

**EGYPTIAN RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS IN JUDAH AND ISRAEL
FROM 900 B.C.E. TO 587 B.C.E.: A STUDY OF SEAL
ICONOGRAPHY**

by

FLORIS NICOLAS VERMEULEN

**Submitted in accordance with the requirements
for the degree of**

DOCTOR OF LITERATURE AND PHILOSOPHY

in the subject of

BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR WS BOSHOFF

FEBRUARY 2010

SUMMARY

When cultures meet, mutual influences and cultural exchanges are unavoidable. Egypt's contact with Syro-Palestine goes back to at least the Chalcolithic Period. Egypt was a major role player in the region throughout the Bronze Age. The discoveries at Ugarit have placed a lot of emphasis on possible Canaanite influences on the religion of ancient Israel.

The purpose of this study is to investigate if cultural exchanges led to Egyptian religious concepts being accepted in Israel and Judah during the period 900-587 B.C.E. (Iron IIB and C). For this reason the iconography on contemporary seals was investigated. Symbols in ancient times, especially amongst illiterate societies, were important instruments in conveying ideas and concepts. The Hebrew Bible abounds with symbolism to illustrate the powers of Yahweh. Egyptian iconography on Hebrew seals, in particular seal amulets, has been regarded by most biblical scholars as mere decorations and the amulets regarded as 'good luck' charms.

Seal amulets were important instruments of magical ritual in ancient Egypt, where there was no distinction between magic and religion. Biblical prohibitions against magic show that in Israel and Judah, it was regarded as a form of idolatry, thus religious rituals.

An important factor to be considered is the influence of Phoenicia on the region during the Period. Close relationships seem to have existed between Phoenicia with the United Kingdom of Israel and later with the northern Kingdom of Israel. An investigation of Phoenician seals from the period revealed that Egyptian religious

iconography was used by all levels of Phoenician society. They inter alia used Egyptian imagery to portray their own gods.

Seals from Israel and Judah during Iron IIB and C indicate that Egyptian religious iconography was also used on seals by all levels of society in those kingdoms. Israel, due to its close proximity to Phoenicia, probably imported these images via Phoenicia. Judah, due to its isolation, probably got those images directly from Egypt. Some of these images may be ascribed to attempts to portray aspects of Yahweh's powers. Others convey definite Egyptian religious messages. Egyptian influences on Israelite religion played a larger role than previously accepted.

Key terms:

Archaeology; Biblical Archaeology; Syro-Palestine; the northern Kingdom of Israel; the southern Kingdom of Judah; Phoenicia; Egypt; Iron Ages IIB and C; culture; cultural exchange; religion; seals; seal amulets; seal iconography.

CONTENTS

Dedication	vi
Acknowledgements	vii
Abbreviations	ix
List of tables	x
List of illustrations	xi
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Defining various concepts	11
1.2.1 Introduction	11
1.2.2 Relevant concepts	12
1.2.2.1 Adaptation	12
1.2.2.2 Appropriation	12
1.2.2.3 Culture	12
1.2.2.4 Cultural exchange	13
1.2.2.5 Interaction	14
1.2.2.6 Transculturation	15
1.3 Statement of the problem	15
1.4 Addressing the problem	21
1.5 Pictorial evidence	23
1.6 Seals: History in miniature	26
1.6.1 The seal of Jezebel	32
1.6.2 The seal of Hezekiah	38
1.7 Conclusion	43

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RECENT LITERATURE	46
2.1 Introduction	46
2.2 Ziony Zevit	48
2.3 William G. Dever	51
2.4 Othmar Keel & Christoph Uehlinger	52
2.5 Amihai Mazar	55
2.6 Izak Cornelius	56
2.7 Conclusion	58
 CHAPTER 3: SYMBOLISM AND RELIGION	 60
3.1 Introduction	60
3.2 Application of symbolism	63
3.3 Symbolism and religion	65
3.4 Conclusion	68
 CHAPTER 4: EGYPT'S CONTACT WITH SYRO-PALESTINE, CONTEMPORARY RELIGIOUS CONCEPTS AND SYMBOLISM	 71
4.1 Introduction	71
4.2 Religion and cult in ancient Egypt during relevant periods	73
4.2.1 Cults, temples and rituals	73
4.2.2 Magic and Egyptian religion	77
4.2.3 Egyptian religious symbolism and its meaning	78
4.2.4 Amulets and scarabs	80
4.3 Ancient Egypt's contact with Syro-Palestine and relevant prevailing religious concepts	83
4.3.1 Introduction	83
4.3.2 Predynastic Egypt	84

4.3.3	The Old Kingdom (ca. 2686-2181 B.C.E.)	87
4.3.4	The First Intermediary Period (ca.2181-2050 B.C.E.)	90
4.3.5	The Middle Kingdom (ca. 2050-1786 B.C.E.)	90
4.3.6	The Second Intermediate Period (ca. 1786-1567 B.C.E.)	91
4.3.7	The New Kingdom (ca.1567-1058 B.C.E.)	93
4.3.8	Third Intermediate Period (ca.1085-664 B.C.E.)	96
4.3.9	The Late Dynastic Period (ca. 664-332 B.C.E.)	100
4.4	Egyptian religion during relevant periods	106
4.4.1	The Eighteenth to Twentieth Dynasties	106
4.4.2	The Twenty-Sixth Dynasty	110
4.5	Conclusion	112

**CHAPTER 5: EGYPTIAN SYMBOLISM ON PHOENICIAN
SEALS DURING IRON IIB AND C**

		114
5.1	Introduction	114
5.2	Egyptian religious symbols on Phoenician seals	117
5.3	Analysis of Phoenician seals with Egyptian motifs	122
5.3.1	Introduction	122
5.3.2	Analysis of some Phoenician epigraphic seals	123
5.3.2.1	The seal of Ger'ashtart	123
5.3.2.2	Seal belonging to Ger'Eshmun, son of Himelek	127
5.3.2.3	Seal belonging to Yaḥziba al	132
5.3.2.4	Seal belonging to Heddai	136
5.3.2.5		139
5.3.3	Phoenician anepigraphic seals	144
5.3.3.1	Phoenician anepigraphic seal (1)	145
5.3.3.2	Phoenician anepigraphic seal (2)	147
5.3.3.3	Phoenician anepigraphic seal (3)	149
5.3.3.4	Phoenician anepigraphic seal (4)	152
5.3.3.5	Phoenician anepigraphic seal (5)	155

5.3.3.6	Phoenician anepigraphic seal (6)	157
5.3.3.7	Phoenician anepigraphic seal (7)	159
5.4	Conclusion	161

**CHAPTER 6: AN ANALYSIS OF SEALS FROM ISRAEL AND
JUDAH DATING TO IRON 11B AND C** 164

6.1	Introduction	164
6.2	Seals with Hebrew inscriptions and Egyptianised iconography	174
6.2.1	The seal of Jezebel revisited	175
6.2.2	The seal of Hezekiah revisited	183
6.2.3	Seal Belonging to Elishama ‘son of the king’	185
6.2.4	Seal belonging to Manasseh son of the king	188
6.2.5	Seal belonging to Ushnâ servant of Ahaz	190
6.2.6	Seal belonging to Abiyau servant of ‘Uzziyau	194
6.2.7	Seal belonging to Asap	199
6.2.8	Seal belonging to <i>ḥmn</i>	202
6.2.8.1	Seal belonging to Azaryaw (son of) hgbh (Haggobeh or Haggebah)	205
6.2.8.2	Seal of Aḥiṣ ûr	207
6.2.9	Seal belonging to Ushna	209
6.2.10	Seal belonging to Elishama ^c (son of) Šarmelek	212
6.2.11	Seal belonging Dalā	213
6.2.12	Seal belonging to Ḥabli	216
6.2.13	Seal belonging to Zaka	218
6.2.14	Seal belonging to Elamar	220
6.2.15	Seal belonging to Peqah	224
6.2.16	Seal belonging to mnr	230
6.2.17	The seal of ŠMRYW	234
6.2.18	Seal belonging to ‘Naveyahu (son of) ‘Azayahu’	237

6.3	Hebrew anepigraphic seals with Egyptian iconography	239
6.3.1	Hebrew anepigraphic seal 1	239
6.3.2	Hebrew anepigraphic seal 2	243
6.3.3	Hebrew anepigraphic seal 3	247
6.3.4	Hebrew anepigraphic seal 4, lmlk	249
6.4	Conclusion	251

**CHAPTER 7: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMEN-
DATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY** 255

7.1	Summary	255
7.1.1	Introduction	255
7.1.2	Chapter 2 to 4	257
7.1.3	Chapter 5	259
7.1.4	Chapter 6	260
7.2	Conclusions	262
7.3	Recommendations for further study	265

ANNEXURES

A	COMPARATIVE CHRONOLOGIES OF ISRAEL/JUDAH AND EGYPT DURING THE IRON AGE IN PALESTINE	267
----------	--	-----

B	LIST OF EGYPTIAN AND PHOENICIAN GODS, RELIGIOUS CONCEPTS AND TERMS	269
----------	---	-----

C	EGYPTIAN CREATION MYTHS	347
----------	--------------------------------	-----

BIBLIOGRAPHY		350
---------------------	--	-----

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my wonderful wife Myra, our children Herman, Surene, Petrus and Wilma and our four grandchildren Wessels, Nicola, Myralene and Wihan who have patiently borne the brunt of my unavailability, impatience and sometimes rudeness. The years lost cannot be retrieved and for that I humbly apologise to you all.

Sed fugit interea, fugit irreparabile
tempus,
singula dum capti circumvectamur
amore.
Hic labor, hinc laudem fortes sperate
coloni.
Nec sum animi dubius, verbis ea vincere
magnum
quam sit, et angustis hunc addere rebus
honorem;
sed me Parnasi deserta per ardua dulcis
raptat amor; iuvat ire iugis, qua nulla
priorum
Castaliam molli devertitur orbita clivo.

Fast flies meanwhile the irreparable hour,
As point to point our charmed round we
trace.
Here lies a labour; hence for glory look,
Brave husbandmen. Nor doubtfully know
How hard it is for words to triumph here,
And shed their lustre on a theme so slight:
But I am caught by ravishing desire
Above the lone Parnassian steep; I love
To walk the heights, from whence no earlier
track
Slopes gently downward to Castalia's spring.

Publius Vergilius Maro
Georgicon, liber III (284-294.)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study would not have been possible without the input of many people and I can merely extend a simple thank you.

My wife and right hand Myra; the sacrifices she made are legion; from continuous mugs of coffee and attending to menial tasks in and around the house to the sacrifice of well deserved vacations and finally her proofreading and assistance with preparation of the final document. Her support and encouragement were invaluable.

Professor WS Boshoff, my supervisor and mentor in field archaeology, who was always available to give advice even under difficult circumstances such as being confronted with large portions of this study at any given moment.

Herman Fourie, my son-in-law, for his continuous assistance in solving computer problems. I also want to thank him and my daughter Surene for the use of some of their Egyptian photos. You saved me a lot of time.

Petrus and Wilma, who regularly took us on short holidays when frustration ran high and thus rekindled the flame of inspiration.

Professor CLVW Scheepers who made me aware of the Unisa-scholarships and arranged for those scholarships to be awarded to me, thus saving me a lot of money.

Coenie it is a privilege to have you and Willem as friends.

All the personnel at Unisa's Department Old Testament and Ancient Near Eastern Studies for their encouragement and friendliness. In particular I want to mention Ms Magdaleen Rootman who is always prepared to help with administrative red tape and Professor P S Vermaak whose advice on Egyptian literature and hieroglyphs saved a

lot of time. The personnel of the Unisa library for their kind assistance and prompt reaction to get books and journal articles from external sources.

A special word of thanks to Professor Benjamin Sass of Tel Aviv University and Ms Karin Rohn of the Staatliche Museum zu Berlin for their contributions in supplying information regarding certain seals.

ABBREVIATIONS

AASOR:	Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research
AJA:	American Journal of Archaeology
AJSL:	The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures
AJS REVIEW:	Association for Jewish Studies Review
BA:	The Biblical Archaeologist
BAR:	Biblical Archaeology Review
BASOR:	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
ca:	circa
EA	El Amarna (refers to the numbering of the Amarna Letters)
EB:	Early Bronze Age
GM:	Göttinger Miszellen
IAA:	Israel Antiquities Authority, Jerusalem.
IEJ:	Israel Exploration Journal
Iron:	Iron Age
JANES:	Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society
JAOS:	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JARCE:	Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt
JEA:	The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology
JBL:	Journal of Biblical Literature
JNES:	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JNSL:	Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages

JSEM:	Journal for Semitics
LB:	Late Bronze Age
MB:	Middle Bronze Age
ZAW:	Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	Comparative chronologies	267
Table 2	Egyptian hieroglyphic alphabet	269

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

<u>FIGURE</u>		<u>PAGE</u>
1	Seal of Jezebel	32
2	Object on head of sphinx	34
3	<i>Ureaus</i> on dead mask of Tutankhamen, Egyptian Museum	34
4	Hieroglyph of Ma'at's feather from Luxor	35
5	Analysis of the name 'Jezebel' on the seal	38
6	Bulla of seal of Hezekiah	38
7	Some religious symbols of today	65
8	Commercial network of the Phoenician expansion in the Mediterranean	115
9	The seal of Ger'ashtart	123
10	Hen protecting her children. Mosaic from the Church of Dominus Fleuit, Mount of Olives, Jerusalem	125
11	Belonging to Ger'Eshmun, son of Himelek	127
12	Section from seal showing lotus standard	128
13	Section of seal showing sun child	129
14	Horus the sun child	129
15	Section of seal showing unidentified deity	129
16	Section of seal showing hieroglyphics	130
17	Sekhmet holding a papyrus sceptre	131
18	Seal of Yahziba a	132
19	Phoenician inscription on seal	134
20	The seal of Heddai	136
21		139
22	Young Egyptian prince with hair lock	141
23	Thoth as a baboon with a scribe sitting in front of him	142
24	Phoenician anepigraphic seal (1)	145

25	Phoenician anepigraphic seal (2)	147
26	Phoenician anepigraphic seal (3)	149
27	God with beard	151
28	Phoenician anepigraphic seal (4)	152
29	Phoenician anepigraphic seal (5)	155
30	Phoenician anepigraphic seal (6)	157
31	Phoenician anepigraphic seal (7)	159
32	Harpocrates seated on a lotus. Ivory from Samaria	167
33	Isis and Nephthys guarding the Djed pillar. Ivory plaque from Samaria	168
34	Seal of Jezebel (2)	175
35	Line drawing of a wooden side panel from Pharaoh Thutmosis IV's throne found in his tomb. He is shown as a winged sphinx trampling Egypt's Asiatic enemies.	178
36	Winged sphinx. Ivory from Samaria	179
37	Sphinx of Hatshepsut at Memphis	181
38	Seal of Hezekiah (2)	183
39	Seal belonging to Elishama 'son of the king'	185
40	Seal belonging to Manasseh son of the king	188
41	Belonging to Ushnâ servant of Ahaz	190
42	Belonging to Abiyau servant of 'Uzziyau	194
43	Plaque referring to the second burial ossuary of King Uzziah	196
44	Isis with Hathor horns and sun disk suckling the child Horus	197
45	Seal belonging to Asap	199
46	Seal belonging to <i>hmn</i>	202
47	Seal belonging to Azaryaw (son of) <i>hg bh</i> (Haggobeh or Haggebah)	205 207
48	Seal of Aḥiṣ ūr	
49	Seal belonging to Ushna	209

50	Belonging to Elishama' (son of) Šarmelek	212
51	Belonging to Dalā	213
52	Seal belonging to Ḥabli	216
53	Seal belonging to Zaka	218
54	Seal belonging to Elamar	220
55	<i>Uraei</i> , including winged <i>uraei</i>	221
56	Winged <i>uraeus</i> protecting Hathor	221
57	Seal of Peqah	224
58	Seal belonging to <i>mnr</i>	230
59	The seal of ŠMRYW	234
60	Seal belonging to 'Naveyahu (son of) 'Azaryahyu'	237
61	Hebrew anepigraphic seal 1	239
62	Hebrew anepigraphic seal 2	243
63	Hebrew anepigraphic seal 3	247
64	Hebrew anepigraphic seal 4, <i>lmlk</i>	249
65	Ammut	270
66	Amun-Ra in his solar boat on his daily journey through the sky	271
67	Ram's headed sphinxes of Amun at Karnak	271
68	Ankh symbol on a wall relief at the Horus temple, Edfu	272
69	Statue of Anubis, Egyptian Museum, Cairo	274
70	Apis	275
71	Atef crown	276
72	Aten on altar piece from Amarna, Egyptian Museum, Cairo	276
73	Atum	276
74	Bronze statue of Bastet	276
75	Bennu bird	279
76	Statue of Bes	280
77	Buto, the snake goddess nursing Tutankhamun	282
78	Canopic jars from the 7 th Century BCE	283
79	Cartouche from a wall relief at the Horus temple, Edfu	284

80	Coffin texts from the coffin of Gua	285
81	Locations of major cult centres of ancient Egypt	286
82	Deshred	287
83	Djed Pillars	287
84	Temple of Horus at Edfu	288
85	Eye of Horus	289
86	Flail and crook on a sarcophagus of Tutankhamun, Egyptian Museum, Cairo	291
87	The earth god Geb	291
88	The god of the Nile, Haapi	292
89	Harprocrates on lotus flower	294
90	Wall painting of Hathor	295
91	Hathor headdress	296
92	Hedjet being worn by Osiris	296
93	Statue of Horus at Edfu	297
94	Golden statuette of Isis	299
95	Ka hieroglyph <i>k3</i>	300
96	The beetle god Khepera on a boat on the waters of Nun	301
97	Ramses II and Ptah wearing the blue crown	301
98	Statuette of Khonsu	302
99	Hieroglyph of Knot of Isis (Tyet)	303
100	Double temple at Kom Ombo	304
101	Lotus flower and bud at Egyptian Museum Cairo	304
102	Ma'at	305
103	Min in a fragment of a relief from Koptos	309
104	Statue of Mut and Amun	309
105	Neb (<i>nb, nbt, nr</i>) basket	310
106	Statuette of Neith	312
107	Dead mask of Tutankhamun showing nemes. Egyptian Museum, Cairo	313
108	Isis and Nephthys	313

109	Nut being raised by her father Shu	314
110	Statue of Osiris	315
111	Papyrus. Egyptian Museum, Cairo	317
112	Papyrus flowers	317
113	Temple of Isis at Philae	318
114	Pshent	326
115	Bronze figure of Ptah	327
116	Ra in his sun barque	328
117	Egyptian symbol Sa (<i>s3</i>)	329
118	Heart scarab	330
119	The sedge hieroglyph (<i>sw</i>)	331
120	Statue of Sekhmet holding papyrus sceptre	332
121	Unique depiction of sema: Horus and Seth tie the lotus and Papyrus plants together in a symbolic unification of Upper and Lower Egypt	333
122	More traditional depiction of sema, where Horus and Seth tie the lotus and papyrus round the sema	333
123	Serapeum	334
124	Horus and Seth	335
125	Shabti of Tutankhamun in Egyptian Museum, Cairo	336
126	Shen amulet	336
127	Wall relief of Sobek	337
128	Amulet of Tauert	338
129	The goddess Tefnut	339
130	A limestone tablet with Thoth as an ibis	340
131	Thoth with human body and Ibis head	340
132	Egyptian ibis	340
133	<i>Uraeus</i> . Inner sarcophagus of Tutankhamun, Egyptian Museum, Cairo	341
134	Sekhmet with the was-sceptre Winged scarab from the tomb of Tutankhamun, Egyptian	342

135	Museum, Cairo	343
136	Winged sun disk	344
137	Winged sun disk with <i>uraei</i>	345

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

‘Recent finds from Tel Rehov shed a bright light on domestic religious observance in ancient Israel and, like so many archaeological finds, raise unanswered questions, reminding us how little we really know’ (Mazar & Panitz-Cohen 2008:40).

‘---the dominant view among scholars has been that the Israelite populace as a whole was not monotheistic or even monolatrous until shortly before or even after the fall of the Judahite kingdom in 587 B.C.E.’ (Tigay 1987:157).

‘What have you gained by your alliances with Egypt and Assyria? ---For you have as many gods as there are cities and towns in Judah’ (Je 2:18-28).¹

It is an indisputable fact that throughout history an intermingling of societies has led to a cross pollination of cultures or cultural exchanges, including religion. From the Chalcolithic Period to Iron II, mostly for geographical reasons, there was continuous contact between Egypt and the land of Canaan.

