.[14] This is also substantiated by the mummification process itself: the act transformed an animal from an ordinary creature into a divine being, and the debris generated during this process was also regarded as divine.

Considering this, the South African animal mummies were further classified as true (complete animal skeleton present) or fake (containing rags, plant material, mud, or only the odd bone or feathers). The term pseudo-mummy[15] has also been used, but no clear distinction was ever made as to which term is appropriate. Subsequently, two of the animal mummies, SACHM 1718a and 1718b (Iziko Museums of South Africa), were classified as fakes.[16]

---

[7] Each Egyptian god had a specific animal acting as his or her symbol or totem, e.g., cats were sacred to the goddess Bastet; ibises and baboons to the god Thoth; raptors to the solar deity Horus; and dogs and other canids to the god Anubis (Ikram, 2005a: 9; 2005d: 247; 2012: 2).

[8] Ikram / Dodson, 1998: 135; Ikram / Iskander, 2002: III; Ikram, 2005a: 9–15; 2005d: 246–248; 2012: 2–3; 2015: 89–93; 2019: 181–182. An alternative interpretation of these animal mummies is that they were not votive offerings, but animals living and dying within temple enclosures or lands. Such animals were consecrated to the gods, considered sacred, mummified, and interred (Kessler, 1989).

[9] Ikram / Iskander, 2002: III; Ikram, 2005a: 14; 2005d: 248; 2012: 2–3; 2019: 181–182.

[10] The ratio of complete animal mummies to incomplete skeletal remains or non-skeletal remains which were studied as part of the Ancient Egyptian Animal Bio Bank project under radiological examination was 3:1 (McKnight / Atherton-Woolham, 2016: 353). Ancient Egyptian Animal Bio Bank: https://www.mummies.manchester.ac.uk/.

[11] For example, the x-ray of a hawk wrapped in an intricate herringbone pattern typical of the Roman Period revealed that this finely crafted mummy bundle only contains either a twig or a bone fragment (Ikram, 2005b: pl. 1.5, 1.6).

[12] Ikram / Iskander, 2002: III; Ikram, 2005a: 14; 2005d: 248; 2012: 2–3; 2015: 91–93; 2019: 181–182.

[13] For example, Brier's (2001) "dummy mummy". This exploitation is attested to by some of the writings of Ḥor (*Archive of Ḥor*), a priest responsible for the ibis galleries (miles of tunnels containing mummified birds) at Saqqara around 200 BCE, which refer to corrupt practices by the embalming priests. They were accused of putting empty jars into the catacombs or putting in bundles of ibises that only contained a few bones. The offending priests were tried and punished and the rule of "one god in one vessel" instituted (Ray, 1976: 140–143).

[14] This might have occurred when there was a shortage of an animal type, for example raptors, which are difficult to breed in captivity. The percentage of fake raptor mummies is much higher when compared to those of other species (Ikram, 2005a: 14; 2005d: 248; 2012: 3; 2015: 91–92).

[15] McKnight, 2010: 81–87.

[16] Cornelius et al., 2012; 2017.

However, McKnight and Atherton[17] and McKnight et al.[18] have argued that votive mummies should be categorised as true mummies if any animal tissues are present, while the term pseudo-mummies[19] should apply when only non-animal material is present. For the following reasons, they consider the terms "fake" and "falsified" misleading when referring to incomplete or empty animal mummies:

- Mummy bundles containing anything other than a complete animal body should not automatically be classified as "fakes". The term "fake" implies deliberate intent on the part of the embalmer to misrepresent the contents of a votive mummy when several factors might explain this occurrence. For instance, the scarcity of entire specimens of the required animals (e.g., n. 14) or when a more complete specimen was too expensive for a devotee to afford.[20] The term "ersatz" is considered more suitable under these circumstances.
- Regardless of their actual contents, some of these partial and pseudo-mummies could have been equally effective as votive offerings. As noted above, the ancient Egyptians believed in the concept that a part could act for the whole and that any materials that came into contact with sacred animals or were found within a sacred area could be just as efficient votive offerings as true mummies. Mummy bundles created from the remnants of dead or living animals collected within a specific sacred location should display evidence of the same elaborate mummification treatment as seen for whole animals.[21]
- Partial and pseudo-mummies might have been used for different ritual purposes. Mummy bundles comprising less than an entire animal might have served another votive function. Also, there might have been regional differences regarding votive practices in the various animal cemeteries across Egypt—one size did not necessarily fit all.[22]

Essentially, the terms "fake", "false", "ersatz", and "pseudo" mean the same thing, while the various possible interpretations of the contents, or rather the lack of or partial contents of votive animal mummies, range from negative (deception) to positive (economics, choice, belief, diversity, etc.). For this contribution, we will revisit the category assigned to SACHM 1718a and 1718b, by following the guidance of McKnight and Atherton and McKnight et al.