¹ All references in this study to the ‘Bible’ connotes the Hebrew Bible. Quotations in English are from *The Holy Bible: New International Version*. When references are made to occurrences in ‘the Bible’, it is not intended to place any historical value on such biblical information. The various writers of the books of the Bible pertaining to proto-Israelite or Israelite ‘history’ probably either related actual ‘history’ or created ‘history’ or simply took ‘historical’ legends from other nations such as the Sumerians, Babylonians or Persians and made them part of their own Israelite ‘history’. Unless corroborated by other evidence such as external texts or archaeological finds, it is impossible and unscholarly to accept the historicity of biblical ‘facts’. On the other hand, these biblical writers would not have written these ‘facts’ without a purpose. It could have been written to serve as a background for the Israelite religious development or to give the Israelites a ‘sense of belonging’ as a nation during the Babylonian exile and afterwards. One should therefore see such ‘historical’ facts in the context of the message that these writers intended to convey. A reference to the creation and worship by the Israelites of a golden calf and the subsequent consequences may for instance be a dire warning of the consequences of accepting foreign gods, such as Canaanite or Egyptian gods. I will endeavour to place ‘historical’ facts from the Bible in context.

According to Cornelius (2008:105): ‘The north was influenced by Aramaic and Phoenician ideas and Judah more by Egypt’ during Iron IIB and C (Cf. Colon 1995:97). Phoenician iconography on seals during this period also reflects a strong Egyptian influence.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the acceptance and use by the Israelites and Judahites of Egyptian religious symbols during Iron IIB and C. The use of such symbols could be the result of direct cultural exchanges with Egypt or indirectly via other nations such as the Canaanites and later the Phoenicians. During the twentieth century, especially since the early 1930’s, a lot of emphasis was placed on the Canaanite influences on the religion of the Israelites from Iron Age I to the Persian Period. This was mainly the result of the discoveries at Ugarit, which were enhanced by other discoveries.

‘...The one-sided orientation toward the world of hearing (and reading) has led to the situation that the religious history of Palestine (ca. 1800-500) has been reconstructed predominantly on the basis of two lexical corpora: the texts of Ugarit (especially the mythology) and the Bible, and this situation continues. Recently discovered Israelite and Judahite inscriptions are screened through the symbol system deduced from Ugaritic texts and then interpreted on this basis’ (Keel & Uehlinger 1998:395).

The Yahweh/Asherah inscriptions at Khirbet el-Qom and Kuntillet ‘Ajrud, for example, are amongst the further materials relating to Canaanite connections. Scholarly debates surrounding the issues whether Yahweh had been considered to have a consort or not, led to intensive research and voluminous papers.

The reasoning behind these debates cannot be questioned. One finds in the Bible that one of the names of the God of Israel was El. This happened to such an extent that scholars classify the various writers of the Bible books as *inter alia* the E-writers (for El or Elohim) (or E-school or E-source) and J-writers (for Yahweh) (or school or source). Other writers are known as the D-school (for Deuteronomistic) and the P-school (for Priestly) (Dever 2001:102). The fact that El had initially been the main god of the Canaanites was too much of a coincidence to be ignored. In Canaanite religion El had a consort called Asherah and the discovery that Yahweh probably also had Asherah as a consort, led to a lot of excitement in the circles of biblical scholarship. In the Bible the Israelites are condemned (especially by various prophets) for religious practices involving Canaanite gods such as Baal, Asherah and Astarte. The fact that the Israelites were living next to or even amongst the Canaanites seems to indicate that the biblical writers did not write hypothetically but were probably pointing out actual factual occurrences.

Scholars also took note of Mesopotamian religious concepts that emerged in the religion and religious history of the Israelites. Major parts of the Bible was written during and after the Babylonian exile and consequently it is to be expected that some of the Mesopotamian historical folklore, culture as well as religious practice and beliefs were incorporated in the writing of an Israelite 'history' (Cf. Zevit 2001:10).

There are some modern scholars, especially the 'Copenhagen School', who dates the writing of the Bible to a period much later than the exile. The 'Copenhagen School' includes scholars such as Thomas Thompson, Niels Peter Lemche as well as Philip Davies (Cf. Brettler 2003:1-6). Lemche (1993:182) is of the opinion that the major

part of the Bible is of a Hellenistic nature, but he concedes that it may include recollections of earlier historical events. In a contradictory statement Lemche (1993:163) states that Jewish—Rabbinic collection of writings dates no earlier than the 2nd Century CE. It does not fall within the scope of this study to get involved in the controversy caused by this point of view and by what Dever (2001:24) calls ‘a very small minority of biblical scholars.’ I merely want to point to the Dead Sea Scrolls to state that the 2nd Century CE seems a ludicrous date. Another author, Philip Davies, admits that the Pentateuch probably existed before the time of Nehemiah and Ezra (Davies 1998:101). Dever (2001:23-52) analyses writings by some of these scholars whom he calls nihilists and contradicts them on archaeological data. I do not want to take the matter any further and it should suffice to state that for purposes of this study it does not really matter when exactly the various sections of the Bible were written.

The ‘biblical history’ includes the alleged Mesopotamian origins of the Israelites in that it alleges that Abraham hailed from the Sumerian city of Ur. It later led to Isaac and Jacob taking wives from that region and that Jacob’s wife, Rachel, took her father’s household gods with her. These ‘historical’ references to Abraham were probably intended to relate folklore about the influx of Semitic nomads from Mesopotamia into Canaan and ought not to be accepted at face value. If such nomads indeed hailed from Mesopotamia, ‘historical’ similarities between the Bible (especially the first eleven chapters of Genesis) and early Mesopotamian writings such as the Gilgamesh and some Mesopotamian influence on the religion of the Israelites are therefore to be expected and should not be regarded as coincidental.

Some scholars² have noted Egyptian influences in the development of the religion of Israel, but due to assumed, though unfounded perceptions, lack of artifacts³ and structures⁴ that can be directly related to Egyptian religious practices, most of the comments are superficial and incidental.

‘However, associations between Egyptian texts and the Old and New Testament have been traced, and it is probable that some biblical elements were derived from Egyptian beliefs’ (David 1999:128). This author states that biblical texts may have been influenced by some of the Egyptian traditions and beliefs especially books like Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Psalms and Job. The closest parallels can be drawn between Egyptian texts during the New Kingdom (a time when Egypt’s direct influence in Palestine seemed to have been at its highest) and Proverbs. The similarity between the religious ideas expressed in Psalm 104 in the Bible and the hymn to the Aten, composed during the Amarna-period, is also remarkable, both describing the divine role as creative and sustaining.

² Zevit 2001:267-349, 606. Zevit (2001:606) claims that although the Egyptian symbolism found on seals in Palestine may have a religious connotation, there are no indications that they had a cultic status in Israel. They do not appear as votives or in combination with other cultic artifacts (2001:343-344) (Cf. Mazar 1992:92, 174, 187-188 and 273). Albright (1968:67) rejects any religious meaning in respect of the majority of the numerous seals with Israelite or Judahite names and Egyptian iconography. Nakhai (2001:91) argues that as early as MB IIA there was a transmission of religious ideas amongst Egypt, Canaan and Syria. Mazar (1992:506-507) acknowledges the importance of engraved Hebrew seals from the eighth and seventh centuries as a source of our knowledge of art and iconography in Israel and Judah. Although the themes were inspired by Phoenician art, and thus indirectly from Egyptian traditions, these foreign symbols were, according to Mazar, only employed as decoration without any religious significance.

³ In this regard we think of the more obvious instruments used for worship, such as altars, shrines, figurines, cultic stands and other votive implements. The purpose of this study is *inter alia* to show that there indeed is no lack of artifacts that are related to Egyptian religious customs (Cf. Keel & Uehlinger 1998:49-108).

⁴ Again this is not a correct assumption. The two temples at Beth-Shean as well as a temple to Amun in Gaza clearly indicate Egyptian cults survived in Palestine until well into the Iron Age (Keel & Uehlinger 1998:110).

Recent valuable contributions in this field were made by BU Schipper (1999 and 2001). He investigates the cultural exchanges between Egypt and Israel with emphasis on the political, commercial and personal contacts from the time of King Solomon to the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians. The corresponding period in Egypt dates from the 21st to the 26th Dynasties. As sources for his study, he concentrates on the Bible, Egyptian texts and archaeological data. The 21st Dynasty of Libyan pharaohs concentrated on internal policies to rebuild Egypt after its decline during the reign of the later Ramesside pharaohs. During the 22nd Dynasty Sheshonq I invaded Palestine and later his son Osorkon I (see footnote 10 on p19 as well as Chapter 4 hereinafter for a more detailed discussion).

‘After seeking advice, the king made two golden calves. He said to the people, “It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.”---Jeroboam built shrines on high places and appointed priests from all sorts of people, ---and offered sacrifices on the altar’ (1 Ki 12:28-32).

Although the Bible does not clarify the origin, the resemblance with the golden calf of Sinai is obvious and again this may be a mere reference to deviations from the Yahweh-religion and not based on a particular historical event. One should be careful however not to discard all biblical events as fictitious, hypothetical or metaphorical. Some may actually be historical or contain a kernel of truth. Without other corroborating evidence it will however be difficult to establish the historical value.

‘Then Aaron took the gold, melted it down, and molded and tooled it into the shape of a calf. The people exclaimed, “O Israel, these are the gods who brought you out of Egypt!”’ (Ex 32:3-4).

In Hosea 13:2 the prophet cautions against calf idols. According to the biblical story of the Exodus from Egypt, it occurred after generations of the descendants of Jacob (including Aaron) had been established in Egypt and had been exposed to Egyptian deities. God had to explain to Moses who he was when he accosted him at the burning bush, not stating that He was the only God, but the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob (Ex. 2:6). The Israelite sojourn in Egypt has not been confirmed by other sources and cannot be accepted as historically correct. It could, in my opinion, be seen metaphorically of the power of Yahweh. He has the power to free his people from bondage and to overcome other foreign gods.⁵

In Egypt several bovine gods were worshiped. In Memphis it was Apis, at Heliopolis we find Mnevi and at Armant the Buchis bull (Dunant, Zivie-Coche & Lorton 2005:21). The goddess Hathor's familiar animal was the cow (Moorey 2003:37). She was often depicted as a cow and was the major goddess of Egypt, the Lady of heaven, earth and the underworld, worshipped throughout Egypt and indeed beyond as far as Syria (Geddes and Grosset 1997:374).

In later periods, Isis also became associated with a cow, to such an extent that it is

⁵ The length of the alleged sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt, if the biblical version of such sojourn is accepted, has been a matter of contention amongst biblical scholars. The Bible itself gives contradictory periods. Genesis 15:13 predicts a period of 400 years and in Genesis 15:16 it is stated that in the fourth generation, Abraham's seed will return to Canaan. In Exodus 12:40-41 it is related that the children of Israel dwelt in Egypt for 430 years. A detailed discussion appears in Osman (2002:250-254). The exact number of years of the sojourn is however, irrelevant for purposes of this study. Suffice to state that according to the Bible it was for an extended period, more than enough for the descendants of Jacob to accept Egyptian culture and religious practises as their own. The God who Moses encountered at the burning bush was, despite his Hebrew heritage, unfamiliar to him and to the Israelites. The continuous rebellion of the Israelites against Moses and this 'new' God in the period to follow, is, therefore, totally comprehensible.

sometimes extremely difficult to distinguish representations of the two goddesses, unless there is an accompanying hieroglyphic inscription.

Calf and bull idols are not unknown to other religions, including the religion of the Canaanites and it would, therefore, not be possible to categorically claim that the calves of Aaron and Jeroboam were indeed directly based on Egyptian models.⁶

If the Bible is literally read in a historical context, then it is conceivable that the Sinai calf was created in the context of the Egyptian religion and that Jeroboam followed the tradition. If one considers that the Bible was probably written at a stage when the Israelites had for centuries been exposed to Canaanite and later Phoenician deities, it could be argued that the calves were of Canaanite origin and that these gods were stronger than the Egyptian gods, thus assuring the safe escape of the Israelites from Egypt.

It should also be kept in mind that according to the Biblical story, Jacob (Israel) and his sons migrated from Canaan to Egypt probably during the same period when the Ugaritic texts were written. Again one should not accept this biblical description at face value. Jacob and his sons probably refer to early Semitic nomads (or Hebrews?) that wandered into Egypt and made contact with the Egyptians. Some of these nomads probably settled in Egypt. This story could perhaps even be linked to the Hyksos invasion of Egypt and their subsequent expulsion. Most of the sons of Jacob, according to Genesis 34:16-29, apparently married Canaanite women

⁶ At Ashkelon in the context of MB IIC (thus Canaanite) a small silver-plated bronze calf, inside a cylinder shaped ceramic shrine, was found (Stager 1991:25-29). This was before the Philistine settlement and clearly a Canaanite idol. In LB IIA context a statuette of a man standing on a bull and a bronze bull were discovered in front of the Orthostat temple. Yadin (1972:95) is of the opinion that these figures represent the storm god Haddad or Baal. Bonfil (1997:101) came to the same conclusion.

This may refer to original nomads entering Palestine from Mesopotamia who married Canaanite women. It is probable that these women would have retained their Canaanite religious practices and passing them on to their children.

During the migration to Egypt, Canaanite religion could have been well established amongst the 'descendants of Jacob' or those nomads that entered Egypt from Canaan. Joseph, on the other hand, according to Genesis 41:50, married the daughter of an Egyptian priest from On (Heliopolis) thus establishing an Egyptian religious influence. It is conceivable this 'episode' refer to marriages between Hebrews and Egyptians in general.

After the alleged exodus from Egypt and back in Canaan the Israelites were continuously in direct contact with the Canaanites and their culture. Whether the sojourn in Egypt is true or partially true (some elements of the later Israelite nation could have hailed from Egypt), the fact is that the Israelites were indeed established as a nation in Canaan.

It has indeed been argued that the material cultures of the early Israelites and the Canaanites are so similar that it is nearly impossible to distinguish between the two.⁷ Thus, there are also convincing scholarly views that the core of the group which ultimately formed the Israelites, came from the low country of Canaan itself and moved into the higher areas.⁸ This could have been the result of the simultaneous

⁷ Fritz (1994:145 states): 'While Philistine culture exhibits an independent character, due to its Aegean origin, Israelite and Canaanite settlements are indistinguishable in material culture'. According to Dever 2003:121: 'Thus our early Israelites look ceramically just like Canaanites.' (Cf. Smith 2002:19-20).

⁸ Dever (2003:191-221) discusses in detail, at the hand of archaeological evidence, the probable scenario of the Proto-Israelites and the development of at least the core of the later Israelites from Canaanite origins.

settlement of the Sea Peoples in the coastal areas of Palestine resulting into a forced migration of some of the Canaanites. The more logical explanation seems to be that the demise of the strong Canaanite cities necessitated this step. Some scholars argue that if the core of the Israelites, while establishing themselves in the hill country of Canaan, did not hail from Egypt, at least a portion of them did in fact come from Egypt.

Should either the biblical story about the lengthy stay of the whole Israelite nation in Egypt or the theory that at least some of the Israelites migrated from Egypt be true, then it is also inconceivable that cultural exchanges between the Egyptians and the Israelites, including matters pertaining to the religion of the early Israelites would have been avoided.

In view of the official religious development in Israel and Judah portrayed in the Bible and the obvious Canaanite role models which seem to have been particularly influential (including the continuous condemnation of the worship of Canaanite gods such as Baal, Asherah and Astarte), the Canaanite connection in respect of the calves appear to be the most probable scenario.

Since the Bible was for the most part apparently written during Iron II C and the Persian Period, contemporary religious practices in the region would have been prevailing in the minds of the writers. The failure to condemn Egyptian idols creates the impression that during these periods they were not, even in respect of unofficial religious practices, regarded as posing a threat to the official religion.

Should a possible Egyptian connection with the religious practices in the region, especially during Iron IIB and C and more in particular with regard to unofficial

religious practices, therefore be ignored? For several reasons that will be discussed in detail during the course of this study, I want to argue to the contrary. It seems that the matter is not a simple one to be referred to in passing whilst attention is drawn to the adoption of Canaanite religious practises or idols by the Israelites. It may even be possible that Canaanite religion, in its initial and even later stages were influenced by the Egyptians. The Ugaritic texts date from a very late period (Late Bronze Age) in the history of the Canaanites, whilst Egyptian influence in the region (see paragraph 1.3 hereinafter) dates back to at least the Chalcolithic.

1.2 DEFINING VARIOUS CONCEPTS

1.2.1 Introduction

Whether one is dealing with individuals, groups of people, nations or various nations, contact between individuals or nations is unavoidable, unless one is a fictional Robinson Crusoe secluded on a deserted island. These meetings may be deliberate or by accident and various motifs may be involved. It could be mere social intercourse, for trade purposes, to gain something desired by force or various other reasons. Whatever the reason, certain relationships develop as a result of these meetings and these relationships are harmonised and regulated by a system of rules, whether by custom, tacit or expressed agreement or issued by authorities, the latter being either democratically appointed or enthroned by force. Certain interest, preferences and activities may join people together and social norms and moral standards are required to regulate these relationships. It is therefore important for purposes of this study,

which is aimed at the results of certain relationships, to briefly discuss some concepts pertaining to such relationships.

1.2.3 Relevant concepts

1.2.2.1 Adaptation

It consists of patterns of behavior which enable a culture to cope with its surroundings in order to establish protocols of both freedom and constraint (Bennett 2002:38).

1.2.2.2 Appropriation

Initially in all the languages of Western Europe *appropriation* referred to taking possession of material goods. In the course of the past three decades ‘appropriation’ has become a major tool for cultural analysis. Appropriation is the way in which the intended receivers — or even the not intended receivers — make things, ideas symbols their own, though their transformation and adaptation to the receivers’ standards, whatever these may be, and how far they may be removed from the intentions of the sender (Korsten 1999: 94-95).

1.2.2.3 Culture

Culture (from the Latin *cultura* stemming from *colere*, meaning ‘to cultivate’) is a term that has different meanings. For purposes of this study I accept the anthropological definition of culture by Kroeber & Kluckhohn (1963:357):

‘Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiment of artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached

values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of actions, on the other as conditioning elements of further action.'

Fagan & De Course (2005:115) states that in terms of archaeology, culture is perceived to have three components:

- a. An individual's own version of his or her culture; diversified individual behaviour which make up the totality of a culture;
- b. Those elements of a culture shared by every individual, such as religious practises. Language is an essential element as well as the cultural system;
- c. The cultural system is the system of behaviour in which every individual participates. The individual not only shares the system with others, but also actively participates in it.

1.2.2.4 Cultural exchange

People as human groups do not live in isolation but are in continuous contact with other peoples and their cultures, resulting in the exchange of cultural elements between the groups. These exchanges may be friendly (diffusion) or the result of forceful expressions (acculturation):

(a) Diffusion

Diffusion is the spread of customs or practises from one culture to another where cultural elements from one society are borrowed by members of another society. These exchanges normally occur in a friendly way without any hostilities involved. Peoples, however, tend to accept their own innovations to their culture more readily than borrowed innovations (Haviland 1996:422-423).

According to Zevit (2001:689) the cultural elements that may be borrowed ‘can be broken into distinct categories:

1. things learned by observing: technology, tools, agricultural methods, architecture, building techniques, dress, military techniques, cuisine and the like;
2. things learned by listening: language, myths, laws, poetry, music;
3. things learned by empathetic understanding after close understanding: values, priorities, attitudes towards age, wisdom, honor, shame, work, piety, and the like.’

The concept ‘borrow’ in this context implies that the cultural items are imported for personal or communal use and incorporated into an integrated cultural system (Zevit 2001:689).

(b) Acculturation.

This comprises major cultural changes that people (by one or both groups) are forced to make as a consequence of intensive, firsthand contact between societies (Haviland 1996:425). Acculturation normally occurs ‘when a number of items in category 1 (note: see ‘diffusion’ above) and language from category 2 is ...adopted’ (Zevit 2001:689).

Archaeology (and therefore also this study) works primarily with the first category, whether such cultural exchange was the result of diffusion or acculturation.

1.2.2.5 Interaction

It is a mutual or reciprocal action or effect. ‘It is a joint activity, whose performance replicates part of the coherent and “corporate” structures of the societies and cultures to which the individual participants belong’ (Rapport & Overing 2000:198).