[17] McKnight / Atherton, 2014.

[18] McKnight et al., 2018.

[19] The term "pseudo-mummy" means something quite different when used in connection with human mummies. It is one of the types of counterfeit human mummy and is a wrapping of fabric, strips, and/or shroud(s) containing human remains, sometimes from more than one person (e.g., three forearms), but not a complete human body (Marshall, 2018: 32).

[20] Votive animal mummies appear to have been of different qualities or "grades" depending on how much a pilgrim was willing to spend or on the importance of the request. The more expensive types were presumably the more extravagantly wrapped mummies with cartonnage masks while the cheaper versions were the more modestly presented creatures (Ikram 2005b: 10–11). So, it is entirely possible that a partial or fragmented mummy bundle was merely the low-cost version of votive offering.

[21] An inscription found on a limestone sarcophagus in the Falcon Catacombs, North Saqqara describes how the body of a dead bird found outside the entrance to the Serapeum's southern vault was recovered, mummified, and deposited. Another inscription on a ceramic jar (no provenance) describes the intended contents as the remains of an ibis found dead in a canal bearing the name of Ramesses I. These sources provide evidence that deceased animals were collected from within the temple complex and similarly prepared for votive offering as animals acquired for that specific purpose (McKnight et al., 2018: 54).

[22] For example, fraudulent behaviour by the embalmers may have occurred at some animal cemetery sites, such as at Saqqara (e.g., *Archive of Ḥor*, n. 13), where proof of pilgrim activity is evident. But to apply such regional evidence to animal cemeteries across Egypt is problematic (McKnight / Atherton-Woolham, 2016: 352). Furthermore, the decree "one god in one vessel" from the *Archive of Ḥor* can be interpreted differently as conclusive evidence of fraudulent activity by the embalmers responsible for the mummification of animals intended as votive offerings. The use of the word "vessel" refers to the ceramic pots within which the mummified ibises were placed in the catacombs, rather than to the manufacturing of the mummies themselves. So, "one god in one vessel" could be interpreted as one mummy in one pot, instead of one animal in one votive ibis mummy, thereby excluding the *Archive of Ḥor* as evidence of "fake" mummy production (McKnight et al., 2018: 54).

3. THE RE-EVALUATION OF SACHM 1718A AND 1718B

Comprehensive physical descriptions and CT-scanning results for the seven animal mummies found in South African museums were published by Cornelius et al.[23] We will only highlight a couple of aspects from the two mummies that are important for their re-categorisation as either a pseudo-mummy or true mummy.

Fig. 1a: Photograph of SACHM 1718a shows the shape of an ibis (or raptor). Feathers can be seen protruding from the damaged section at the bottom. © Iziko Museums of South Africa + Photograph Carina Beyer.

Fig. 1b: X-ray image of a cross-section of SACHM 1718a shows that no animal remains are present, but only feathers, mud and linen. © Stellenbosch University; Cornelius et al., 2012: 135, fig. 2A; 2017: 133, fig. 3B.

SACHM 1718a

This mummy is similar in shape to other ibis votive mummies.[24] Although without any identifying decorations, it could also represent a raptor. The mummy is damaged, making it easy to identify the feathers within (fig. 1a). Cornelius et al.[25] originally postulated that the interior consisted of reeds and other inorganic material, but this was later modified to feathers instead of reeds.[26] These feathers are wrapped up and tied together with string and finally covered with a linen shroud. The CT-scanning confirmed the absence of skeletal remains and the presence of feathers with mud and linen added for support (fig. 1b).

[23] Cornelius et al., 2012; 2017.
[24] See Ikram / Iskander, 2002: 94; Ikram, 2005b: pl. 3.1; 2005c: 221, fig. 9.11; 2015: 92; Nicholson, 2005: 51, fig. 3.3.
[25] Cornelius et al., 2012.
[26] Cornelius et al., 2017.