1.2.2.6 Transculturation

Transculturation is a term to describe the phenomenon of merging and converging cultures. It describes the different phases of the process of transition from one culture to another (Millington 2005:219)

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In isolation, the biblical stories such as those of the golden calves should not be regarded as evidence to endeavour proving either Egyptian or Canaanite influences in Israelite religious practices. Archaeological finds such as the Ugaritic texts go a long way in establishing some Canaanite foundation. These are complemented by figurines, shrines, altars, mourning and burial practices and various other aspects of corresponding material cultures. To categorise the religious practises of the common Israelite as mostly Canaanite and to accept that Canaanite religion developed in isolation would be tantamount to ignoring the history of the region and the fact that it was situated at the crossroads between the big powers of the Bronze and Iron Ages. Egyptians, Hittites, Assyrians, Babylonians and lesser nations most assuredly left their marks on the region.

Historically, at least in the earliest periods, mostly for geographical reasons, the Egyptians of all the major nations appeared to have had the most contact with the region, either as trade partners, as invaders or just passing through the territory. These contacts would undoubtedly have led to Egyptian concepts being brought into the culture, including the religion of the inhabitants. The Fifteenth Dynasty in Egypt was

established by Canaanites (the Hyksos) who ruled Lower Egypt for approximately 100 years.⁹

Scholars have not neglected the contact and cultural exchanges between Egypt and the Palestine region. The question is, however, has enough emphasis been placed on the importance of such exchanges?

Archaeological evidence points to a strong possibility of contact between the Levant and Egypt during prehistoric times, at least as far back as the Chalcolithic period (Mazar 1992:78-790).

A lack of essential raw materials, indispensable for a developing society, forced the Egyptians from the beginning of their civilisation to reach beyond their borders. Egyptian pottery and flint blades from the late Pre-Dynastic Period, discovered in Palestine, are clear indicators of relationships between the two regions during EB I.

The emergence of the pharaonic civilisation dates back to ca. 3100 B.C.E. with the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt. EB II pottery from Palestine and Syria discovered in Egyptian tombs from the First Dynasty shows a continuation of such relations (Mazar 1992:105-107). Archaeological sites in northern Sinai and southern Palestine indicate a predominant Egyptian presence in the form of settlements during

⁹The name 'Hyksos' is a Hellenized name derived from the Egyptian which means 'ruler from foreign lands' (Keel and Uehlinger 1998:17). Flavius Josephus believed that the Hyksos were 'the children of Israel' and quoted Manetho who stated that 'the foreigners were called Hyksos, which signifies "shepherd kings"'. Queen Hatshepsut, in an inscription referred to the Hyksos as a people not knowing Ra. Their chief deity was Sutekh, a weather and war god and his appearance in Egypt points to a definite foreign influence. The Hyksos kings endeavoured to compel the Egyptians to recognise Sutekh in their pantheon. During the New Kingdom he was identified with Seth (Geddes & Grosset 1997:213). This is an important example of the cross pollination in ancient times of cultures and religions. As a result, the continuous contact between Egypt and the land of Canaan from the Chalcolithic Period to Iron II would have led to the assimilation in one culture of some of the cultural (including religious) concepts and practises of the other.

this period. It is not clear if these settlements were the result of mere trade relationships or active Egyptian colonization. Although some of them may have been military outposts, there is no evidence of Egyptian military incursions into the area. These settlements lasted for about 100 years and came to an end in EB II. Military invasions from Egypt into the Levant apparently started during the Fifth Dynasty and seem to have gained momentum during the Sixth Dynasty when the third pharaoh of that Dynasty, Pepi I conducted military raids against cities in Palestine.

According to archaeological evidence it is clear that by the time of the Twelfth Dynasty there was extensive contact between Egypt and Palestine (Marcus 1991: 19-44). It seems that these contacts established bilateral relations between the regions, mainly as a result of trade requirements (Ilan 1998:308). Trade relations imply recognition of and adherence to the customs of trading partners in modern as well as in ancient times. These customs may influence the future conduct and beliefs of the new user.

During the Eighteenth Dynasty, mainly as a result of the expansive policies of Thutmosis III, Egypt seemed to have played a dominant role in Canaan which resulted in a number of cultural exchanges between the regions which probably still prevailed during Iron II (Cornelius 2004:2; David 1999:127-128). This does not signify that no cultural exchanges occurred at earlier stages during the Bronze Age.

As a result of the continuous contact between Egypt and the region over millennia, cultural exchanges would have been unavoidable. Egyptian influences on the culture and religion of the Canaanites and finally their descendants, the Phoenicians, would play a significant role in the development of the religions and cultures of the region,

in particular if one keeps in mind the role the Phoenicians, as seafarers and merchants, would play throughout the Mediterranean region during the Iron Age. It follows that even in those areas where the Egyptians never had any direct influence, their earlier influence on Phoenician culture would indirectly be passed on to other nations within the Phoenicians' field of influence.

During the latter part of the Eighteenth Dynasty, especially in the Amarna period, Egypt's direct political influence in the region started its decline, never to regain a lasting foothold again. During this period (Amarna) most of the letters from the vassal kings in Canaan beg for assistance, which requests were apparently ignored by Akhenaten.

Akhenaten seems to have isolated himself from state affairs, living contently with his family at Akhetaten (Amarna) and practising his new monotheistic religion. This may be the reason why Horemheb and the early Nineteenth Dynasty Pharaohs did everything possible to remove every trace of the existence of Akhenaten and his reign.

Horemheb, being a military commander, as well as the first Pharaoh of the Nineteenth Dynasty, Ramses I (one of Horemheb's co-commanders in the Egyptian army) and his descendants Sethos I, Ramses II and Merneptah did attempt to regain some of Egypt's former glory, but the attack of the Sea Peoples during the reign of both Merneptah and Ramses III (although these two pharaohs claimed convincing victories) seemed to have been the final turning point in the history of Egyptian empire building.

This does not imply cultural exchanges in the form of trade relations and personal contacts (maybe even politically) did not continue. It is clear, however, both from Egyptian texts and the Bible, that, temporary military raids excluded, there was no further political control by Egypt over the region.¹⁰

Thus, throughout the further history of Egypt until the 26th Dynasty some relations between that country and the Palestine region, especially Judah in the south, continued. There were further trade relations and the occasional military incursions by the Egyptians. According to the texts, the last attempt of Egypt to interfere in Palestinian affairs was during the 25th Dynasty when the pharaoh, Shebiktu, sent his brother Tirhakah against the Assyrian forces of Sennacherib which had invaded Judah of King Hezekiah, resulting in a defeat for Egypt. It is extremely doubtful that this

¹⁰ In 2 Kings 23:29 and 2 Chronicles 35:20-24 the Bible relates the final confrontation between Egypt and Judah: 'While Josiah was king, Pharaoh Neco, king of Egypt, went to the Euphrates River to help the king of Assyria. King Josiah marched out with his army to fight him, but King Neco killed him when they met at Megiddo'. The Pharaoh involved, according to the Hebrew Bible is Neco. In Egyptian sources he is Nekau II (610-595 B.C.E.), the son of Psamtek I, the founder of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty. This was, however, as stated in the Bible and Egyptian texts, clearly not an Egyptian invasion of Palestine, but an attempt by the Egyptians to assist the Assyrians against the Babylonians. King Josiah of Judah apparently regarded the Egyptians themselves as a threat to his country, for the Babylonians (after Isaiah's warning to King Hezekiah in 2 Kings 20: 16-19), at the cost of his own life, attacked the Egyptians at Megiddo. Although, as a result of the defeat of Judah, Egypt laid claim to Assyria's Palestinian possessions, her forces were soundly defeated by the Babylonians at Carchemish in 605 B.C.E. and all of Syria-Palestine fell to Babylon.

Military excursions by the Egyptians into the region continued throughout most of the New Kingdom e.g. Ahmosis, the founder of the Eighteenth Dynasty (also the first king of the New Kingdom), who drove the Hyksos back and expanded the Egyptian Empire to Palestine; the main expansionist being Thutmose III; Sethos I who reasserted Egyptian authority in Syro-Palestine; his son Rameses II who, as a result of the treaty with the Hittites after the battle of Kadesh, maintained the Palestine holdings; Merneptah, famous for the Israel Stele; Rameses III, who repulsed the Sea Peoples. During the Third Intermediate Period Sheshonq I of the 22nd Dynasty [Shishak in the Hebrew Bible (1 Ki 14:25 and 2 Chr 12:2)], invaded Judah during the fifth year of King Rehoboam and subdued Judah as well as Israel. Sheshonq's purpose was limited and definite: to gain political and commercial security by subduing his immediate neighbours. He made no attempt to revive the empire of Thutmose III, Sethos I or Rameses II (Schipper 1999:119-132). Sheshonq's son, Osorkon I attempted to emulate his father's successes in Palestine, but his forces under the Ethiopian general Zerah were soundly defeated by the forces of King Asa of Judah c. 897 B.C.E. (2 Chr 14:9-15) (Schipper 1999:133-139). This defeat spelt the end of Egypt's expansionist policy in Asia.

move was intended to assist the Judahites. It should rather be seen as a precautionary measure to protect Egypt's own borders against the Assyrian threat.¹¹

Thus, despite the decline of Egyptian political authority in the region, it seems that throughout the Iron Age there was continuous contact between Egypt and Syro-Palestine, sometimes as enemies, sometimes as allies and sometimes as trade partners. The stelae of Sheshonq I, Osorkon I and Osorkon II at Byblos (Marshall et al 1996:298) indicate that relations with Phoenicia were maintained. According to the Bible, Israel's last king, Hoshea, turned to Egypt for help against the Assyrians (2 Ki 17:4). If this is historically correct, it is a clear indicator of an existing alliance. This request was, however, in vain and no help came to save Samaria from destruction.

Thus there is ample evidence, both textually and archaeologically of continuous contact between Syro-Palestine and Egypt during the Bronze and Iron Ages. These contacts as such, however, do not serve as proof that there were cultural exchanges between Egypt and Syro-Palestine, in particular Israel and Judah. On the other hand we know that during the Eighteenth Dynasty, especially during the time of Thutmosis III, several Canaanite/Phoenician deities such as Baal, Astarte and Anath were imported into the Egyptian pantheon.

The fact that the conquerors were prepared to accept gods of the conquered and made them their own, makes it highly likely that the conquered would sometimes accept the

¹¹ During the reign of Osorkon II, it seems an alliance with Israel existed as witnessed by the discovery in the palace of Omri and Ahab at Samaria of an alabaster vase of Osorkon II of a type which the pharaohs included in diplomatic gifts. It further suggests that relations existed between the House of Omri with Tyre as well as with Egypt.

gods of their conquerors on the principle that since the conquerors have won the war, their gods must be stronger than those of the conquered.

The problem that this study intends to address is as follows: Did the continuous contact and unavoidable cultural exchanges between Egypt and Palestine result in the acceptance by Israel and Judah of Egyptian religious concepts during the period 900-587 B.C.E.(hereinafter referred to as Iron IIB and C) and if so, to what extent?

1.4 ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM

It seems that the root of the problems relating to establishing an Israelite/Judahite religious history during Iron I and II lies in an overemphasis of the limited textual material. These limited sources leave a lot of unanswered questions regarding the development and form of religious beliefs and practises in the region during the relevant periods. This situation has, unfortunately, prevailed during the last century or two, without due regard to another important factor, the one of human frailty. Texts are after all written by human beings with their own perspectives and subjective approaches. As has been proven countless times in courts of law, an eyewitness report is not necessarily factually correct in all aspects.

Human beings, as result of various factors, such as culture and religion, perceive things in different ways and their rendition of facts are not always trustworthy. Unanswered questions sometimes only signify that the wrong questions have been asked or that the wrong or even inadequate avenues of investigation to find solutions have been followed.

Relying purely on the Bible and Egyptian texts in order to deduce the Egyptian

presence and sphere of influence, especially in the religious context, in the region and thus disregarding other, sometimes more convincing, evidence, would amount to an unscientific approach interspersed with dangerous pitfalls.¹² Textual evidence, such as ritual texts, e.g. the Pyramid texts and the Egyptian Book of the Dead, has contributed tremendously to our understanding of Egyptian religion and religious concepts. Ritual texts were also found in abundance in Syria and Mesopotamia. At Ugarit literally hundreds of such texts were found from which a clear picture of the religion of Ugarit emerges, but such extra-biblical sources are not available in the context of Palestine (Keel & Uehlinger 1998:10). Lack of such textual evidence (especially in the Egyptian context) with regard to the religion of the Israelites/Judahites should, however, not be a deterrent in pursuing other avenues.

Our current knowledge of Egyptian religion, on the other hand, will go a long way in understanding the role it played in Palestine if it can be proved that its symbolism, or some of it, was adopted in the region during a period under investigation. In more modern context, if one should find a wall painting of Christ on the cross in a residence, it may be deduced with fair certainty that the residents, or some of them, are followers of the Christian religion. Sometimes religious icons are collected for other reasons without betraying the religious beliefs of the collector e.g. Buddha-

¹² Keel and Uehlinger (1998:11) are outspoken in their statement that anyone who prefers to work exclusively with texts, such as those from Ugarit, Ebla, Mari or Meskene/Emar (without doubting the relevance of the texts), should get little or no hearing. Dever (2002:3-29) delivers a passionate plea for a commitment to history (in particular archaeology) and not theology in pursuing ancient Israelite history. On the other hand, Hoerth (1998:20), cautions, not without substantiation, that archaeological proof of historical facts does not necessarily imply proof of historical theology e.g. should it be archaeologically proven that king Solomon existed, it would not prove his relationship with God or that he received wisdom from God. It does not follow, however, that should a shrine to Baal be discovered in a house or palace, that the deduction should not be made that Baal was worshipped by the residents or at least some of them, but the nature and contents of the religion would probably remain a mystery without textual input.

statuettes for decorative purposes or altar pieces for its artistic or monetary and investment value. The researcher should, therefore, be extremely careful in evaluating such evidence not to be seduced into irrelevancy and erroneous conclusions. A lack of textual evidence, it is submitted, leaves only one alternative avenue of pursuit and that is the field of archaeology. The structural remains of temples or burial tombs, in particular relating to burial practises, artefacts, such as figurines, altars shrines and sacrificial remains enhance our knowledge and serve as more concrete proof of the nature of religious practices. There are, however, at this stage of our knowledge, not an overwhelming number of such structures and obvious religious artifacts in Palestine with Egyptian connotations which will enable us to reach irrefutable conclusions.

Is this then the end of the road in an endeavour to find a solution to the problem and should one wait till more evidence is available? I submit not, for there is one avenue to be pursued, which for the most part has been ignored or rejected by scholars and that is pictorial evidence and especially seal iconography.

1.5 PICTORIAL EVIDENCE

‘But when attempting to reconstruct the religious system (*belief*), we also reject emphatically the view that it is adequate to limit oneself to working with texts. Religious concepts are expressed not only in texts but can be given a pictorial form on items found in the material culture as well’ (Keel & Uehlinger 1998:10; Cf. Keel 1992:XI-XIV; Becking 2006:56-57).

Keel & Uehlinger pursues this line of thought and states on pp. 304-305:

‘Unlike speech which is a human construct, graphic images share at least some similarity with the reality they seek to portray. ...because the picture is closer to the reality it depicts, it usually shows this reality as somewhat complex. Unlike language, it is not limited to listing a few isolated aspects of what it shows. The power in the image is in its ability to portray several aspects simultaneously...’ (Cf. Keel 1992:268).

Anyone who wants to reconstruct the religious symbol system of Canaan and Israel accurately, and is not content with mere supposition, cannot avoid pictures. The way a particular world appeared can be seen again and again by looking at its pictures and some important aspects are detected only in such depictions.

‘It is a crass anachronism to continue to assert, as do some scholars who put no stock in images, that pictures are meaningless decoration. The idea that pictures and their production were important only if they measured up to some primarily or even exclusively formal and aesthetic standard is a viewpoint that is no older than the nineteenth century and is typical of the so-called “enlightened”, western civilisation. Only modern western-thinking hold such a view. The majority of ancient Near Eastern and ancient Egyptian sign systems are better described as “a valiant attempt of magic and religion at co-existence” (Goldwasser/Laor 1991/50)’ (sic) (Keel & Uehlinger 1998:394-395).

This does not imply that pictures should be used as evidence to the exclusion of other and more in particular textual evidence. Pictures may relate to events that may be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to identify if some textual evidence are not available. The Lachish reliefs of Sennacherib at Nineveh and other similar Assyrian

reliefs reveal a lot of information about Assyrian methods of warfare and treatment of prisoners, but without accompanying Assyrian textual evidence and to a lesser the biblical text, it would be extremely difficult to place the particular event. The same applies to the reliefs at Medinet Habu on the funerary temple of Rameses III, depicting the attacks of the Sea Peoples.

Textual evidence is in many cases not a prerequisite to explain ideas depicted in pictures, including religious concepts. A simple picture of a person in a worshipping position with only the sun in front of him clearly conveys the idea that the sun is regarded as a god. This picture may be complemented with various other objects to present a more complex scenario. An altar and various votive accessories may signify the way in which the worship was conducted, dress may denote the person as a priest, an animal on the altar signifies blood sacrifice and in the end it may be possible to wean comprehensive data from a single picture about the religion and religious practises of the artist or the person(s) he wants to depict.

Monumental structures containing wall paintings, reliefs or some other form of pictorial religious presentation for the relevant period, in contrast to Mesopotamia and Egypt, are totally absent in Palestine, especially in the areas inhabited by the Israelites/Judahites. Religious pictorial concepts are not, however, confined to the more obvious forms of artistic expression such as reliefs and paintings.

In order to pursue a possible solution for the stated problem, I propose that the lack of these larger forms of presentation not be regarded as an impediment. Evidence of religious concepts abound in Palestine albeit not on a monumental scale: 'Other artifacts also provide information about Israelite religion: scarabs, scaraboids, seals

and bullae' (Zevit 2001:343). In Palestine thousands of seals have been discovered, by 1992; according to Keel & Uehlinger (1998:10) more than 8500 stamp seals from the earliest times to the end of the Iron Age have been catalogued. Unfortunately the seals from the region available for study dating to Iron IIB and C are extremely limited, but I submit this limitation should not be regarded as a prohibition for a thorough study. I further propose that the study of seals and in particular the iconography of seals may provide a viable solution to the problem which forms the subject of this study and this is the avenue that I will pursue. The Israelites/Judahites, during the relevant period, did not use cylinder seals (papyrus and not clay tablets were used as writing material) and this study is therefore confined to stamp seals and more in particular scarabs and scaraboids. Although the vast majority of scarabs discovered in Palestine are seal-amulets, there are also personal and official seals and bullae involved, which depict Egyptian motifs and which may be indicators of the adoption of Egyptian religious concepts on the highest levels in Israel and Judah, including kings and other royal personalities.¹³

1.6 SEALS: HISTORY IN MINIATURE

The discovery of several scarabs in Palestine from Iron II, which contain Egyptian motifs, whether during archaeological excavations or on the market, bear witness to cultural exchanges (whether the result of politics, commerce or personal contact) over a long period in the region. These cultural exchanges appear to be either direct (with

¹³ An amulet has been defined as 'a personal charm, often in the shape of an animal or animal-god, intended to procure the wearer certain benefits or to ward off evil spirits that might bring disease or bad luck. These could be simple clay objects or beautifully made bejewelled ornaments' (Geddes & Grosset 1997:319). It could be regarded as personal magical instruments, but amulets were also used as personal seals.

Egypt itself), especially in the southern parts, or indirect in the northern part (via Phoenician sources).

Seals are arguably amongst the smallest works of art recovered from ancient times, but their size does not lessen their importance as sources of information. Despite their small dimensions, they have contributed to our understanding of ancient cultures and they were known to most of the ancient cultures of the Near East. They were made of lasting materials and were owned not only by the nobility but also by the general public.

‘...as artificial traces of past civilisations, they provide evidence, both directly through their distribution and indirectly through their imagery, for the ancient patterns of conflict and influence between near and distant centres’ (Pittman 1995:1589).

At this stage it is important to raise a few cautionary notes. The main problem with seals is that if they are not always found in context e.g. strata at excavations or dated tombs, they may sometimes be difficult to be dated accurately.¹⁴ A large number of seals come to the attention of scholars via the antiquities market and not as a result of excavations, thus the possibility of forgeries should be kept in mind. Seals are normally dated by epigraphy: ‘...they are classified as Israelite, Judahite, Phoenician, etc. by onomastic as well as epigraphic criteria. These criteria are often less precise than one would wish... (thus) many seals can only be broadly dated to the eighth-seventh centuries, or labelled “Ammonite-Aramaic”, “Phoenician-Aramaic” etc.’ (Sass 1995:143).

¹⁴ Collon (1990b:24), justifiably, cautions that one should be careful in the use of seals for dating. Due to their small size they may roll from the top to the bottom down animal burrows or natural holes and appear, during excavations in older strata. Seals were also heirlooms and some of those discovered in tombs may, as a result of inheritance date from a period older than the context in which it was found.

Although one should always keep this uncertainty in mind, it should, in the context of this study where a whole period is covered, not be too much of a stumbling block. 'It is not always easy to determine if seals are Israelite, Moabite, or Phoenician etc.' (Zevit 2001: 345). The interpretation of the meaning of the symbolism may also cause problems (Zevit 2001:344-345). This is particularly true regarding anepigraphic seals if it is not possible to identify them contextually.

The materials used may be of some assistance, but similar materials could have been used during a particular period by Judahites, Israelites, Phoenicians, Philistines or other nations inhabiting the region. Stamp seals with Egyptian iconography have, for instance, been found all over Philistia (Golden 2004:236). If anepigraphic seals are found in context, it is therefore also important to have knowledge of the peoples inhabiting those particular areas at particular points in time.

To illustrate this danger I want to use one example, the city of Dor on the Mediterranean coast. According to Egyptian sources, in particular *The Report of Wenamun* (Goedicke 1975:149), it was inhabited by the Sikil around 1100 B.C.E. According to the Bible it was an important Israelite harbour during the reign of King David and King Solomon and the time of the divided monarchy. King Solomon even appointed his son-in-law, Ben-Abinadab, as district governor of Dor (1 Ki 4:11). During the Assyrian rule it became an Assyrian province. Despite these references to inter alia Sikil, Israelite and Assyrian presence, archaeology has revealed that the material culture of Dor throughout those periods remained predominantly Canaanite/Phoenician. Thus, an anepigraphic seal discovered at Dor in the context of the alleged

Israelite rule does not necessarily signify Israelite origin. It is far more probable that its owner was a Phoenician.

On the other hand, despite the cautionary note above, most seals were only used for a short time and were then discarded. Large quantities were found in rubbish pits, especially in strata dating back to the third millennium. This short life of seals and the fact that they were usually discarded during the same period in which they were used may be of assistance to archaeologists in establishing their age.

The following question may be asked: 'How can seals be of assistance in the investigation of the religious history of the Israelites?'

'Not only because of their sheer number, but also because of their importance, seal amulets far outshine all other kinds of image-bearing artifacts in value, being even more valuable than inscriptional evidence. Since they are preserved in relatively comparable quantities for all periods, they can virtually serve as the standard by which religious history is documented, particularly because they are more or less public artifacts and can thus serve as a sensitive seismograph to detect subtle shifts in religious history' (Keel & Uehlinger 1998:10).

To this should be added that seals and in particular their inscriptions and/or iconography (except for official purposes) have always been of a very personal and subjective nature. For the most part they are custom made and designed to the owner's personal preferences. Iconography on seals could thus be very subjective reflecting a person's personal culture, level of education or belief system (Pittman 1995:1600).

Seals developed from amulets which were used as magical tokens to secure the property of the owner. The shape (scarabs and scaraboids) of the vast majority of seals discovered in Palestine is a definite indication of Egyptian influence from the earliest times. The scarab beetle indigenous to Egypt, was venerated as a representation of Ra. The beetle pushing the ball of dung (as a sun disk) personified Ra's journey through the skies. It was also a symbol of resurrection. The birth of a new generation of beetles from the ball of dung, also personified Ra's resurrection every day after his nightly journey through the underworld (Pittman 1995:1601) (

There are two Hebrew words for seal and both are Egyptian loanwords. Korpel (2006:353) regards this as an illustration of the Egyptian superiority in jewellery. I suggest that it rather indicates that seals were first introduced amongst the Hebrews by the Egyptians. Whether it is a leftover of the alleged stay of the Israelites in Egypt or the result of cultural exchange between the Hebrews and the Egyptians during the relevant periods is not really important, either way the Egyptian origin is the key factor. The two words are *ḥotam* (feminine: *ḥotemet*) and *ṭaba'at* (Korpel 2006:353). Korpel also discusses the debate that *ḥotam* was either the word used for cylinder seals or for seals in general, while *ṭaba'at* was only used for stamp seals. For purposes of this study, this debate is not relevant.

The fact that the iconography on many of these scarabs found in Syro-Palestine (Phoenician, Israelite/Judahite, Philistine, Ammonite etcetera) in the context of Iron IIB and C depicts Egyptian religious motifs and symbols enhances the impression of cultural exchange and poses questions regarding the impact of Egyptian religious

symbolism on local religion. Were these symbols depicted on the seals purely for decorative purposes?¹⁵

There is, unfortunately, another problem in the study of these seals. Scholars like Keel, Sass, Uehlinger, Avigad and others have started extensive research in order to catalogue these seals and have made remarkable progress in this regard, but it is not always an easy task.

‘There are serious difficulties in dealing with the Syro-Palestinian and related Egyptian stamp seals of the Iron Age. No systematic classification of stamp forms and designs at this time in Egypt or the Levant is available, due largely to a paucity of firmly dated seals from well-published controlled excavations and to an overabundance of unprovenanced seals in collections’ (Marcus 1996:39).

Despite the difficulties raised by Marcus, which in the interim (since 1996) have only been fractionally solved by *corpi* published by scholars such as Othmar Keel, Nahman Avigad, Benjamin Sass and others, I submit that enough material, is available to attempt a study like the current one.

As an introduction the significance of these symbols may be illustrated by the example of two seals, the seal of Jezebel, arguably the queen of Israel and the seal of King Hezekiah, probably king of Judah. Thus one seal probably originated in the northern Kingdom of Israel and the other in the southern Kingdom of Judah.

¹⁵ Consequently the dozens of inscribed and uninscribed Israelite seals and several of the Samaria ivories, which offer strong evidence for the prevalence of solar symbolism in Northern Israel during the eighth century B.C.E., attest to the existence of a general religious ‘ambience’ that clearly conditioned the religion and beliefs of many people among the Israelite elite. Many of the seal owners involved bear Yahwistic personal names and it is simply unthinkable that the state religion of Northern Kingdom of Israel, i.e. ‘official’ Yahwism, should not have been affected by this ‘ambience’ and emphasis on solar symbolism (Cf. Uehlinger 2005:158-160).

This example may illustrate that whoever is interested in the reconstruction of the religious history of first-millennium Syria and Palestine should certainly not disregard the potential of iconographic sources in general, and of Northwest Semitic inscribed seals in particular (Uehlinger 1993:277-279).

1.6.1 The seal of Jezebel



Figure 1: Seal of Jezebel
(Korpel 2008a:33)

According to the biblical story (1 Ki 16:31), Jezebel was a Phoenician princess who imported Phoenician religious concepts into Israel. The seal under discussion is the subject of intensive debates, whether this Jezebel is indeed the biblical wife of Ahab.

For the current example the debate is ignored. At this stage it is only intended to illustrate Egyptian symbolism in Phoenician/Israelite seal iconography during Iron IIB and C. According to Avigad & Sass (1997:275) this seal dates to the late ninth-eighth-century. Of all the thousands of seals with Hebrew inscriptions this is one of only thirty five that belonged to women. Of these ‘thousands’ of seals only a small number of the published seals are epigraphic, the main reason apparently being that epigraphic seals first made their appearance in Israel and Judah during the eighth century B.C.E.

a. Description

It is a scaraboid (the common shape during the divided monarchy), made of gray quartz and with dimensions of 30 x 22 x 10 mm, it is larger than normal seals (average approximately 17 x 12 x 9 mm) of the period. It is perforated with a single-line border and with a solid field divider separating the top register from the bottom one.

In the top register is a recumbent, winged sphinx on ground line holding an ankh between his forelegs. The sphinx has, what appears to be a Hathor headdress on its head and protruding from it is an object that looks a bit like a *uraeus*. A study of the various *uraei* on the headdresses of Egyptian pharaohs, however, reveals that this preliminary impression is not correct. A *uraeus* is depicting a cobra with its front part upright in an attacking position ready to bite or spit, and it does not vary much when it is used in different ways.



Figure 2: Object on head of sphinx



Figure 3: *Ureaus* on dead mask of

Tutankhamen Egyptian Museum.

Cairo (Photo: F N Vermeulen)

The shape of an ureaus on an Egyptian royal crown resembles an S, with two curves along the body of the snake (see also the *uraei* portrayed in the bottom register of this particular seal, where this shape is clearly defined).

The object on the relevant sphinx has no S-shape, but is nearly straight resembling a phallic symbol. Another possibility is that the object is the feather of Ma'at as portrayed in Egyptian hieroglyphs. The fact that the object has a straight shape with the top section leaning a bit towards the front and the fact that it appears to protrude from a headband gives the impression that it is indeed the Ma'at feather that is portrayed.



Figure 4: Hieroglyph of Ma'at's feather from Luxor
(Pirard 2007)

Another more probable explanation is that the object represents the double crown of Egypt, albeit in very stylized form. If one compares the object with the double crowns on other seals (especially Phoenician seals) (see Figures 18, 21 and 28 on pages 132, 139 and 152 respectively), it seems highly probable.¹⁶

Immediately below the field divider is a winged disk stretching over the width of the seal and it represents Ra.

¹⁶ Some scholars such as Korpel (2008:36) suggest that the sphinx is wearing an Hathor/Isis crown thus denoting a royal woman, without explanation or clarification. If they identify the feather as a cow horn of Hathor, I cannot agree. I submit that the double crown is portrayed, which clearly signifies a royal seal. In Egyptian symbolism only the king wears the double crown. I contend that this interpretation should go a long way in solving the riddle. The double crown represents a royal presence, thus the seal belonged to a royal personality, and I finally contend that it favours a queen, most probably Jezebel of Israel with her Phoenician origins. See also the discussion in paragraph 6.2.1 below.

Central to the bottom register is a bird in the form of an Egyptian falcon with a flail at its back. On either side of the falcon is a *uraeus*, an ornamental serpent, most commonly seen on the headdresses of Egyptian royalty and gods, and representing the goddess Wadjet. At the bottom is a lotus flower.

b. Preliminary discussion of symbols

It is significant that this particular seal has as its first symbol in the top register a winged sphinx (more popular in Phoenicia than in Egypt) with a human head and body of a lioness. It is also significant that the winged sphinx is the only identifiable Phoenician symbol on the seal, thus denoting a Phoenician connotation. The fact that the sphinx wears a double crown signifies royalty.

In front of the sphinx is the ankh, the Egyptian symbol of life or eternal life. The ankh, therefore, could have signified an afterlife totally removed from the Israelite idea of life after death (the concept of Sheol) or just represented 'life' itself.¹⁷

The winged sun disk, stretching over the width of the seal as a guardian, represents Ra, the oldest and one of the greatest of the Egyptian gods; he created the elements to sustain life on earth. On his daily journey through the sky he gives light and life. At night he dies and travels through the realm of the death (Duat), to be resurrected again in the morning, thus, as already stated, he also represents resurrection, a concept that at that time did not exist in the official religion of the Israelites. It is possible that the concept of resurrection was imported from Egypt into the unofficial religious

¹⁷ The Egyptian religious symbols and concepts (including the gods) and their meaning to the Egyptians are discussed as fully as possible in context in the text of this study. More information is contained in ANNEXURE B.

principles of various Israelites by using such symbols as the winged sun disk, the lotus flower and Harpocrates (the Sun Child).

The falcon also represents royalty as the falcon has since earliest times represented Horus, who was the protector of kings and during the Hellenic and Roman periods became the main god of Egypt. What is interesting is the flail behind the falcon. The fertility god Min was normally depicted with a flail in his right hand behind his back denoting the harvest and thus fertility (Kemp 1991:85). The falcon Horus with a flail at its back is, however, not an uncommon depiction, thus denoting authority as on this seal.

The *uraei* flanking the falcon and representing Wadjet had been a symbol of kingship in Lower Egypt since the earliest history of Egypt. The lotus flower at the bottom was the symbol for Upper Egypt and also represented regeneration, a typical female symbol, usually connected to royal women.

These conclusions and those in sub subparagraph 1.6.2 are only preliminary. Final conclusions will be discussed in Chapter 6, where Hebrew seals are dealt with.

c. Inscription

Interspersed between the symbols are the letters YZBL. It should be noted that all inscriptions on Hebrew seals discussed in this study was written in the Ancient Hebrew script (between 3200 and 2500 years ago) (Cf. Brenner 2005:8). For purposes of this study, these inscriptions are rendered in Classical Hebrew, adopted after the Babylonian exile.

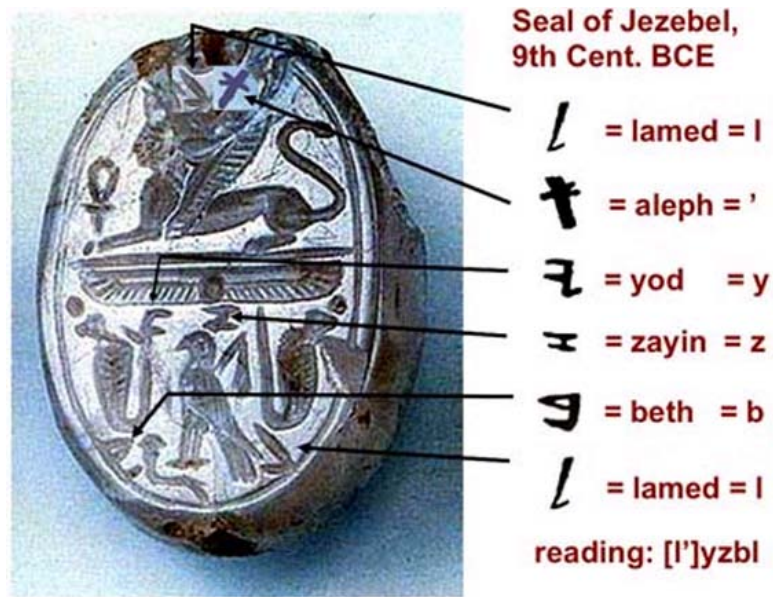


Figure 5: Analysis of the name 'Jezebel' on the seal.
 (Korpel 2006:369 and 2007)

1.6.2 The seal of Hezekiah



Figure 6: Bulla of seal of Hezekiah
 (Cross 1999:42)

a. Introduction

During the latter part of the twentieth century a bulla of the seal of a Hebrew king came to light for the first time: The seal of 'Ahaz, king of Judah from about 734 to 715 B.C.E., had been pressed into a small bit of clay that once sealed a papyrus roll. It is not clear when it was discovered and where it was found. The seal, an iconic seal, inscribed in Old Hebrew letters, reads: $\text{ /• • /• } , l'hz y/hwtm mlk /yhdh$ 'Belonging to 'Ahaz (son of) Yehotam, King of Judah' (Cross 1999:42).

A few years later two bullae of a seal belonging to 'Ahaz's son, the Judahite king, Hezekiah, came to light. They differ from the seal of Ahaz in that they contain both an inscription and iconography. The first one is severely damaged and nearly illegible. Without the discovery of the second one it would have been nearly impossible to decipher the first one, but now the two complement each other.

b. Description

It depicts a two-winged scarab pushing a ball of dung or possibly the sun with the inscription: $\text{ /• • • } , lhzyhw 'hdz mlk/ yhdh$, 'belonging to Hezekiah, (son of) 'Ahaz, king of Judah'.

Without the original seal it is not possible to give a better description of the seal. The seal impression in the clay indicates that it probably was a scaraboid, but without further detail, the shape cannot be established with certainty. It is, therefore, not possible to see any further detail such as the type of border, whether it had more than one register or whether it contained more symbols.

c. Discussion

Regarding the identifiable symbol on this seal, Cross (1999:42-43) argues as follows: 'The dung beetle pushes the circular ball of dung, which symbolizes the movement of the rising sun. The meaning of the symbol is clear from Malachi 4:2: "For you who revere my Name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings." In other words, the winged sun disk is a symbol of the deity. Two- and four-winged sun disks also appear on Hezekiah's *l'melekh* handles, so the two-winged scarab with the sun disk is wholly appropriate on Hezekiah's seal. There appears to have been a tendency to solarize Yahweh in Judah in the eighth century and later.'

This argument of Cross may be true, but the question remains: Where did the idea of using the scarab as a symbol of the sun or the sun god originate? The answer is very simple: Egypt. The seal associated above all with Egypt is the scarab, for it is a tri-dimensional reproduction of the dung beetle, *scarabaeus sacer*, with its natural habitat in the low desert (Pittman 1995:1601). The vast majority of seals found in Palestine are scarabs and scaraboids. During Iron Age II scaraboids were mainly used in the areas administered by Israel and Judah. The form of the seal used is the first indicator of Egyptian influence in Palestine.

Four-winged scarab beetles are well documented on Hebrew and West Semitic seals and seal impressions (Avigad & Sass 1997: 59, 163, 475, 775, 832, 837, 987). On the other hand, according to Tushingham (1992:61-65), it seems that the four-winged scarabs were preferred by the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the two-winged scarab (as in the seal under discussion) was preferred by the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Laughlin (2000:147) argues that the royal house of Judah probably used both the two-

winged and the four-winged scarabs as insignia on jar handles, because seals or bullae of four-winged scarabs and four-winged sun disks have been found at sites which belonged to ancient Judah. He fails however to distinguish between the scarabs and the sun disks and treats them as if they were the same. I agree with Fox (2000:221) that at this stage the evidence is too scant to come to any definite conclusions in this regard.

The Egyptians observed every form of life and developed a special feeling for the scarab. It was linked to Ra, the sun god and became the symbol of resurrection. The female rolls a ball of dung and then lays her eggs in it, which she then rolls in front of her. To the Egyptians this was the same process as that of Ra rolling the sun's disk across the sky (Galling 1941:145). Furthermore the scarab's young emerged from this ball, in a manner similar to the god's own creation of life.

Thus the scarab was regarded as very sacred. Millions of scarab seals and amulets were produced by the Egyptians and other nations under its influence, especially the peoples of the Levant. All were inscribed with a charm or marked with the cartouche of a king or a god. It was pierced to wear around the neck or was mounted on a ring (Geddes & Grosset 1997:438). The scarab, whether in its tri-dimensional form as a seal, seal-amulet, statuette or as a statue as well as when it was depicted pictorially, was therefore an important Egyptian religious symbol.¹⁸

¹⁸ During the Middle Kingdom in Egypt and later, thus also during the reign of King Hezekiah in Judah, Ra was associated with Amun and became known as Amun-Ra, who was associated with the sun which became an object of worship.

Hezekiah (c. 715-687) was the 13th king of independent Judah and the son of King Ahaz and Abijah. The Bible refers to him in 2 Kings 18-20, Isaiah 36-39, and 2 Chronicles 29-32.

In the Bible he is portrayed as a great and good king and did what was pleasing in the eyes of the Lord. He introduced religious reforms and reinstated religious traditions. He set himself to abolish idolatry from his kingdom and among other things which he did for this end, he knocked down the asherah poles and destroyed the bronze serpent, Nehustan, which Moses had made.

Why then would this pious king and religious reformer use a sacred Egyptian religious symbol on his royal seal? If the argument of Cross is correct that Yahweh was solarised, it follows that by using a symbol of Ra, Yahweh was identified with Ra, or (the least negative scenario) that a symbol of Ra was used to identify Yahweh or an aspect of Yahweh. It still signifies that there were Egyptian influences even on the highest level in the religion of Judah. Even the great Judahite prophet and adviser to Hezekiah, the first Isaiah, the propagator of Yahweh as the First and Last, the universal God (Mills 1998:64), seemed to have at least tolerated Hezekiah's appropriation of an Egyptian religious symbol. Should Cross be wrong in his contention that it was Yahweh depicted as the sun god, the plot thickens, for the only logical conclusion would then be that the scarab on the seal represents Ra himself creating a scenario irreconcilable with the biblical portrayal of King Hezekiah. The winged scarab was clearly the official symbol of the royal household as can be seen on the seal of Manasseh discussed hereinafter (see paragraph 6.2.4 on pp.188-190).