Fig. 2a: A photograph of SACHM 1718b shows that it is in the shape of a raptor with the head, beak, and neck distinguishable from the rest of the body. © Iziko Museums of South Africa + Photograph Carina Beyer.

Fig. 2b: X-ray image of a cross-section of SACHM 1718b showing the leg and talons of a raptor as well as feathers and other non-animal materials. © Stellenbosch University; Cornelius et al., 2017: 133, fig. 4B.

SACHM 1718b

This mummy is shaped like a raptor. The head, beak, and neck are distinguishable from the rest of the body (fig. 2a). There was no external damage that allowed us to deduce what was on the inside, but CT-scanning revealed the presence of a leg and talons, most likely originating from a bird of prey, as well as other non-animal materials as well as feathers (fig. 2b).

4. DISCUSSION

Seven ancient Egyptian votive animal mummies are housed in South African museum collections. Two of these mummies, SACHM 1718a and 1718b were classified as fakes.[27] McKnight and Atherton and McKnight et al. proposed alternative categorisation guidelines: (a) true mummies—the presence of any animal tissues will place the mummy in this category; (b) pseudo-mummies—the absence of any animal tissues will place the mummy in this category. The newly proposed categories prompted us to reconsider the naming of the category for SACHM 1718a and 1718b. The physical and CT data confirmed the presence of animal tissues in both these mummies—feathers and bone. For that reason, SACHM 1718a and 1718b can now be considered true mummies.

All animal mummies present in South African museums are therefore true mummies, we have no fake, false, ersatz or pseudo votive mummies!

[27] Cornelius et al., 2012; 2017.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brier, B., 2001: “Case of the Dummy Mummy”. Archaeology 54/5, 28–29.

Cornelius, I. et al., 2012: “Looking inside Votive Creatures: Computed Tomography (CT) Scanning of Ancient Egyptian Mummified Animals in Iziko Museums of South Africa: A Preliminary Report”. Akroterion 57, 129–148.

Cornelius, I. et al., 2017: “Animal Mummies in South African Collections”. In G. Rosati / M. C. Guidotti (eds.): *Proceedings of the XI International Congress of Egyptologists: Florence Egyptian Museum, Florence, 23–30 August 2015*. Archaeopress Egyptology 19. Oxford. Pp. 131–136.

Ikram, S. 2005a: “Divine Creatures: Animal Mummies”. In S. Ikram (ed.): *Divine Creatures: Animal Mummies in Ancient Egypt*. Cairo/New York. Pp. 1–15.

— 2005b: “Manufacturing Divinity: The Technology of Mummification”. In S. Ikram (ed.): *Divine Creatures: Animal Mummies in Ancient Egypt*. Cairo/New York. Pp. 16–43.

— 2005c. “Protecting Pets and Cleaning Crocodiles: The Animal Mummy Project”. In S. Ikram (ed.): *Divine Creatures: Animal Mummies in Ancient Egypt*. Cairo/New York. Pp. 207–227.

— 2005d: “The Loved Ones: Egyptian Animal Mummies as Cultural and Environmental Indicators”. In H. Buitenhuis et al. (eds.): *Archaeozoology of the Near East VI: Proceedings of the Sixth International Symposium on the Archaeozoology of Southwestern Asia and Adjacent Areas*. Groningen. Pp. 240–248.

— 2012: “Creatures of the Gods: Animal Mummies from Ancient Egypt”. AnthroNotes 33/1, 1–5. https://doi.org/10.5479/10088/22463.

— 2015: *Death and Burial in Ancient Egypt*. Cairo/New York.

— 2019: “Shedding New Light on Old Corpses: Developments in the Field of Animal Mummy Studies”. In S. Porcier / S. Ikram / S. Pasquali (eds.): *Creatures of Earth, Water, and Sky: Essays on Animals in Ancient Egypt and Nubia*. Leiden. Pp. 179–191.

Ikram, S. / Dodson, A., 1998: *The Mummy in Ancient Egypt*. London.

Ikram, S. / Iskander, N., 2002: *Catalogue Général of the Egyptian Museum: Non-human Remains*. Cairo.

Kessler, D., 1989: *Die heiligen Tiere und der König, Teil I: Beiträge zu Organisation, Kult und Theologie der spätzeitlichen Tierfriedhöfe*. ÄAT 16. Wiesbaden.