1.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the continuous contact over millennia between Egypt and the Canaanite region, sometimes as friendly commercial partners and sometimes as a result of invasion and warfare was emphasised. It is argued that it is highly improbable that such continuous contact would not result in cultural exchanges, including the adoption of religious concepts.

The question was posed whether the continuous contact and unavoidable cultural exchanges between Egypt and Palestine resulted in the acceptance by Israel and Judah of Egyptian religious concepts during Iron IIB and C and if so, to what extent?

In order to answer this question, the Bible, supposedly reflecting the religion of Israel and Judah would not be of much assistance, the main reason being that the Bible was apparently mostly written after this period and tends to reflect an idealised pure Yahwistic religion. Furthermore the Bible tends to concentrate on the religion of the Canaanites, with whom the Israelites had the closest contact, as posing a threat to the Israelite religion.

One way of enhancing our knowledge about cultural exchanges between Egypt, on the one hand and Israel and Judah on the other during the relevant period, could lie in an analysis of the iconography of contemporary seals discovered in the areas where those two kingdoms were situated. In museums and private collections all over the world are large quantities of seals with pictures, which contain *inter alia* inscriptions of the names of the owners of the seals in Phoenician, Aramaic or Hebrew (Galling 1941:9). What Galling failed to mention is the fact that epigraphic and anepigraphic seals were also found which contain Egyptian religious symbols and Hebrew

inscriptions. Most of these seals (the anepigraphic seals), however, date to the Bronze Period and although they may be indicative of cultural exchanges between Egypt and the Canaanite region at an early stage, it does not necessarily point to Egyptian symbolism being employed in a religious manner in Israel and Judah during later periods such as Iron II.

In defining the purpose of this current study it was contended that the purpose of the iconography could not have been purely decorative and had to have some meaning. If religious symbols are portrayed, those symbols probably had a religious meaning. An analysis of the Egyptian religious iconography on these seals may contribute to our knowledge of the religion of Israel and Judah during the time of the Divided Monarchy and in particular during Iron IIB and C. The purpose of this study in particular was confined to the implications of Egyptian religious symbols on seals from Israel and Judah during the relevant period.

By analysing these symbols one finds that most of the major gods of the Egyptians such as Ra, Osiris, Isis, Seth, Ptah, Bes, Sakhmet, Horus, Hathor, Thoth and Ma'at as well as other Egyptian religious symbols are represented on seals discovered in the context of Iron IIB and C (or which could be dated to that period) in Palestine. Since seals were very personal items, I contend and that is the purpose of this study, that this seal iconography was done not for decorative purposes but to represent the beliefs of the individuals concerned. This argument is further enhanced by the fact that a large proportion of these seals/amulets, especially anepigraphic seals, as revealed by a perusal of *corpi* such as Keel (1997) were found in tombs in Palestine.

Not only were they regarded as having an influence on the daily lives of the living person, but they accompanied the deceased on his journey to another existence. It is incomprehensible that in an era where concepts such as magic, religion, society and government were much closer interrelated than in modern times, people adhering to one particular religion, would wear amulets or use seals with the iconography of the religious symbols of a foreign religion purely for decorative purposes.

‘The so-called minor arts for instance, such as seals, amulets...could be called in to tell a much more nuanced and complicated story of their own about values and beliefs, cultural contact and changing orientations in the history of ancient Israel, Judah and their neighbours’ (Uehlinger 2007:192).

Having discussed, by means of introduction, the importance of seal iconography and the depiction of Egyptian symbols (including religious symbols) on Hebrew seals, it is important to investigate and compare the recent conclusions of scholars on the subject.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RECENT LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Literally thousands of scholarly works have been published about the religions of Israel and Judah as well as that of Egypt. One finds the same scenario regarding the archaeology of Egypt and Palestine and in particular articles about seals. In view of the multitude of seals (which are unfortunately for the most part unpublished), relating to Iron IIB and C, discovered in or in context of Phoenicia and Palestine, containing Egyptian symbols, it is amazing that so little written material, linking those seals with the religion of Israel and Judah, is available.¹⁹ This is even more incomprehensible if one keeps in mind that as far back as 1886, de Vogüé investigated the meaning of the personal names and the possible religious significance of the figurative designs on Northwest Semitic seals. Of special significance to him were the abundance of Phoenician seals with Egyptian religious symbols which demonstrated a strong Egyptian influence on the Phoenician religion (Sass & Uehlinger 1993:XII). These two authors blame this neglect on the emphasis placed at the time on the philology of seals rather than the iconography.

A perusal of the studies regarding the pre-exilic religion of the two kingdoms reveals a lot of emphasis being placed on texts enhanced by archaeological material such as

¹⁹ Zevit (2001:344) states: 'Although catalogues of scarabs from excavations do exist, their study along the lines described above (i.e. in regard to religious connotations) are (sic) only beginning.'

temples, shrines, altars, figurines, statuettes and other more obvious instruments of religion.

Another factor seems to be a lack of serious consideration of the religious implications of the relevant iconography on seals with Israelite or Jewish names, which have been found in Palestine and on which are often carved symbols of various kinds. According to Albright (1968:67) there are:

‘a lion, a young bull..., a griffin with the crown of Upper and Lower Egypt, a four winged cobra (also Egyptian), as well as more complex scenes, sometimes drawn from non-Israelite mythology or cult. Among miscellaneous symbols may be mentioned palmettes, winged, solar discs, winged rolls, either with two or four wings, four-winged scarabs, etc. To what extent these representations possessed religious significance is very obscure; the writer tends to reject such meaning in the majority of cases, on the analogy of Phoenician art as well as of synagogal Jewish art in the Roman-Byzantine period, but there must be a residue of cases where we are dealing with authentic religious symbolism.’

Thus the ‘father’ of Biblical Archaeology, without a real scientific analysis, except for superficial comparisons with other scenarios, was of the opinion that in the majority of cases, these seals had no religious connotation. Since the days of Albright, however, a multitude of similar seals, mostly anepigraphic and in context of the Bronze Age, but some in context of Iron Age II, were discovered, including (in my opinion) extremely significant finds, such as the seal of King Hezekiah.

An important factor regarding seals that some of the scholars seem to ignore and which leads to a *laissez-faire* attitude towards it, is that seals were regarded by ancient

peoples not only as purely functional in their role as seals for sealing documents or establishing ownership or origin, viz wine flasks, but also as amulets or ‘good luck’ charms to safeguard them against evil forces during their lifetimes.²⁰ This also led to seal amulets accompanying a deceased person as part of the grave goods to the afterlife to assist (with its magical powers) to ward off evil forces and other potential enemies in the next world.

It is, therefore, important to look at the more recent, but limited, attitudes and approaches by scholars regarding the relationship between seal iconography and religion, in particular the Egyptian iconography on seals from Israel and Judah during Iron IIB and C especially in view of the biblical prohibitions of graven images. It seems clear that amulets were worn by the Israelites, despite the dire warnings contained in texts such as Isaiah 3:3 and 3:18-23 and Proverbs 17:8.

2.2. ZIONY ZEVIT

Zevit (2001:343-346) in a very brief discussion of the subject, acknowledges that in the Israelite Iron Age artifacts such as scarabs, scaraboids, seals and bullae provide information about Israelite religion. Seals were apparently not used exclusively for identification purposes, as it seems their main function was in Egypt. The copying of Egyptian motifs and hieroglyphs in Israel and Judah may have been for religious purposes, although there are no indications that they had any cultic status in the

²⁰ Thus Avigad (1997:45-46) refers to the iconography on Hebrew seals as merely ‘figurative’ or ‘decorative motifs’, derived ‘mostly from Phoenician art, which overwhelmingly utilized Egyptianizing themes. Two main figurative motifs adopted on Hebrew seals are the scarab and the *uraeus*.’ Avigad, however, fails to express an opinion as regards the reason for using these motifs or other similar Egyptian motifs.

region.²¹

This scholar readily admits that the study of seals in this regard (as religious symbols) is still in its infancy. He alleges that Egyptian seals found at Israelite Iron Age sites reveal a ‘remarkable restricted repertoire of gods and icons: Isis and the infant Horus—Sakhmet or Bastet—Bes—Ptah—and the divine eye, Udjet’. It seems that he has not studied the catalogues himself and that he for, the most part, relies on the study of Herrmann (1993). Zevit’s allegation is not correct, as will appear from this study. All the major gods are represented, whether universal or local, as well as various other Egyptian symbols, religious or secular.²² Zevit expresses the opinion that the designs, although of Egyptian origin, may be indicative of the personal preferences of the Israelites who bought them.

Zevit, however, readily admits the importance of motifs on Israelite seals: ‘Seals and bullae bearing inscriptions and/or iconic motifs offer more direct insight into Israelite religion---from their placement in tombs, it may be assumed that they had some meaning in burial ceremonies and may reflect beliefs about death, burial and afterdeath’ (Zevit 2001:344).

²¹ The author argues that seals apparently did not have cultic status because they do not appear as votives or in combination with other cultic artifacts. On the other hand he points out that seals were sometimes used as grave goods and may therefore have formed part of Israelite conceptions of the afterlife. He also concludes that the use of Egyptian gods as motifs on Israelite seals indicate a religious connotation. ‘---the Egyptian god Bes was worshipped by Judahites during the divided monarchy---representative deities from Egyptian cults were not overlooked in Israelite piety’ (Zevit 2001:606). Although the author does not state so explicitly, it seems as if he also extend this worship of Bes to other Egyptian gods such as Horus, Isis, Sakhmet and Ptah (Zevit 2001:606).

²²At this stage it may be relevant to mention some of the gods who are actually represented and not included in the repertoire of Zevit: Ra, the adult Horus, Amun, Ma’at, Hathor, Osiris, Mut , Min, Khonsu, Anubis, Sebek, Seth, Thoth, Aten, Apis, Taweret, Nekhabet and Wadjet.

In view of a study by Sass (1993), Zevit (345) avers that Egyptian motifs, which had been predominant during Iron I, were replaced with other motifs during Iron II and that ‘the East Semitic influence replaced the Egyptian one prominent in Iron I’. It is correct that a greater variety of motifs are to be found during the eighth and the seventh centuries, but this can be easily ascribed to the prevalent political situation in the region with Mesopotamian and even Greek influences. On the contrary, it seems (as will be indicated in more detail later in Chapter 6) that it does not follow that the Egyptian symbols were completely replaced by others. Egyptian symbols still played a major role in Israel and Judahite iconography during the relevant period. Zevit’s conclusion in this regard does not fit the iconographic profile of the period.

Zevit also seems to at least partially grasp the religious meaning of the Egyptian symbolism.²³ He regards the Isis/Horus symbols as representative of the faithful wife and mother, the protector of children; Sakhmet/Bastet as the friend of the faithful to the gods and the enemy to their enemies; Bes as protector²⁴ and Ptah, as the creator of the world by act of mind expressed in words.²⁵

²³ His interpretation of the religious connotations that should be given to the Egyptian symbols, although basically correct, is extremely superficial in view of the development of Egyptian religion during the Middle and New Kingdoms. The Isis/Horus representation, which apparently served as a role model for the symbol of the Madonna/Christ child of Christianity, for instance, had a much deeper religious connotation as a mere mother and child depiction.

²⁴ Zevit (2001:388-389) points out that approximately 146 seals from Palestine contain the Bes image in a variety of forms and shapes.

‘In Egypt the Bes image was used to represent many different deities, including Bes, Aha, Hayet, Soped, Tettenu and is associated at various times with Amun, Horus and even Baal. When the Bes figure was borrowed by Egypt’s northern neighbours, it was apparently perceived as an icon representing divinity---which---could be filled with meaning and manipulated according to local tradition. It was a pictographic god symbol and not necessarily the representation of any given deity.’

²⁵ ‘This concept of creation can of course be reconciled with the story of creation contained in the Hebrew Bible and would have been acceptable to the minds of the Israelites. This image could have been a substitute for the lack of an image of Yahweh. This could also have been the position of Bes in Israelite seal iconography’ (Zevit 2001:388).

He also states: ‘These figures in Israelite comprehension and interpretation comprised a sort of insurance against various ills that could befall the living’ (Zevit 2001:344).

2.3 WILLIAM G. DEVER

Dever (2005:51-59) criticises the lack of illustrations in many studies on Israelite religion and emphasise the fact that many major works on the subject have not even one illustration. According to him (I agree with his submission) these lacks of illustrations reflect the preoccupation of philologically trained biblical scholars with words rather than things, with ‘theological formulations rather than the symbols that for most people represented the reality of religious beliefs and practises. A picture really is “worth a thousand words”’ (Dever 2005:52).

He regards the direction taken by Othmar Keel (see next sub subparagraph) and colleagues from what he calls the ‘Freibourg’ (sic) school in Switzerland, as a ‘refreshing exception to the myopia of most biblical scholars’ (Dever 2005:52). He states that this school has used art history to document ancient Near Eastern iconography, in particular how the gods and the worship of such gods are depicted in representative art in order to place ancient Israelite religion in a larger context, thus deviating from the strict biblical representation of such religion. The fundamental aspect here is the ‘symbol’. He then defines a symbol (see the next chapter) ‘as being something to represent and typify a larger reality; usually it is an object or a pictorial image’ (Dever 2005:52).

2.4 OTHMAR KEEL & CHRISTOPH UEHLINGER

During the past few decades the 'Freiburg School' of biblical scholars have played a leading role in an attempt to rectify the negation by biblical scholars of the importance of symbolism in religion, especially the religion of the Israelites. Taking the lead in this regard has been Othmar Keel who has written several scholarly works on the subject. A significant work in this regard is *Göttinnen, Götter und Gottessymbole* by Keel and Christoph Uehlinger, published in 1992, with an English translation by T H Trapp *Gods, Goddesses and Images of God in Ancient Israel* (Cf. Keel [1992]; Uehlinger 1993:72-88).

The starting point in this work is the authors' quote of Manfred Weippert: "'One ought not ... to confuse the minority opinion express in the religious literature preserved in the Old Testament with the historic religion in Israel in the preexilic period'" (M. Weippert 1990, 151)'" (Keel & Uehlinger 1998:3). In order to reconstruct the religious history of Israel/Judah during the Iron Age, primary sources of information, not provided by the Bible, are required and these sources can only be provided by archaeological discoveries.

The authors referred to the works of several scholars who analysed archaeological evidence to reconstruct the development of the religious history of Palestine/Israel during the Pre-exilic Period. 'A shortcoming that these studies have in common is their lack of attention to one of the most important artifacts for Canaanite-Israelite religious history, the seal amulet' (Keel & Uehlinger 1998:4). They emphatically reject the view that it is adequate to limit one to texts in order to reconstruct a religious system.

The authors emphasise the value of symbolism where a single picture can convey more reality than a lot of words and transverse language barriers. Speech is a human construct and thus limited in its application.

‘The power of the image is in its ability to portray several aspects simultaneously; to put it another way: it represents the complexity of the reality that is portrayed in the pictorial constellation---It is a crass anachronism to continue to assert, as do those scholars who put no stock in images, that pictures are meaningless decoration’ (Keel & Uehlinger 1998:394-395).

In reconstructing the religious symbol system of Canaan and Israel accurately, pictures cannot be avoided. In relying on words, the reconstruction of the religion of Palestine has mainly been based on the Bible and the texts of Ugarit. The distances between Ugarit and Palestine and the time span between the texts of Ugarit (ca 12th Century B.C.E.) and Israel/Judah during Iron IIB make the use of those texts to interpret symbolism of Israel and Judah in the 9th or 7th Centuries B.C.E. extremely problematic.

The problem with biblical texts is that they were copied, adapted and purged over the centuries thus rendering them unreliable as a source to interpret symbolism of a specified period. The result is that reconstructions of the symbol systems of Palestine in various periods based on the texts from Ugarit and the Bible are largely conjectural and proposed solutions have imaginatively been filled in with evidence from various times and places ‘arranged like pieces of a mosaic’ (Keel & Uehlinger 1998:396).

In view of the quantity of available seals, in particular of stamp seals of which more than 8500 have been catalogued, seals, according to the authors 'can virtually serve as the standard by which religious history is documented' (Keel & Uehlinger 1998:10).

The authors, although concentrating to a large extent on the iconography of seals, also use various other artifacts such as figurines, cultic stands, jewellery and ivory decorations on pieces of furniture, then proceed to make a survey of the religious history of Israel/Palestine starting with MB IIB and ending with the Persian Period.²⁶

They, however, rank seal amulets as the most important images, some even have inscriptions as additional aids. With their number, continuity and somewhat public nature, they carry special weight, but have been grossly neglected by biblical scholars.

It is also pointed out that in Palestine during Iron IIB and C, thus the period of Israel and Judah, there was a great fascination with Egypt and its symbol system. 'This system was assimilated selectively, with royal and solar symbols especially being the motifs of choice' (Keel and Uehlinger 1998:402).

They admit that at the end of their survey, there are more open questions than answers, but a look at the pictorial evidence gives the viewer a 'more textured awareness of the religio-historical development of Palestine/Judah than an approach that relies on texts alone' (Keel and Uehlinger 1998:402).

My only problem with the approach of Keel and Uehlinger is that one should be

²⁶ It should be noted that the authors refer to the period from the Babylonian invasion and more in particular the conquest of Jerusalem (ca. 587) to the time of Nehemiah (ca. 450) as Iron III. I regard the same period as overlapping the Babylonian and Persian periods (ca 587 to 332 B.C.E.). The present study, being confined to Iron IIB and C thus ends at ca. 587.

careful not to overemphasise the value of pictorial symbolism to the detriment of textual evidence. As previously stated (see p 25) the pictorial evidence of the Lachish and Medinet Habu reliefs for instance would be of far lesser value if not accompanied by textual evidence.

Despite this limited criticism these two authors have contributed a lot to our current understanding of iconography in Israel and Judah during Iron II.

2.5 AMIHAI MAZAR

Mazar (1992) only refers to seals and their iconography in a very sketchy manner. He refers to engraved Hebrew seals from the eighth and seventh centuries B.C.E. and states that they are:

‘the most important source of our knowledge of art and iconography in Israel and Judah. The themes were inspired mainly by Phoenician art, and thus indirectly from Egyptian traditions, but these foreign symbols were probably employed only as decoration without any religious significance.’

Mazar is an archaeologist of vast experience who has made valuable contributions in the field. It is a pity that with vague and unmotivated statements like this one he merely reflects the opinion of Albright, expressed decades earlier and does not contribute to a serious study of the subject. Albright, despite his well deserved reputation in the field of Biblical Archaeology, appeared to be very subjective in his interpretation of some of the finds in Palestine. It seems that his main agenda was to use archaeology to prove the truth of the Bible and this, unfortunately leads to a loss of objectivity. Again Mazar seems to ignore the significance of seals as amulets.

Albright, at least, was prepared to admit that the iconography on some of the seals could have had a religious connotation, a possibility that Mazar apparently does not seem prepared to admit.

2.6 IZAK CORNELIUS

Cornelius has investigated various specialised aspects of Near Eastern iconography as reflected *inter alia* in his thorough and excellent studies: *The iconography of the Canaanite gods Reshef and Ba^cal: late Bronze and Iron Age I periods (c 1500-1000 B.C.E.)* (1994) and *The many faces of the goddess: the iconography of the Syro-Palestinian goddesses Anat, Astarte, Qadeshet, and Asherah c. 1500-1000 B.C.E.* (2004). He clearly understands the significance of iconography and its symbolism and advocates its importance. Unfortunately, for purposes of this study, these studies pertain to the Late Bronze and Iron I periods.

Recently (2008) he wrote an article: *Religious iconography of Israel and Judah ca. 1200-587 B.C.E.*, in which he deals with religious iconography in general during Iron II in Israel and Judah. He states regarding Iron IIB, that the ‘period starts with the aftermath of the invasion of the Egyptian pharaoh Sheshonq (Shishak) in 925 ... and ends with the fall of Samaria in 722 or perhaps in 720. This is the time of the real state of Israel with its capital Samaria in the north and that of Judah with its capital Jerusalem in the south. The north was influenced by Aramaic and Phoenician ideas and Judah more by Egypt’ (Cornelius 2008:105).

Cornelius, therefore, acknowledges the influences of Phoenicia and Egypt on Israel and Judah respectively. Unfortunately he does not deal with these influences in detail,

especially with regard to Egypt. He mentions that seal-amulets from Iron IIB depict winged serpents (*uraei*) and winged suns. The winged ureaus apparently made its appearance in Israel during the eighth century and later in Judah. The *uraei* from Israel had two wings and those from Judah four wings. The winged sun originated in Egypt but was also found in Phoenicia (Cornelius 2008:107). It is relevant that Cornelius mentions both Egyptian and Phoenician influences. I will argue in Chapter 5 that Egypt had a religious impact on Phoenicia; the least being that the Phoenicians used Egyptian religious symbols to depict aspects of their own religion.

As regards Iron IIC (Judah alone after the fall of Samaria), Cornelius does not deal with Egyptian influences in any detail and merely states that the ‘Egyptian “Renaissance” of the Saite dynasty and its influence is shown by scarabs depicting traditional Egyptian deities’ (Cornelius 2008:111).

Although Cornelius acknowledges the Egyptian influences and the use of Egyptian symbols in the iconography of Israel and Judah, he does not deal with the religious implications of such symbols and why they were used. He admits that during the Bronze Age and Iron I religious exchanges between Egypt and Canaan were common and that gods such as Hathor, Bes, Horus, Ptah and even Amun and Ra were introduced into the Levant (Cornelius 1994:1-2).

He also contends that ‘the religion of Israel and Judah was not monotheistic, but consisted of different religions that themselves formed part of a complex system with a complex historical development sources’ (Cornelius 2008:97). Furthermore in all periods the seal-amulets, especially stamp-seals and scarabs were of ‘great importance’ as ‘iconographic media’ in the search to establish the nature of the

Israelite religion (Cornelius 2008:97-99). From the contents of the 2008-article it seems as if Cornelius is also in full agreement with the theories of Keel and Uehlinger discussed in paragraph 2.4 above.

2.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I concentrated on a few scholars who recently (during the past twenty years) applied their minds (some more than others) to the subject of the religious symbolism of seal iconography. This list is not by any means exhaustive. There seems to be a growing tendency amongst scholars to give more attention to the importance of seal iconography. This is especially true with regard to the 'Freiburg-School' where scholars such as Schroer (1987, 2006); Nunn (2002); Sass (1993); Witte & Diehl (2008), Schipper (1999) and others are making valuable contributions in this field.

Unfortunately, however, except maybe for Keel and Uehlinger, most of the relevant scholars move only on the periphery of the subject of this study. Even those who touched the subject for the most part only do so scantily. There may be a variety of reasons for this neglect: some scholars wrote about other related subjects, for instance the Phoenician or Hebrew inscription on a seal, and only touched on the iconography to complete a picture; some maybe due to a lack of interest and some scholars maybe as a result of incomprehension of the importance of the subject.

'Archaeologists and biblicists have not always clearly and fully communicated with each other' (Gittlen 2002:xi). This lack of communication led to misunderstandings; archaeologists sometimes require the experience and knowledge to understand the

meaning of their finds, while Biblicists, by objectively considering physical evidence, may be in a better position to interpret the texts. Dever (2002:29) pleads for interdisciplinary dialogue and to understand a history of ancient Israelite history, the vantage point should be to pursue history and not theology. Archaeological finds have already done a lot to clarify certain aspects of ancient Israelite religion. Dever (2002:26) gives the following examples:

- a. The 10th-8th century cultic installations at Dan, 'Tel Ta Anach, Tell-el Far' Ah/Tirzah, Lachish, Arad and other sites, illustrating and clarifying what the biblical writers had in mind with the term *bāmōt*;
- b. Hundreds of terracotta female figurines giving testimony to fertility rites;
- c. The 8th century inscriptions at Khirbet el-Qôm and Kuntillet 'A jrûd, referring to the cult of Asherah.

I venture to add that the understanding of and insight into the religion of the ancient Israelites would have been much further developed had such scholars but realised the importance of seals and joined forces in their analysis and interpretation. A major factor contributing to this incomprehension may be a disregard of what the iconography purports to tell us and the important role that symbolism played in ancient societies. In the next chapter the meaning and importance of symbolism will be investigated and discussed.

CHAPTER 3

SYMBOLISM AND RELIGION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Dever (1987:210) defined religion as a ‘set of symbolic thought forms and acts that relate human beings to the ultimate conditions of existence perceived as the Holy’.

Zevit (2001:611) uses the following definition for ‘Israelite religions’ but it can be used to define all religions: ‘Israelite religions are the varied, symbolic expressions of, and appropriate responses to the deities and powers that groups or communities deliberately affirmed as being of unrestricted value to them within their worldview.’

Both the above definitions use the word ‘symbolic’ and symbolism therefore seems to be an integral part of ‘religions.’

The words ‘symbol’ or ‘symbolism’ are not used in the Bible, although there is a prohibition against ‘graven images’, but the connotation of ‘symbol’ and ‘graven image’ may not always be the same. Symbols are however common to all religions. ‘It is derived from the Greek word *symbolon* which had several uses *e.g.* as a sign, pledge, token and its importance derived from the fact that it was a representative object which guaranteed the reality of that which it symbolized’ (Marshall et al 1996:1140).

‘...a symbol is one kind of sign — that is, something (a gesture, sound, objects, image, etc.) that refers to something else. Some signs point to their referents by association, as smoke indicates fire. Others point to their referents by resemblance, as certain paintings at Lascaux resemble horses or pantomime may resemble the

behaviour of a fleeing man. Symbols, however, refer by arbitrary convention. The red, green and yellow of a traffic light, the badge of a policeman, and the sound of the word “table” are all symbols because their meaning is essentially arbitrary’ (Chase 1999:35).

In a primitive religious sense, symbolism has been defined ‘... as a set of complex associations where religious rituals, icons and artifacts were interpreted by members of the social groups (tribe, community, congregation). Meaning, therefore, was a matter of interaction between the symbol, the group and individuals within the group’ (Lewis 2002:48).

Today, modern man may be able to distinguish between an object and a symbol but in ancient times people did not make such a distinction and perceived symbolism in a literal sense, not in the relationship between an object and a sign, but in the influence a sign has upon its perceiver. Symbols provide people with a means to pictorially express ideas of significance. In brief, we can say that the main characteristic of a symbol is that it expresses something significant. Turner (1967:26) states that a ‘symbol is always a best possible expression of relatively unknown fact, a fact which is nonetheless recognised or postulated as existing.’

Religion like the arts requires a response from people. How do you respond to a religious message? No matter what the faith of the individual is, it challenges him/her to respond and each religion has its symbols that require some response from a person. Otherwise it ceases to be a ‘faith’ and remains impersonal teachings that are used for protection from other beliefs and value systems (Tillich 1958:40-41).

The beliefs in a faith, on the other hand, inspire and motivate; they are central to

man's being. These beliefs center on what Tillich called our 'ultimate concern.' And that which forms this center of our values and beliefs, he said, 'must be expressed symbolically, because symbolic language alone is able to express the ultimate' (Tillich 1958:41). Therefore, when we express our core beliefs, we must use symbolism, no matter how concrete the images used to express that faith (Tillich 1958:53). This is not to say that organised religions, whether those of primitive societies or the 'world religions', do not express the faiths of many of their members. These organizations could never have formed if the religious movements out of which they emerged had not expressed the critical beliefs and values of those who formed them into lasting 'institutions.' Regardless, these values, these beliefs have to be expressed by symbolic language. This does not mean that some, even most, of the believers do not take the language literally. The problem with interpretation, given Tillich's statement about the necessity of symbolism, is that its interpretation is never complete; worse, the interpretation loses meaning, thus loses meaningfulness.

It is not just theologians, mystics, and religious leaders who speak of faith, of the power of beliefs. William James, a pioneer psychologist in the study of comparative religious beliefs, made clear the difference between dogma and faith when he stated: 'In the religious sphere, in particular, belief that formulas are true can never wholly take the place of personal experience' (James 1908:457). Indeed, a few paragraphs earlier he almost decried 'philosophy' in terms that argue for symbols, for 'truth and fact' (James, 1908:456).

3.2 APPLICATION OF SYMBOLISM

Symbols would be meaningless if they are not to be applied in practice to some belief or attitude. In modern times we find that many scholars, when encountering primitive symbolism, apply the pragmatic theory to symbolism. First, pragmatism dismisses symbols as ‘ornaments and ornamentation.’ It seems to be regarded as being employed for artistic purposes. At least part of this attitude apparently originated with the Protestant Reformation and its reaction to the excessive statuary and other ‘ornaments’ in churches that the Protestants viewed as idolatry (Cf. Dever 2005:51-52).

‘... biblical scholars who typically dismiss objects like figurines as “mere symbols” miss the point. Theologians, if they presume to contribute anything to liturgy, should be more sensitive to the need for symbols. Yet in my experience, those who deal with ancient Israelite religion are often not even *aware* of the power of symbols. This is especially true of Protestants, who characteristically emphasize the “word” over the “sacraments.” And, not coincidentally, most of the writers on our subject have been Protestants’ (Dever 2005:52).

Although this attitude may be justified in some cases, it should be noted that these very items were originally created to act as symbols for the illiterate to understand much of the Bible and theology of the Church. This is a universal truth; it does not only apply to the Bible and the Israelites, but to all primitive (and illiterate) societies and their religions. It appears that the growth of literacy also created a literalism that ignored the significance of the symbols. Many scholars of religion and anthropology

still seem to analyse symbols and the phenomenon of symbolism itself as ornaments, albeit as ornaments valued by primitive cultures, despite the fact that most ‘primitive’ cultures were extremely practical in all they did, even in rituals and beliefs.

It is a fact that symbolism is no substitute for direct knowledge, which an individual has personally experienced. ‘But symbolism is very fallible, in the sense that they (sic) may induce actions, feelings, emotions, and beliefs about things which are mere notions without that exemplification in the world which the symbolism leads us to presuppose’ (Whitehead 1985:6).

The portrayal of a symbol will be of no significance if the idea which it endeavors to convey, falls outside the field of experience of the percipient. Morris (1993:6) refers to such experience as the ‘given’ which reflects the present experience of an individual. To use an old example: to show to an Eskimo a picture of a lamb to signify innocence or softness would have no effect, a picture of a baby seal would be closer to the mark. Thus the perception of the individual is of the utmost importance. It has been said: ‘We regard symbolism as a reality, important in its own right, worthy of systematic investigation. Consequently, we attempt to look directly at symbolism — in the case of religion, at the symbolism of meaning — rather than looking through it to see how it functions for the individual or even to give an interpretation of what sort of meaning it conveys’ (Wuthnow 1992:53) .

3.3 SYMBOLISM AND RELIGION

Kendall (2008:416) stated that the symbolism of religion is so powerful because it 'expresses the essential facts of our human existence'. In the modern world symbolism plays a major role in all spheres of society. Symbols are used as trademarks; to identify danger zones; as traffic signs and various other applications for identification purposes. Even the major religions of the modern world can be readily distinguished by merely looking at the following symbols:

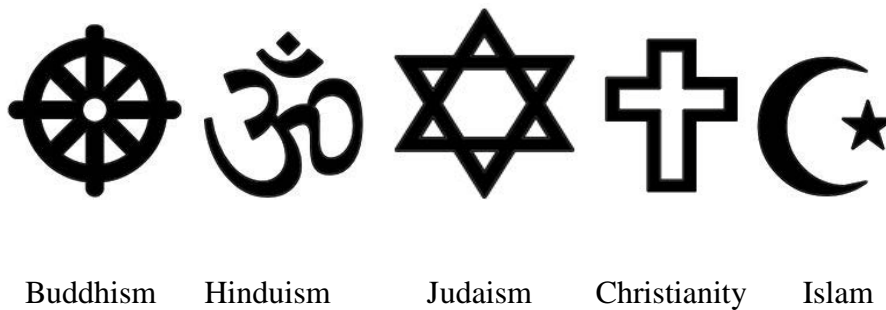


Figure 7: Some religious symbols of today

(Rursus 2007)

When one sees a church with a Christian cross on the top, one perceives the message the church is sending about its belief system. The Jewish, Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist religions do the same.

'Religion involves a complex system of ...symbolic usages. Religion embodies a conceptualization and projection of the most fundamental human needs and human problems (Firth 2004:248)'. Although the symbols used by religions may differentiate

between them, that is not why they are established or their eventual purpose. The most important part of that symbol is to identify with what is special about their faith (Fralin 2002; Cf. Kendall 2008:371). It has, therefore, a special significance, particular to that faith. When any religion places a sign outside their place of worship, they are signifying to the world at large what they believe and what faith system and moral creed they follow.

Furthermore, religion 'being a powerful force, plays an important role in binding and unifying people. Thus, symbolism within different religious beliefs aims to personify the feelings and emotions behind what they believe to encapsulate the trend of that particular belief and create a sense of oneness and exclusivity' (Hunter 2002; Cf. Eliade 1958:445-450).

For the Christian community, the cross represents the gift of Christ's flesh and blood given for salvation. The cross is regarded as an icon of their faith. Many Christians identify the cross with worship, although there are other uses for the symbol of the cross as well. For most Christians it is a reminder that Christ died in order that their sins can be forgiven and receive eternal life. The Star of David and kippa (prayer cap) of the Jewish religion are used similarly. A Buddhist may keep a figure of Buddha in his or her home as a reminder to pay homage to the emblem of their beliefs, a witness to others of what the faithful believe. In Buddhism, the Wheel of Dharma (virtue and duty) is symbolic of God (Devera 2002; Cf Hannay 1912:5-12).

Despite the teachings of Muhammad that it is a sin to make images of any sort, the Muslims use the Ka'aba and the Crescent Moon with a five cornered star in the cup of

the moon as symbols of their faith and are regarded as symbolic of the presence of God. The latter symbol is revered to such an extent that the Red Cross, symbol of medical services in the rest of the world to identify ambulances, hospitals and other medical facilities and equipment, was adapted to a red crescent in the Muslim world.

The various religions and cultures existing in the world thus had developed significantly different symbols. This variety in symbolism enabled the different religions to establish their individual flavour to their symbols and to identify and be distinguished from each other.

The initial symbol adopted by Christians for identification purposes was the fish, or *ichthus*. The Greek letters of the word fish were used as an acronym of the words Jesus, God's son and saviour. The fish was fundamental to the lives of early Christians, figured in many miracles performed by Jesus and fit in well with the theological promise Jesus made that his apostles would be fishers of men.

The hexagram signifying Judaism is one of the oldest symbols still in use today. Initially used as the symbol for the Jewish kingdom, it spread into the rest of the world with the exile of the Jews from their country in 70 CE. It is known as the Star of David or the *magen* David (Shield of David). The earliest known use dates to about the sixth century B.C.E. (Eisenberg 2004:575).

Hebrew symbolism, however, was not something which was born with the establishment of Judaism. '...the one characteristic of the Hebrew scriptures is

symbolism...every page of the Bible is saturated with symbolism...' (Hannay 1922:7-8).

In the Bible symbols are often used to convey aspects of God. The rainbow was the symbol of God's covenant that the earth will never again be destroyed by a flood (Gn 9:13-16). Moses made a bronze serpent and put it on a pole so that anyone who was bitten by a snake could look at it and live (Nm 21:8-9), thus symbolizing the wisdom and power of God. The altar symbolized God's meeting place with man and the Ark of the Covenant the presence of God; when the temple was built it symbolized the universal power of God (Marshall et al 1996:1141).²⁷ These symbols, whether literal or figurative, abound in the Bible.

3.4 CONCLUSION

Throughout the ages symbols have not been regarded as mere signs. By presenting a symbol, the presenter intends to convey a message, for instance, a symbol of a cross in front of a church does not merely state that the building is a church. It signifies that it is a Christian church representing the Christian faith; that Christ died on the cross in order to wash with His blood the sins of those who are prepared to follow him. It goes further, implying that the cross (death) is not the end of the road, but that Christ was resurrected from the grave, thus preparing the road for his followers who also will be resurrected to join Him in eternal life. From a simple symbol flows a complete

²⁷ At a later stage in Israelite history, this serpent, which the Israelites called Nehushtan, was apparently idolized, for King Hezekiah, 14th king of Judah, destroyed this snake 'for up to that time the Israelites had been burning incense to it' (2 Ki 18:4). It seems that the initial symbol evolved into an idol in its own right.

spiritual message. In a study of the ancient Israelites, when the majority of the people were illiterate, symbolism was a much more important vehicle to convey a message. To disregard symbolism in the ancient world and pass it off as mere decoration would not only be an unscientific approach, but a reckless one, bordering on the criminal.

Should a depiction of the Egyptian goddess Taweret be found in the context of the Israelites (for example a figurine at a household shrine or on a seal amulet belonging to a woman), can it be truly said that it was for decoration only? She (Taweret) was a goddess portrayed as a pregnant female hippopotamus and was the goddess of fertility and childbirth, credited with bringing babies to childless women and thus often portrayed on charms and amulets. She was believed to assist all females (divine, royal or ordinary) in childbirth. It would make no sense if one concludes that the female owner only had it for decorative purposes. The logical conclusion is that she had it for fertility and childbirth purposes. She had to believe in the existence of the goddess and her powers and she (the owner) had to have faith that the goddess would attend to her needs; once again a complete spiritual message conveyed by the symbol of the goddess.

Despite the official Israelite religious prohibition of grave images, one can only conclude that, as in all societies, symbolism played an important role in the life of the ancient Israelites, including their religion, whether official or unofficial.

If an Israelite or Judahite, therefore, used religious symbols on a royal, government or personal seal, albeit it symbols of a foreign religion, it could only mean that he or she intended to attach religious significance to those symbols. It does not necessarily

imply that the individual adhere to the foreign religion but he or she could have used the symbol to express concepts of his or own religion. This may especially be true in Israel in Judah where the official biblical Yahwistic religion forbade the use of graven images (see the discussion in paragraph 6.1 hereinafter) and the symbols could have been used to portray certain aspects of Yahweh, without portraying Yahweh himself. It could also indicate polytheism in that the owner may, in addition to Yahwism, also have worshipped other gods, including Egyptian gods.

The theme of the current study being the acceptance of Egyptian religious symbolism in Israel and Judah, one needs to have an understanding of certain aspects of Egyptian religion and symbolism pertaining to the period of study. Only then can the true meaning of Egyptian religious symbols on seals from Israel and Judah be deduced. In the next chapter I will endeavour to highlight those relevant aspects of Egyptian religious symbolism required to place the Israelite seal iconography in question in context. The Egyptian symbolism must also be placed in historical context and in particular those periods in Egyptian history when contact between Egypt and Syro-Palestine was of such a nature that cultural exchanges between the regions were the most likely to have occurred.

CHAPTER 4

EGYPT'S CONTACT WITH SYRO-PALESTINE, CONTEMPORARY RELIGIOUS CONCEPTS AND SYMBOLISM

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 1, I briefly discussed the continuous contact between Egypt and Syro-Palestine from the Chalcolithic Period to Iron Age II. Some of these contacts resulted from hostile activities, others from trade relations, passing through a region or random casual encounters. Hostile activities include invasions with temporary and limited goals such as military raids, but also the creation of more permanent military presence as part of empire building, the latter being more conducive to cultural exchange than a short-lived incursion.

In this study it is not intended to give a complete overview of Egyptian history, including the historical development of Egyptian religious concepts and symbolism. For purposes of this study I will confine myself to those periods of Egyptian and Syro-Palestine history when the regions were the most closely involved politically, commercially or otherwise. Cultural exchanges between Egypt and Syro-Palestine apparently occurred over millennia and Egyptian religious symbols appearing on seals from Syro-Palestine during Iron II could be the result of cultural exchanges that occurred already during the Bronze Age. As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6, anepigraphic seals with Egyptian motifs (including Egyptian religious motifs), dating to the Bronze Age, have been discovered at archaeological sites all over Syro-Palestine.

Although Egyptian motifs first made their appearance in Canaan, Phoenicia, Israel and Judah during the Bronze Age, epigraphic seals with such motifs only appeared in this region at a very late stage during Iron II. It therefore does not necessarily follow that the motifs on these seals resulted from cultural exchanges during Iron II only. These motifs could have been established centuries before and became a cultural tradition in the region. The name Thutmose III (the Eighteenth Dynasty pharaoh) for instance appears on seals as late as the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty. The names of Old Kingdom pharaohs such as Khufu and Wenese were first inscribed on seals during the New Kingdom, not on contemporary ones (Andrews 1994:55).