Marshall, A., 2018. “Pseudo-mummies, Fake Mummies and Bodies Delivered in ‘Kit Form’”. Ancient Egypt 18/5, 32–35.

McKnight, L. M., 2010: *Imaging Applied to Animal Mummification in Ancient Egypt*. BAR International Series 2175. Oxford.

McKnight, L. M. / Atherton, S. D., 2014: “How to ‘Pigeon-Hole’ Your Animal Mummy: A Proposed Categorisation System for Ancient Egyptian Wrapped Animal Remains Based on Radiographic Evaluation”. In H. Gill-Frerking et al. (eds.): *Yearbook of Mummy Studies*. Vol. 2. Munich. Pp. 109–116.

McKnight, L. M. / Atherton-Woolham, S., 2016. “The Evolution of Imaging Ancient Egyptian Animal Mummies at the University of Manchester, 1972–2014”. In C. Price et al. (eds.): *Mummies, Magic and Medicine in Ancient Egypt: Multidisciplinary Essays for Rosalie David*. Manchester. Pp. 345–354.

McKnight, L. M. et al., 2018: “Appearance and Reality in Ancient Egyptian Votive Animal Mummies”. Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections 20, 52–57.

Nicholson, P. T., 2005: “The Sacred Animal Necropolis at North Saqqara: The Cults and Their Catacombs”. In S. Ikram (ed.): *Divine Creatures: Animal Mummies in Ancient Egypt*. Cairo/New York. Pp. 44–71.

Ray, J. D., 1976. *The Archive of Ḥor*. London.

SOUTH AFRICA AND THE ANCIENT WORLD: ARTEFACTS AND THEIR USE IN TEACHING AND OUTREACH

Samantha Masters / Franziska Naether

1. INTRODUCTION AND AIM

South African museums house a treasure trove of ancient artefacts from Mesopotamia and Egypt to Greece, Rome and other areas of the Mediterranean. The country has a rich and often complicated heritage when it comes to the image of antiquity and its reception from the 17th century until today. Therefore, studying, teaching, curating, and researching the ancient world in South Africa always includes taking into consideration aspects of colonialism, slavery, diversity, etc. A few publications have been devoted to this matter, notably Lambert's *The Classics and South African Identities* and the volume *South Africa, Greece, Rome: Classical Confrontations* edited by Grant Parker, with a second volume under way.[1]

Despite there being a substantial number of antiquities in South African museums, the challenge lies in making these objects available to the international scholarly community and to local students and the public alike. As is often the case, museums only display parts of their collections, whereas 60–90% of the items in their inventories are usually stored in magazines. Furthermore, in the South African situation, very few had found their way into the digital realm before 2019.[2]

Both endeavours—the work on the primary sources and on reception—are dear to Sakkie Cornelius, who not only published and presented widely about Western Asian and Egyptian artefacts in South African collections, in particular the Iziko Museums of South Africa in Cape Town, but who also invited scholars such as Jessica Nitschke and Salima Ikram to work on the local material.[3] Apart from his scholarly input in this,[4] we both also benefitted greatly from his approach and expertise: learning and teaching together with Sakkie. Several aspects have impacted us in particular: his interdisciplinary approach in research where he sees the ancient world not as consisting of separate and individual empires, but always in context with their neighbours, by creating a wonderful atmosphere of learning and knowledge transfer as head of the Department of Ancient Studies, and in his engagement with the public in many imaginative ways—in South Africa or from his favourite "outpost" in Leipzig.

In this contribution, we would like to summarise aspects of the current state of the ancient world exhibited in South African museums as well as present-day and future avenues through which these objects may become more visible to the public and to scholars. In the digital age, however, new methodologies enable us to make collections available to the public, for example, through online presentations, databases, images, and 3D models. Additionally, an important aspect for us is to train future generations of academics and curators to (1) work with artefacts at an early stage of their education in order to see especially the textual and the material dimensions in context and (2) to be enabled to exhibit artefacts in an analogue and a digital way.

[1] Lambert, 2011; Parker, 2018.

[2] Already commented on by Cornelius / Venter, 2000.

[3] Du Plessis et al., 2015; Ikram et al., 2015; Cornelius et al., 2017.

[4] Cornelius, 2001; 2005; 2007; Cornelius / Boshoff, 2002; Cornelius et al., 2012; Slabbert / Swanepoel / Cornelius, 2015.