One also finds that during the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty the Saite rulers of Egypt revolutionised the prevalent religion in Egypt by reverting to archaic gods, cults, rituals, priesthood, festivals and ceremonies (Law 1988:91-92) (see also paragraph 4.4.2 hereinafter). One should therefore be careful not to confuse one period with an older one by dating artifacts to an earlier period simply because they represent symbolism from the earlier period and were not found in context.

In the premises it would be unscientific to confine oneself to the period in Egyptian history coinciding with Iron IIB and C, i.e. from Dynasty 21 to 26 (during the Third Intermediate Period and the early part of the Late Dynastic Period).

Before continuing with the specific periods I will endeavour to explain certain Egyptian religious concepts as well as Egyptian symbolism and the role of amulets and scarabs.

4.2 RELIGION AND CULT IN ANCIENT EGYPT DURING RELEVANT PERIODS

4.2.1 Cults, temples and rituals

a) Cults

The word cult comes from the Latin word *cultus*, a derivation of the verb *colere* meaning 'to worship or give reverence to a deity'. Cults were the official structure used to worship the Egyptian gods. In regard to ancient Egypt, this structure included the priests who carried out rituals associated with the gods, who were frequently manifest in the form of statues, within the cult temples (Gomes 1995:7). The center of the Egyptian cult was the temple, a sacred area enclosed by a wall that excluded the profane.

b) Temples

By definition, a temple, in Egyptian context, was a closed place, the house of a god, the receptacle of his effigy and his *ba*, isolated and protected from the outside, profane world by its enclosure wall. It included a section devoted to worldly needs. Inside the sanctuary of the temple was the effigy or cult statue, which served as the dwelling for the god worshipped in the cult center, though there could be and were more than one in many temples (Dunand, Zivie-Coche & Lorton 2005:121). Some of the temples are dedicated to more than one god. A prime example is the double temple, devoted to Horus and Sobek at Kom Ombo in Upper Egypt (see Figure 100 on p.304).

At state level temples played an important role and in Ancient Egypt there were two approaches towards the temple concept. In earlier dynasties one finds the sun temples, especially during the 5th Dynasty (but also the Aten temples during the Amarna period of the 18th Dynasty) and the cultus and mortuary temples. In contrast to houses and palaces, regarded as temporary dwellings and thus for the most part constructed of clay bricks, temples, like tombs, were approached on the basis of lasting forever and were thus elaborately built of stone and luxuriously decorated (Kleiner 2008:52).

Temples could be divided into cultus and mortuary temples. Although their architecture and rituals were similar, the cultus temples and mortuary temples were two distinct concepts. The cultus temple, dedicated to the cult of a particular god or goddess, was the house of the god, where his or her statue could be housed and protected (Oakes & Gahlin 2007:354). It was a place of great sanctity where the king or priest by the use of specific rituals and offerings could approach the god. From the offerings the god could derive sustenance and benefit. It was believed that the god or goddess on his or her part would assist in maintaining *ma'at* and provide bountifully for Egypt (Shafer 1998a:1). This relationship and regular performance of rituals were regarded as essential lest disaster befall the country (Cf. James 1983:139).

Mortuary temples had a similar cultus function, but they had an additional function. During the Old and Middle Kingdoms they were attached to the pyramid as part of the king's burial complex where the funerary rites were performed and perpetual offerings were placed to ensure the continuing sustenance of the

deceased ruler. With the demise of pyramids and the introduction of rock-hewn tombs, a lack of space prohibited the erection of adjacent mortuary temples. These temples were now built as separate entities away from the Valley of the Kings, but for the most part still on the west bank of the Nile at Thebes. They still functioned as places where the deceased, but now deified king, was worshipped and provided for by food offerings. In its cultus function the temple was dedicated to the main local deity, thus providing for rituals incorporating both the god and the king (Cf. Murray 1931:3-4).

c) Cult rituals

Cult rituals were actually dialogues between the gods, and therefore the king (or a priestly substitute for the king) acted in the divine performance as a god.

Until the Middle Kingdom, the spheres of administration and cult were not separated, but in the 18th Dynasty, a special priesthood for cultic purposes was established (Erman 1894:293; Fox 2000:47).

Rituals centered on offerings, but there were certainly numerous other rituals, including many daily functions such as washing and clothing the gods (or at least the statue of the gods). Other rituals took the form of celebrations when, for example, one god might be taken to visit the cult center of another, and it was during these festivals that common Egyptians probably came closest to their gods, for at other times they were prohibited from the sanctuaries that housed the cult statues (Johnston 2007:156).

The ancient Egyptians believed that the living, the dead and the gods all had the same basic needs: shelter, food and drink, washing, rest and recreation. The

living was accommodated in houses, the dead were provided with tombs and the gods resided in temples. Foods were supplied for the dead by means of the funerary cult and the god's needs were served through divine rituals in the cultus and mortuary temples (Silverman 2003:148). It provided a ritualised and dramatised version of the mundane process of washing, clothing and feeding of the god's cult statue in the sanctuary.

A second group of rituals were the festival rituals which, although they differed from temple to temple, depending on the particular god's theology, were held at regular, often annual occasions and celebrated special events in the god's life, such as the resurrection of Osiris. These festivities consisted of celebrations both inside and outside the temple, including a public procession of the god's statue and, as already stated, this was the only occasion when the public had the opportunity to see the god and participate in his worship (Silverman 2003:149-150; David 1999:111-112).

At first the cult, and for that matter, the benefits of religion and the gods which it served, was for the most part limited to the king, though many functions and rituals were performed by his substitutes (priests). Common Egyptians could mostly only hope that the King took his religious duties seriously or otherwise they might expect to suffer famine or other disasters or for that matter, any prospect of an afterlife. As time passed, religion became much more popularized, so that in later Egyptian history, common Egyptians demanded their own means of worshipping and being accepted by their gods. More and more ordinary Egyptians built within their homes shrines for their personal worship, or at other

times, small public shrines where they could worship and pray together. However, throughout Egyptian history, ordinary Egyptians were limited as to the scope that they could participate in the state cult centers (James 1983:132; Silverman 2003:162).

4.2.2 Magic and Egyptian religion

It seems that the ordinary Egyptian's religion consisted largely of magical practises and the invocation of those deities who might protect him or her from the dangers of daily life (James 1983:133-134).

Magic has been defined as 'the apparent manipulation of natural forces to change the form of things or influence events' (David 1999:119).²⁸In Egypt, in contrast to the Israelites, magic was fully legitimized through religion. Magic was a thread that linked everything because all things were regarded as potentially animate if the correct magical procedures were followed (Cf, Thompson 2003:51; Harris 1998:156).

'In fact, the ancient Egyptian religion was inseparable from magic and thus it became an integral part of daily life in many ways. ... Priests were not mere administrators of divine will, but also masters of the magic arts. Their job was to keep the perfect primeval order of things, but they didn't hesitate to use their magic for earthly purposes as well.' (Frater 2008:340).

²⁸ Magic has also been variously defined as 'a "pretended art", an art that can somehow influence the course of events and produce amazing physical phenomenon. The art of magic is supposedly to work by using its power to compel supernatural beings to intervene in everyday events or to call up occult forces of nature' (Christie 2007:6).

Throughout the ages magic and religion have been associated with one another, either forming an integral part of the beliefs of a country like Egypt or being used in conjunction with them, ‘...whereas “society” principally covers relationships between man and man and “religion” the relationship between deity and mankind, the powers of magic found application in both spheres’ (Marshall et al 1996:714). Thus, higher authorities or deities had to exist to explain the otherwise inexplicable. Rituals could help to solve everyday problems and maintain stability and well being. As a result magic and superstition played a crucial part in daily life and were by no means considered unorthodox or an alternative to religion but an integral part of it. As a matter of fact, magic can be regarded as a subdivision of religion.

4.2.3 Egyptian religious symbolism and its meaning

Symbols, since prehistoric times, have played a major role in the culture and religion of Egypt. Symbols were used on a regular basis to convey concepts and ideas which would be difficult to express clearly through more concrete modes of expression. These ideas, thoughts, beliefs or perceptions often transcended the realms of reality (Cf. Bonnefoy & Doniger 1992:12-15). Egypt’s symbolic orientation can be confirmed by the fact that these symbols were not just used for decorative purposes but they also were inherent to religious and magical rituals. Any effort at understanding Egyptian culture would be half hearted without learning more about these symbols (Cf. Kirk 1973:207-208).

Religious symbolism in Egypt can best be illustrated by the system of hieroglyphs, which, even after the development of other writing systems (hieratic, demotic and

Coptic) in Egypt, remained the vehicle for religious (sacred) writings (Geddes & Grosset 1997:378). ‘Hieroglyphs contain within them the very essence of ancient Egypt’ (McDermott 2002:6).

Hieroglyphics come from the Greek words *hieros* (sacred) and *glyphos* (sculpted). The earliest known hieroglyphs are on seals and seal impressions. Initially they were mere pictograms, thus merely conveying the object(s) they portrayed. This situation however placed severe limitations on more complex or abstract concepts and ideas. In their further development, phonograms to depict particular sounds and ideograms to convey abstract notions such as love, hate or anger where the symbol represented much more than the image itself (Geddes & Grosset 1997:377).²⁹

This system of symbols finally evolved into a complex system ‘...which was a mixture of ideographic signs and phonetic signs, abstract allusions and concrete pictograms in the form of visual pictures...’ (Cirlot & Sage 1978:182). It is not possible to discuss this whole complex system in this study and only certain aspects will be highlighted for illustration purposes.³⁰

Sometimes the name of Isis is simply written as if it meant ‘throne’. Amongst the insignia of royalty, the throne has special significance because it represents the power of the king sitting on his throne: ‘The throne “makes” the king — the term occurs in Egyptian texts — and so the throne, Isis, is the “mother” of the king...the throne

²⁹ It is important to note that: ‘Letters (of the alphabet) of all cultures have a symbolic significance...Letter-symbolism probably derives from Primitive pictograms and ideographs’ (Cirlot & Sage 1978:182).

³⁰ Further details and discussions of various Egyptian religious symbols are contained in Annexure B.

which “made” the king is comprehended as a mother...As early as the First Dynasty a Pharaoh called himself “son of Isis” (Frankfort 2000:6-7). Furthermore Isis was the mother of Horus, the Egyptian god associated with kingship. Isis is therefore associated with the throne and she was *inter alia* represented as such. The hieroglyph for Isis appearing on a seal could therefore, depending on the context, be read as representing ‘throne’ or a ‘throne’ read as Isis.

The same symbols on various seals may therefore have different meanings. This may cause confusion and could explain the varying interpretations by Egyptologists of the same inscription on a particular seal. This will be more fully discussed in Chapter 6, where individual Hebrew seals are analyzed.

Various Egyptian religious concepts and symbols such as the *ankh*, the *ba*, the *ka*, Bennu, Ben-Ben, *djed*, *udjat*, feather of Ma’at etcetera are encountered and will be more fully dealt with in Chapter 5 and 6 hereinafter as well as in Annexure B.

4.2.4 Amulets and scarabs

‘The Egyptians probably invented the biggest and most varied collection of amulets in the history of mankind. Over thousands of years literally millions were fabricated, usually in faience, shell, ivory, precious stones like lapis lazuli, jasper, alabaster, turquoise, silver, gold and later in bronze’ (Najovits 2004:117).

The Egyptian belief in magic, magical powers and magical properties influenced many areas of their lives. Inanimate objects were believed to have the ability to affect events once they have been charged with magical force. Funerary equipment was

considered to have magical properties that could bring special benefits to the deceased (Petrie 1914:1).

It was common practise throughout the ancient Near East to wear on the person a small symbolic object as a charm or protection against evil forces. Such amulets were usually in the form of small ornaments such as stones, gems, seals, beads, plaques or emblems, sometimes inscribed with an incantation or prayer (thus proving beyond doubt their religious connotation). In this regard the Bible was unique in condemning their use. Thus all stones and rings used as seals were considered as amulets (Cf. Je. 22:24; Hg. 2:23; Marshall et al 1996:33).

Amulets formed an important group of jewellery since they acted as lucky charms and the ancient peoples believed that they endowed the wearer or owner with protection and supernatural magical powers and could be worn by the rich as well as the poor. They were carried by the person when alive and even in death they had a special significance and were placed as part of the grave goods with the deceased to provide help in his future existence (Andrews 1994:6). Thus they were carried over from this life to the next in order to continue their intended purpose.³¹

The ancient Egyptian names for an amulet were *sa*, *meket* and *nehet*, all derived from verbs meaning 'to guard' or 'protect'. A further term *wedja* seems to mean 'well being' (Oakes & Gahlin 2007:454). The term *amulet* comes from the later Arabic

³¹ It is important to note at this stage that a large number of seal-amulets, discovered in Palestine, were found in tombs and graves as part of the funerary objects (Cf. Keel 1997). Although not all of them can be ascribed to Israelite/Judahite origin (for instance some are found in Philistine context, others are Phoenician and some come from areas exclusively occupied by Egyptian military forces), it will be argued that the remainder, which can only have Israelite/Judahite origins, bear witness to diversions from the Yahweh religion propagated by the Bible.

word *hamulet* meaning ‘something that is borne or carried.’ The term itself is applied to any ornament or talisman, which were worn to attain the assistance of supernatural powers (Wallis Budge 1972a:23).

The primary function of all Egyptian jewellery was to protect the wearer against a whole array of hostile forces and events, including ferocious animals, disease, famine, accidents and natural disasters. Amulets were believed to have special beneficial properties and by the principle of sympathetic magic, to be able to attract good forces to assist the wearer or, conversely, to repel a variety of evils and dangers. Nearly every Egyptian, whether adult or child, if they could afford it, wore an amulet, charm or talisman (Wallis Budge 1972a:4).

In ancient Egypt, two kinds of amulets were produced and worn, firstly those inscribed with magical formulae and secondly those without such formulae (Wallis Budge 1972a:26).

Some amulets were regarded as universally beneficial while others had particular significance only for the wearer. Essentially they were charms that had been magically charged in order to bring about the desired results. Some were designed to strengthen the owner’s ability to overcome the dangers he encountered and took the forms of images of power such as miniature crowns, sceptres and staffs of office while others represented gods or animals. Another group was believed to have impact on any physical weakness or disability which the owner might suffer; these were modelled to simulate the limbs in the hope that the amulet would attract magical strength to heal the afflicted part or that the disease would be transferred from the limb to the amulet ‘double’ (Wallis Budge 1978a:1-3).

Other amulets represented offerings (food, drink or clothing) and possessions to ensure that the owner would continue to enjoy wealth and prosperity. Examples of these are the sacred Eye of Horus (*Wedjat*), which symbolised completeness or wholeness; the *ankh*, which represented eternal life and the *djed* pillar, which was associated with resurrection and rebirth as well as strength and stability.

The scarab (dung beetle) symbolised eternal renewal of life. The Egyptians made this association because when they observed the habits of the beetle, each new generation seemed to emerge self-generated from the ball of dung.

The shape of the amulet conferred power and strength to its owner, but some materials and colours were also believed to possess special hidden qualities that could bring health and good luck. Stones such as carnelian, turquoise and lapis lazuli were much favoured because of the magical properties of their colours and they were often used in the manufacture of jewellery and amulets. Sometimes such stones were used only if they duplicated the colour of the original limb or organ and this authenticity was expected to bring additional benefits to the owner (David 1999:114).

4.3 ANCIENT EGYPT'S CONTACT WITH SYRO-PALESTINE AND RELEVANT PREVAILING RELIGIOUS CONCEPTS

4.3.1 Introduction

In paragraphs 1.3 and 4.1 above we have seen that although there was contact in some form of another between Egypt and Syro-Palestine, it was only during the period of empire building by Egypt during the Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Dynasties that

there were prolonged periods of continuous contact between the regions. It seems that there was nearly always contact through trade or on personal levels, especially through Syrian ports such as Byblos and Tyre. Politically, however, Egypt's presence in Syro-Palestine during other periods was confined to temporary military raids. Thutmosis III (and to a lesser extent Amenophis II, Amenophis IV and Horemheb) of the Eighteenth Dynasty and Sethos I of the Nineteenth Dynasty established a more permanent presence in the region. Military bases were established and Egyptian envoys supervised and controlled the activities of local princes. This presence lasted for nearly five hundred years and it seems therefore that this is the most likely period during which Egyptian symbolism got a foothold in Syro-Palestine and retained its importance for the next thousand years.

Another period where close contact (commercial, political and on personal levels) between Egypt and Syro-Palestine appear to have existed was during the Third Intermediate Period and the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty of the Late Dynastic Period.

4.3.2 Predynastic Egypt

Although archaeological records indicate contact between Egypt and Syro-Palestine during pre-historic times, the extent of such contact and the resultant cultural exchanges (including religious concepts) is unknown. I will confine this study to a brief overview of the dynastic periods, starting with the Old Kingdom where archaeological evidence is supplemented by textual evidence.

In pre-dynastic times, thus before unification of Upper and Lower Egypt, religious cults appear to have been localised with each community having its own set of

deities, without a real state religion (Emery 1961:119). These earliest gods were for the most part depicted in animal or fetish form, thus laying the foundation of animal cults and representations in the religions developed during later periods of Egyptian history. These cults are attested to by the burial of animals, wrapped in linen and matting, amongst human burials. Even at this early stage amulets in the form of animals were placed with the interred bodies of humans. Animal gods were painted on pottery and statuettes of animals are found in human graves from that period (Wiedemann 2001:1671-172).

The reason why the early Egyptians deified animals are not clear, but it could possibly be ascribed to man's close proximity to the animal world, some of the animals being domesticated and thus assisting mankind, while others posed a threat to human life, domesticated animals and crops (Cf. Oakes & Gahlin 2007:268-269). Jackals devastating cemeteries and mostly being scavengers may have led to Anubis, in his capacity as dealing with dead bodies, being depicted as a jackal headed god.

This type of anthropomorphization of the animal gods seems to have started during early dynastic times when these gods began to be represented with animal or bird heads on human bodies. By the time of the 2nd Dynasty some animal gods appear with fully human forms. Some of the gods, although a vast minority, such as Ptah, were, however, always represented with a full human form (Cf. Pinch 2004:181).

One finds that throughout the dynastic period animal gods appeared in a variety of forms; some with animal heads and human bodies; some with only partial animal features (as for example Hathor with cow ears or horns) and others have complete animal bodies (David 1999:101).

During predynastic times, before the unification of Egypt (allegedly by Narmer [Menes], who was allegedly the first king of the First Dynasty), there occurred a gradual political development when small villages joined together to form clans and eventually nomes.³² These nomes had their own gods (local gods) from which some emerged as national gods while others remained local gods (James 1983:130).

Most of the universal gods of Egypt are depicted on seals found in Syro-Palestine. The concept of universal gods, elevated above local gods, seems to have started during predynastic times and they have been termed as 'cosmic gods.' So from the earliest time the ancient Egyptian had a perception of the expanse of the universe and of beings not confined to specific localities or tribes. Ultimately these gods were responsible for creating and maintaining the perceived universe. It seems that Horus was revered in both Upper and Lower Egypt and that after unification he became the principal deity. Gods from Upper Egypt who profited from the unification and became national (cosmic or universal) gods were Seth of Ombos and Thoth of Hermopolis. Gods from Lower Egypt who retained their prominence throughout the Dynastic Period were Ra of Heliopolis and Ptah of Memphis (James 1983:130).

Throughout the dynastic period and beyond, some of the local gods remained virtually unchanged, while others became fused with the universal gods and both

³² Although 'nomes' or districts appear to have originated during predynastic times and were administered as provinces during dynastic times by viziers, the concept remained the same throughout the history of ancient Egypt (Cf. Ions 1997:19).

local and cosmic gods continued to be worshipped throughout the historic period with the cosmic (or universal) gods usually assuming roles as state gods (Harris 2001:156-157).

The result was that the local gods amalgamated to become gods of the nomes and where an area was conquered the gods of the conquered people would become absorbed into the gods of the conquerors.

Desirable features or characteristics of the 'conquered' gods would be assimilated by the victorious gods, thus enhancing their own powers. The chief god of the nome had extensive powers and protected the regional chieftain (Cf. Morenz & Keep 1992:237-242).

Very little is known of the Thinite Period (the first two dynasties) and it will serve no purpose to deal with this period.

4.3.3 The Old Kingdom (ca. 2686-2181 B.C.E.)

The Old Kingdom in Egypt comprises of the Third to the Sixth Dynasties. By this time the amalgamations of local cults have led to a confusing pantheon of gods, which create the impression that the ancient Egyptians worshipped many gods, although, in all probability, each Egyptian, in practise only worshipped one local god or group of gods. Nevertheless, Egypt, by now being a united country, had so many gods that it led to confusion (Cf. Ions 1997:8-9) and it became essential that the role of the various gods which originated in the previous independent regions of Egypt be reconsidered and organised in a hierarchy within coherent national pantheon.