Therefore, the second part of this contribution is devoted to our good practice model of teaching and digitising objects of ancient material cultures.[5]

2. THE ANCIENT WORLD IN SOUTH AFRICA: CURRENT STATE OF DISPLAY

There are currently few antiquities on display in South African state museums, though university collections of antiquities are, on the other hand, mostly more accessible.[6] The cabinets and spaces of state museums, which were once crowded with a variety of cultural artefacts from around the world—showpieces of colonial and apartheid South Africa—have been literally and also ideologically reconfigured. Classical objects are currently particularly sparse in these museums; most of the artefacts are now in storage at the various institutions. At Iziko, the Greek, Roman, and objects of other cultures were packed away from their rooms in the Slave Lodge (previously the South African Cultural History Museum) between 2003 and 2005. However, selected items were loaned to the Stellenbosch University Museum as part of three temporary exhibitions: "Living Antiquity" (2005–2007), "Containing Antiquity" (2007–2011), and "Artefacts from the Ancient World" (2016), coinciding with the IOSOT conference. In all cases, in fact, Sakkie Cornelius was the driving force behind these loan exhibitions.

In contrast to the classical pieces belonging to Iziko, several Egyptian artefacts remain on display at the Slave Lodge in the recently revamped Egypt exhibition, now renamed "Kemet: Life in Ancient Egypt" (discussed below). In other museums, some Egyptian objects are still on display, for example, mummies in the Durban Natural Science Museum, the Albany Museum in Grahamstown, and the Ditsong National Museum of Cultural History of South Africa in Pretoria.[7] Also, in contrast to the classical collections at other state museums, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Rhodes University, and Stellenbosch University, the teaching collections continue to be exhibited; this is largely through their connection with departments, even where those departments have morphed into larger departments or schools. However, in all cases, for both state and university collections, the records and photographs, data and metadata, have existed only in paper form and there was no consistent cataloguing system across collections or individual or collective digital records. After the initial research for the article in Parker (2018) highlighted the need for the collection, preservation, and publication of the data related to the classical collections, a large research project was initiated by Samantha Masters.[8] Her students, Thandi Welman (PhD), Samantha Graham (MA), Meg Moodie, and Matthew Snyman, all contributed to this process, which has also been facilitated by colleagues Jessica Nitschke, as a major contributor, with Franziska Naether and Adrian Ryan in advisory roles. The result is the digitisation of data in the form of the South African Classical Antiquities (SACA) database.[9]

3. CURRENT RESEARCH AND FUTURE POTENTIAL

The South African Classical Antiquities (SACA) project has now made a significant contribution towards the preservation of the records as well as the accessibility of the objects, particularly in the case of the collections, which are in storage. It has also served as a source for the Stanford University Libraries digital museum "South Africa, Greece, Rome", which grew out of the publication by the same name. Ongoing co-operation with Iziko and increasingly, other institutions, fosters the research into the collections, including the future potential of academic teaching and outreach activities such as classes, workshops, and excursions. By this, we hope to attract scholars, students, and the public in South Africa and beyond to engage with the fascinating artefacts.

---

[5] We were invited to write a short blog entry about this for the 3D portal SketchFab in 2018: https://sketchfab.com/blogs/community/digitizing-the-ancient-world-in-cape-town.

[6] A summary of the state of the collections of classical antiquities is to be found in Masters, 2018. See also Masters, 2008.

[7] See also http://egyptiansociety.co.za/mummies-in-sa/ for an overview.

[8] Masters, 2018.

[9] The need for a digital solution is discussed by Masters / Welman, 2015 and presented in detail in Welman, 2020. One of Sakkie's larger research projects also includes a digital catalogue of Ancient Egyptian and Near Eastern artefacts in South African museum collections.

4. LEARNING AND OUTREACH: OUR TEACHING AND TRAINING PROJECT WITH IZIKO MUSEUMS, CAPE TOWN

During the first semester of 2018, we co-taught the class "Studying Ancient Artefacts and Art" within the module "Ancient Cultures: Theory, Method and Sources" for Honours students (fourth year, after a Bachelor of Arts degree).[10] After a thorough introduction into how artefacts and images can be "read" according to several theoretic approaches, Ancient Greek, Roman, and Egyptian artefacts were examined. The aim of this module was to develop visual literacy, to hone skills of interpretation of imagery and artefacts, and to understand curatorship of objects. After this, students were introduced to museum studies. In short presentations and discussions, we focussed on good practice in exhibiting objects in general, featuring the space, object presentation, support by several media, text of different registers/levels, messages and arguments conveyed by an exhibition. Further aspects included museum management and marketing in general, as well as advertising and fundraising in order to attract visitors and patrons.

The final part of the module was practical: a digital representation of artefacts. During an excursion to Iziko's Social History Centre in Cape Town, we were able to take photographs of the stored objects, which are currently not exhibited and largely unpublished. After an introduction to the museum's history, its collections and archiving practices, students were required to take photographs of ancient objects from the collection individually or working in teams of two or three—in these cases covering more than one object. In order to test our hard- and software, we used different types of materials, surfaces, and hardware (smartphone cameras, single reflex cameras, and a motion-tracking camera for a gaming device). After returning to Stellenbosch, the next classes were devoted to improving the photographs and creating a 3D model by the method of photogrammetry with the software Agisoft Photoscan.[11] After some trial and error (and digitising more models, for example, a replica from the study collection of the Department of Ancient Studies), all models were uploaded online to the Portal SketchFab.[12] During a presentation in May 2018, students were required to present their models to the public, including information on the pieces themselves, their provenance (gained from publications and data in Iziko's archives) and significant insights during the 3D modelling process. The marks for this module comprised of written assignments, the 3D model, and the presentation thereof.

We are aware of the fact that this way of digitising artefacts is a very simple method and can serve only as an introduction into digital curation. Students are encouraged to move on from this starting point and were pointed to more advanced 2D and 3D techniques.[13] We emphasised the community-driven approach by using largely open source software with low-key hardware restrictions and encouraged an open access publication. Apart from the 3D models on SketchFab, we hope to make further details on ancient artefacts housed in South Africa available online through the database "South Africa, Greece, Rome: a digital museum", a joint project of Stanford University and Stellenbosch University.[14] After quality control, the students' projects on ancient artefacts are to be entered into the database and displayed.

During another module, students could already make use of their knowledge obtained in this class. The Honours students were required to curate an exhibition of undergraduate students' creative art projects reflecting on ancient symbols and discourses. Jessica Nitschke and Franziska Naether were also able to give input in creating the new immersive presentation of the Egyptian collection in the Slave Lodge of Iziko Museums, "Kemet: Life in Ancient Egypt".[15] Together with colleagues and students of the Friends of Design: Academy of Digital Arts in Cape Town, we helped creating, shaping, and evaluating an augmented-reality presentation of an Egyptian upper class man and the journey of his soul to the Netherworld as known from several literary sources such as the *Book of the Dead* and the *Second Setna Novel*. The visitor could solve several tasks through quizzes and puzzles using a smartphone app after scanning the relevant QR codes in

[10] The overall study program of Stellenbosch University's Department of Ancient Studies is available here: http://www.sun.ac.za/english/faculty/arts/ancient-studies/programmes.

[11] Now Agisoft Metashape; see https://www.agisoft.com.

[12] https://sketchfab.com/ancient.studies.stellenbosch.

[13] See, e.g., https://www.digitalepigraphy.org for further reference including publications.

[14] https://exhibits.stanford.edu/SAGR/about/south-africa-greece-and-rome. Photographs are uploaded in IIIf format (International Image Interoperability Framework) and objects are annotated according to the Getty Vocabulary standard.

[15] https://www.iziko.org.za/exhibitions/kemet-life-ancient-egypt.

the museum, in order to reach a good afterlife for the main character. This gamification approach, making use of 3D models in context of a fabricated digital landscape of spaces depicting, for example, mummification and burial, enhances the visitor's experience in the museum and helps the transmission of knowledge on ancient cultures—always in dialogue with the originals.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Research and teaching in Classics and other fields of Ancient Studies, such as Egyptology and Western Asian Studies, have a long history in South Africa, with several professional organisations, journals, and conferences.[16] Classical Greco-Roman art has its afterlife in classicistic and modern architecture, art, theatre, and literature, and ancient Egyptian cultures and their reception also form parts of African heritage. The use of artefacts—both actual and in their digital versions—in teaching and in outreach projects, brings the materiality of the ancient world to life in an immersive way. This is also one of Sakkie's most important and memorable contributions to his field in South Africa: bringing ancient Western Asian, Egyptian, and North African cultures into vivid and colourful animation, for colleagues, students, and the public alike.[17]

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cornelius, I., 2001: "Van Karnak tot Kakamas: Die Naleef van Ou Egipte in die Suid-Afrikaanse Boukuns". Akroterion 46, 75–91.

— 2005: "Van die Nyl tot Stellenbosch: Antieke Egiptiese Voorwerpe op Stellenbosch". Akroterion 50, 125–136.

— 2007: "A Horse Figurine in Stellenbosch and the Iconography and Function of Palestinian Horse Figurines". ZDPV 123, 28–36.

Cornelius, I. / Venter, P. J., 2000: "(Cyber)space … 'The Final Frontier': The Future of Ancient Studies in the Digital World". JNSL 26/1, 153–169.

Cornelius, I. / Boshoff, A., 2002: "The Egyptian Collection in Iziko Museums of Cape Town, South Africa". In M. Eldamaty / M. Trad (eds.): *Egyptian Museum: Collections Around the World. Studies for the Centennial of the Egyptian Museum*. Vol. 1. Cairo. Pp. 133–142.

Cornelius, I. et al., 2012: "Looking inside Votive Creatures: Computed Tomography (CT) Scanning of Ancient Egyptian Mummified Animals in Iziko Museums of South Africa: A Preliminary Report". Akroterion 57, 129–148.

Cornelius, I. et al., 2017: "Animal Mummies in South African Collections". In G. Rosati / M. C. Guidotti (eds.): *Proceedings of the XI International Congress of Egyptologists: Florence Egyptian Museum, Florence, 23–30 August 2015*. Archaeopress Egyptology 19. Oxford. Pp. 131–136.

Du Plessis, A. et al., 2015: "Three-dimensional Model of an Ancient Egyptian Falcon Mummy Skeleton". Rapid Prototyping Journal 21/4, 368–372.

Ikram, S. et al., 2015: "Fatal Force-Feeding or Gluttonous Gagging? The Death of Kestrel SACHM 2575". JAS 63, 72–77.

Lambert, M., 2011: *The Classics and South African Identities*. Classical Diaspora. London/New York.

Masters, S., 2008: "In the Museum: Containing Antiquity—An Exhibition in the Sasol Art Museum, Stellenbosch". Akroterion 5, 99–109.

— 2018: "Museum Space and Displacement: Collecting Classical Antiquities in South Africa". In G. Parker (ed.): *South Africa, Greece, Rome: Classical Confrontations*. Cambridge. Pp. 283–315.

[16] See, e.g., the Classical Association of South Africa (CASA), http://www.casa-kvsa.org.za and the Southern African Society for Near Eastern Studies (SASNES), http://www.sasnes-savnos.org.za/.

[17] Our research and projects are not possible without the generous help of colleagues and students. We would like to thank the Iziko Museums of South Africa in Cape Town for being a constant cooperation partner, in particular, Esther Esmyol and Leilah Hisham; Jessica Nitschke (Stellenbosch University); Grant Parker (Stanford University); Adrian Ryan (Unisa); the Ancient Cultures Honours students of 2018, and the European Union and Leipzig University for travel and research grants for Franziska Naether. Renate van Dijk-Coombes kindly supported us with a few bibliographical issues.

Masters, S. / Welman, T., 2015: “Disrupting Context: Making a Case for the Digital Curation of Classical Antiquities in South Africa”. Akroterion 60, 83–99.

Parker, G. (ed.), 2018: *South Africa, Greece, Rome: Classical Confrontations*. Cambridge.

Slabbert, R. / Swanepoel, L. C. / Cornelius, I., 2015: “Wat Maak Jou Mummie? ’n Oorsig van die Stand van Mummienavorsing aan die Hand van die 8ste Wêreldkongres”. TGW 55/1, 1–14.

Welman, T., 2020: *“Orphan Artefacts”: Investigating Classical Objects in the Iziko Collection, Cape Town*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Stellenbosch University.

Index of Ancient Sources

Early Jewish Literature

Akkadian and Sumerian Literature

Egyptian and Elamite Literature

Northwest Semitic Inscriptions

Ugaritic Literature

Greek Literature

Rabbinic and Samaritan Literature

Index of Authors

Index of Subjects