The priests endeavoured to create some order amongst this multitude of gods in the pantheon. They attempted to organise the various gods into family groups or into ogdoads (groups of eight gods) or enneads (groups of nine gods). The intention was to establish a group of universal or national gods which would involve the whole of the united Egypt (Cf. Hart 1990:20-22; Dunand, Zivie-Coche & Lorton 2005: 49-50).³³

These actions resulted in the development of creation myths and other mythologies to emphasise the relationship between the deities and finally a pantheon of gods was created which endured throughout the history of ancient Egypt, throughout Greco-Roman times up to the Christian era and the Byzantine Period (see Annexure C) (Cf. Humphreys & Jenkins 2004:30).³⁴

³³ The concept of a pantheon of gods or a family of gods is prevalent amongst the religions of most ancient societies and is to be found in Mesopotamian, Hittite and Canaanite religions. From the Ugaritic tablets one finds the pantheon of gods that includes a family such as El, Asherah, Baal-Haddad, Astarte and Anat in the Canaanite religion. In the later Greek civilization the pantheon of Mount Olympus appears. This pantheon, with a change of names, was later adopted by the Romans. The concept of a single god, as propagated by the Eighteenth Dynasty pharaoh Amenophis IV (Akhenaten) and the Yahweh-religion of the Israelites religions were therefore not conforming to the accepted practises of the times. In the end Akhenaten was reviled and his monuments and temples destroyed. Throughout the history of the Israelites (even if we rely only on the Bible as evidence), one finds the notion to also adopt gods from at least the Canaanite pantheon.

³⁴ Some of the deities remained localised without attaining national acceptance, while some dynasties would elevate their own local god to become the royal patron god, thus becoming, if sometimes only for a limited period, a state god. Most state gods, once elevated as such, however, retained that status throughout the rest of Egyptian history. They might have had local associations with certain nomes and cult centers, but their powers extended throughout the whole of Egypt and sometimes even beyond its borders. They were believed to influence the affairs of state, whether internal or on the international front, especially in respect of foreign conquests. These patron gods of a line of rulers was regarded as state gods and the supreme gods of that particular dynasty. Some of them, such as Ra, Osiris, Isis, Hathor and Amun, later Amun-Ra, were worshipped as supreme deities almost on a continuous basis and even achieved international acclaim (David 1999:102). Other state gods included Ptah, Thoth and Anubis.

Prominent in the Third Dynasty was King Djoser, renowned for the first monumental stone building, the step pyramid at Saqqara. He sent punitive expeditions against the Nubians and the Bedouin of Sinai, but no records indicate contact with Syro-Palestine (James 1983:44-45).

The Fourth Dynasty was the era of the great pyramid builders such as Sneferu, Khufu and Khafre. Monuments and documents provide us with more complete historical record than during the Third Dynasty. Depictions of arriving sailing ships indicate trade relations with Syro-Palestine through Byblos. The sun god Ra was mostly confined to Heliopolis as a local god, although some of the kings started calling themselves 'the sons of Ra.'

During the Fifth Dynasty the worship of the sun god Ra of Heliopolis became more prominent as a national god. Every king started to call himself 'the son of Ra' and at least six of these kings built sun temples dedicated to Ra at Abu Gurab.

There are clear indications that during the Sixth Dynasty Egypt had a more aggressive expansion policy under kings such as Pepi I, Merenre and Pepi II. Expeditions were sent to Nubia, Libya, Sinai and Syro-Palestine, but these were mere military raids with no intention of establishing an Egyptian empire. While Anubis appeared to have played a major role in the death rituals during the Fifth Dynasty, Osiris came into prominence during the Sixth Dynasty (Griffiths 1980:5). It is thought that the last pharaoh of this dynasty, Pepi II, ruled for 94 years. During this long reign the central administration of Egypt collapsed, followed by political fragmentation of the country. An important religious development during the Old Kingdom was that during the early part only the king was entitled to an afterlife. By the end of this period soul and

afterlife rights were extended to the entire population; immortality was now the birthright, not only of the king, but of everybody (Najovits 2004:5).

4.3.4 The First Intermediary Period (ca.2181-2050 B.C.E.)

The Sixth Dynasty was followed by a period known as the First Intermediary Period during which Egypt lost its unity and was mostly ruled by regional princes (nomarchs). During the Ninth and Tenth Dynasties the western Delta resumed trade by sea route with Syro-Palestine as is demonstrated by the use of Lebanese cedar wood, especially in coffin construction. During this period and more in particular the Eleventh Dynasty, Thebes and its priesthood came into prominence for the first time in Egyptian national history (Trigger 1983:114). For a short while during this turmoil of this period, Arsaphes of Herakleopolis was elevated as a principal god in Lower Egypt and at the same time the Theban god Month became the principal god in the south (James 1983:130).

4.3.5 The Middle Kingdom (ca. 2050-1786 B.C.E.)

Approximately 2050 B.C.E. Egypt was reunited by the fifth king of the Eleventh Dynasty, Theban King Nehepetre Mentuhotpe II. He took the Horus-name Smaatowy, 'He-who-unites-the two-lands' and from this reunification dates the period known as the Middle Kingdom which lasted until the end of the Fourteenth Dynasty (Kuhrt 1997:160-162).

During this period Egypt achieved some of its greatest successes, both politically and artistically. The power of the regional princes (or nomarchs), who caused the

disruptions resulting in the First Intermediate Period, was curtailed. Trade routes were re-established with Syro-Palestine and improved during the Twelfth Dynasty.

Very little is known of actual warfare in Syro-Palestine during the Twelfth Dynasty apart from a foray by the general Nesymont during the joint reign of Ammenemes I and Sesostris I and an expedition of Sesostris III. Archaeological discoveries of objects from the Twelfth Dynasty in Syro-Palestine reveal that there was considerable contact (probably commercial) between that region and Egypt, not least through the port of Byblos (James 1983:53).

Despite the continued importance of state gods such as Ra, Osiris, Isis, Horus, Hathor, Ptah, Thoth and Anubis, a local triad (Amun, Mut and Khonsu) from Thebes gradually gained in importance (James 1983:131). Amun was originally one of the eight gods of Hermopolis Magna, but from the 12th Dynasty, when a temple was built at Thebes for his worship, he became the principal god of that region (Pinch 2004:100)

4.3.6 The Second Intermediate Period (ca. 1786-1567 B.C.E.)

The period between the end of the Twelfth Dynasty and the beginning of the Eighteenth Dynasty is generally called the Second Intermediate period. All the historical events have not yet been precisely established, but it was the time of the Hyksos rule in Lower Egypt where a separate kingdom was established. According to the historian Manetho, this period was ruled by five dynasties, three being native Egyptian and two Hyksos, with a certain amount of overlapping, not only between the native and foreign dynasties but also within the limits of the native dynasties (Kuhrt 1997:173-175).

It seems that the centralized government of the whole country continued to function during the Thirteenth Dynasty until central control developed such weaknesses which enabled Asiatic settlers (probably from Syro-Palestine) to establish the separate kingdom in the north. It is not clear if this rule resulted solely from the settlers or if there was also a subsequent invasion from western Asia. What is clear, however, is that in recorded history this episode appears to be the first prolonged direct contact between the Egyptians and the people from western Asia.

The name 'Hyksos' is derived from the Egyptian words *hekau-khasut* which means 'ruler from foreign lands' (Keel and Uehlinger 1998:17). Although there is no evidence of their direct rule in southern Egypt, especially in the Theban region, their influence appeared to be felt throughout Egypt.

During this period commercial contact with Syro-Palestine was maintained. Redford (1993:116-117) alleges that despite the fact the Hyksos kings got the Egyptian priests to confer Horus-names on them, they retained their original religion. This contention is rejected by Ryholt and Bülow-Jacobsen (1997:149-150) and correctly so. The Hyksos did not only accept the Egyptian god Seth as their main god, but inscriptions indicate that other gods such as Ra, Hathor Sobek and Wadjet were also worshipped, especially from the Fifteenth Dynasty onwards. The kings even accepted the title 'sons of Ra' (Ryholt & Bülow-Jacobsen 1997:149; Cf. Te Velde 1971:122; Booth 2005:29-31). Here we have a clear indication of cultural exchange. Unfortunately it is not known how much of the Egyptian religion was retained by the Hyksos when they were finally defeated by the Egyptians and returned to western Asia.

4.3.7 The New Kingdom (ca.1567-1058 B.C.E.)

In approximately 1567 B.C.E. the Egyptian king Nebpehtyre Amosis I defeated and expelled the Hyksos; he reunited Egypt and became the first pharaoh of the Eighteenth Dynasty. Now followed a period of Egyptian aggression in western Asia (Spielvogel 2008:24). Amosis I, after a three year siege, destroyed the Hyksos city of Sharuhin in southern Palestine. His successor Thutmose I even penetrated as far as the Euphrates defeating the strong kingdom of Mitanni. Princedoms in Syria and Palestine were conquered and became vassal states of Egypt, with Egyptian garrisons being stationed in the region to keep the princes at bay (Healy & McBride 1992:8-12).

In approximately 1482 B.C.E., Thutmose III became the sole ruler of Egypt and in approximately 1481 B.C.E. the subject princes of Syria revolted forcing the Egyptian garrisons to withdraw to southern Palestine. Thutmose III acted at once and emphatically defeated the princes at Megiddo. He extended the area of Egyptian control to the east across the Euphrates and to the north to the boundaries of the Hittite empire (David 1999:50). He undertook no less than seventeen campaigns into Syro-Palestine during his reign (Kuhrt 1997:193). Control over the conquered territories (including Syro-Palestine) was maintained by trusted local princes under the supervision of Egyptian envoys (Bryan 2003:235-237).

These foreign policies were maintained by the successors of Thutmose III, Amenophis II (who carried out two campaigns in Syria) and Thutmose IV and the Egyptian empire was kept secure throughout the reign of Amenophis III. The decline of this empire would only begin during the reign of Amenophis IV (Akhenaten), the

so-called 'Amarna Period.' Horemheb, whose reign served as a transitional period between the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties pursued a foreign policy which partially restored Egypt's domination over Syro-Palestine (Sweeney 2007:116-117).

The first two kings of the Nineteenth Dynasty, Rameses I and his son Sethos I continued the policies of Horemheb and Sethos I pushed the boundaries of the Egyptian Empire to the Orontes. This empire was stable during the long reign of Rameses II and the stalemate with the Hittites at the battle of Kadesh resulted in the retention by Egypt of its Syro-Palestine territories. His successor Merneptah boasted about forays into Palestine (as related on the famous 'Israel stele'). During his reign, however, the threats of the Sea Peoples emerged and although he secured a decisive victory, the end of the Egyptian Empire was approaching. During years 5, 8 and 11 of the reign of Rameses III, the second king of the Twentieth Dynasty, a series of attacks were made by the Sea Peoples in coalition with the Libyans. Rameses III won the decisive battle to preserve the safety of Egypt itself, but presaged her downfall as an imperial power. Except for a few modest forays into southern Palestine, Rameses III had to content himself with keeping up trade relations with Syro-Palestine. He was succeeded by eight kings, all called Rameses until the end of the Twentieth Dynasty (Eidson et al 1970:190). In this period Egypt lost the last remnants of its Asian empire and internally the stability started to disintegrate and the fragmentation of the country started. The king started to lose control and the priests of Amun at Thebes became more powerful.

As a result of Egypt's imperialism during the New Kingdom, it was the period of the longest continuous presence of Egypt in Syro-Palestine (nearly 500 years). During

this time Egyptian military garrisons and envoys were permanently established in the region. Most of the seals (anepigraphic) discovered in this region which contain Egyptian motifs, date from this period and it was probably during this period that the most cultural exchanges between Egypt and Syro-Palestine occurred. Thutmose III imported Canaanite deities such as Baal and Astarte into the Egyptian pantheon of gods. During the reign of Amenophis II, the cults of the Canaanite gods Reshep and Astarte were strongly propagated in Egypt (Bryan 2003:76).

It is most probably also the period when a tradition of Egyptian motifs on local seals took root and which culminated in the epigraphic seals during Iron IIB and C containing such motifs. Since most of these motifs have a religious connotation, I will deal with the basics of Egyptian religion during this period (the New Kingdom) under a separate heading (see paragraph 4.4.4 hereinafter).

It should be noted that during the 18th Dynasty when a family of Theban princes, beginning with Ahmose, became kings of Egypt, the cult of Amun reached unprecedented proportions. Amun, after he had absorbed the characteristics of the sun god Ra to become Amun-Ra, except for the short Amarna-interlude when Akhenaten banned the worship of all gods except the Aten, retained the important status of 'Father of the Gods' and 'ruler of Egypt and the peoples of its empire' throughout the rest of the history of Egypt (David 1999:104). His temple complex at Karnak became the largest religious centre in the history of mankind.

4.3.8 Third Intermediate Period (ca.1085-664 B.C.E.)

This period which lasted for nearly four hundred years comprises of Dynasties XXI to XXV. It refers to the time in Egypt from the death of Pharaoh Rameses XI of the Twentieth Dynasty in 1085 B.C.E. to the foundation of the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty by Psamtek I in 664 B.C.E., following the expulsion of the Nubian rulers of the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty. This period in Egyptian history is important for purposes of this study for it corresponds for the most part with the periods (Iron IIB and C) which are the subject of this study. The period in Palestine from the time of King Jeroboam till the time of King Hezekiah corresponds with the Twenty-Second to the Twenty-Fourth Dynasties in Egypt (Schipper 1999:117). This period will therefore be dealt with in more detail than the other periods. For most of this period of four hundred years it seems that Israel (later Israel and Judah) and Egypt were allies (Porten 1984:373).

The first phase of the Third Intermediate Period started prior to the Twenty-First Dynasty during the reign of Rameses XI, the last king of the Twentieth Dynasty. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the Egyptian control was not fragmented during the 21st and 22nd Dynasties, but the fragmentation already occurred during the Twentieth Dynasty. The country was divided administratively between the north and south during much of this time, but the rulers evidently considered the god Amun himself as king of a united Egypt. Even to outsiders, Egypt appeared to be ruled by only one king and this situation actually began during the reign of Rameses XI. The main players at the beginning of this era consisted of Rameses XI and Smendes in the north and Herihor in the south. It is extremely likely that all of these individuals were connected through some sort of family relationship, though that remains very unclear.

Herihor, a general and High-Priest of Amun at Thebes, appears to have taken effective control of southern Egypt some years prior to the death of Rameses XI and even during Rameses XI's life Smendes in the north seems to have held considerable power. But the south was henceforth effectively ruled by the Amun-priests from Thebes (Grimal 1994:314; James 1983:69).

The rise of Herihor ushered in a period known as the *wehem meswt* (he who repeats births), alluding to what was supposed to be a new era of Egyptian strength, a term previously used by the founders of new dynasties, but in fact this 'renaissance' actually led the country directly into the Third Intermediate Period (Wendel 2009:105-106).

During some periods of the 21st and 22nd Dynasties, Egypt seems to have regained some of its power that was lost during the later part of the New Kingdom. Herihor died about five years before Rameses XI and was replaced by Piankhy (Kemp 1991:343), who may have been his son-in-law. Both Piankhy and Rameses XI seem to have died at about the same time, ushering in the traditional 21st Dynasty, when Smendes gained the throne in the north and Pinedjem I, the son of Piankhy, became High-Priest of Amun in the south at Thebes (Trigger 1983:232-233).

Throughout this period, the High-Priests of Amun, while firmly in control of the south, nominally deferred to the northern king, allowing him to rule, at least in name, the whole of Egypt. In fact, upon Smendes' death and after the short reign of Amenemnisu in the north, one of Pinedjem I's sons, Psunsennes I, became the northern king while several other sons successively became the High-Priests of Amun at Thebes, a situation not at all like that in previous intermediate periods. There seems

to have been considerable co-operation between the two leaders and a relatively productive period set in (Sweeney 2008:25-27).

This period ended with the death of Psunsennes II, after which Sheshonq I came to power in the north, apparently by marrying the daughter of Psunsennes II. Sheshonq I was a Libyan by descent (Dodson 2000:159). He was the leader of the Libyan community that had first come to Egypt partly as slave-prisoners from the armies defeated by Rameses III, partly as mercenaries hired by the Egyptians. His power centre was Herakleopolis in Middle Egypt, between Thebes and the Delta, and he found it easy to extend his power northwards, eventually making his capital at Bubastis (Grimal 1994:322).

Sheshonq I brought the divided factions of Thebes and Tanis together. He appointed his own son, Iuput, as Governor of Upper Egypt and at the same time both High-Priest of Amun and commander-in-chief of the armies (Fazzini 1988:4). Hence, though history continues to refer to this as an intermediate period, the country by this time was undivided. Sheshonq I (Shishak of the Bible) in 925 B.C.E. went on a highly successful military campaign to Palestine, the first of such campaigns since the time of Rameses III early in the 20th Dynasty (Schipper 1999:119).

Sheshonq's purpose was limited and definite: to gain political and commercial security by subduing his immediate neighbours. He made no attempt to revive the empire of Thutmosis III, Sethos I or Rameses II (Schipper 1999:119-132). Sheshonq's son, Osorkon I, attempted to emulate his father's successes in Palestine, but his forces under the Ethiopian general Zerah were soundly defeated by the forces

of King Asa of Judah *ca.* 897 B.C.E. (2 Chr 14:9-15; Schipper 1999:133-139). This defeat spelt the end of Egypt's expansionist policy in Asia.

For a period of time Egypt appeared to have remained united and only later was once again divided. At the end of the 22nd Dynasty we really see a breakdown in power under the long reign of Sheshonq III, which might be said to have signalled the start of the real Third Intermediate Period. All together, the 21st and 22nd Dynasties appear to have been more successful and even somewhat more lucrative than the last years of the New Kingdom. Though men divided the administration of Egypt, they saw not a divided Egypt so much as one ruled by a kingly god, Amun. During the reign of Sheshonq III strong forces of separatism arose and an increasing number of autonomous princes began to establish themselves. By the middle of the eighth century B.C.E., during a period known as the 'Libyan Anarchy', no fewer than nine kingdoms and principalities (collectively known as the Twenty-Third Dynasty) co-existed in Egypt (Silverman 2003:37).

The Twenty-Fourth Dynasty lasted only for a brief period (approximately 15 years) of two kings ruling. Its founder was Tefnakhte, the local prince or governor of the Delta city of Sais, who made himself master of the Delta, taking Bubastis and Tanis, and then moved on Upper Egypt, capturing Hermopolis and Memphis, but during his siege of Herakleopolis the Nubian invasion brought his venture to a sudden halt. On the departure of the Nubians, he regained control of Lower Egypt and was succeeded by his son, Bocchoris, who ruled well. He was favourably remembered, but his rule ended with the return of the Nubians, who are reputed to have captured him and burned him alive (Kessler 1996:31; Kaiser 1998:368). This brought an end to the

Third Intermediate Period. Throughout this period the role of Amun as the most important deity of Egypt seems to have continued

I emphasised the contact between Egypt and Syro-Palestine during the New Kingdom for a very important reason. Except for the excursions of Sheshonq I and his son, Osorkon I, no military invasions were made by the Egyptians into Syro-Palestine during the Third Intermediate Period. Internal fragmentation and unrest prohibited any foreign policy ‘... in der an eine aktive Aussenpolitik Ägyptens nicht zu denken war’ (Schipper 1999:141). During this period there could not have been significant cultural exchanges between Egypt and Syro-Palestine (in particular Israel and Judah), at least not politically. One has to accept, however, that contact in trade and on personal level continued especially through Phoenicia. Due to the long period involved it seems that most of the cultural elements in Israel and Judah during Iron IIB and C, which had their roots in Egypt, were probably the result of cultural exchanges earlier during the New Kingdom.

4.3.9 The Late Dynastic Period (ca. 664-332 B.C.E.)

In this era a large section of Egypt was ruled by the Nubians. Then came the Saites which were mere puppets for the Assyrians. However, between these dynasties Egypt had a degree of stability and prosperity, together with a firm central rule and a ‘good Nile’. Thus Egypt could make a rapid recovery from any attack because of her population and potential for agricultural wealth.

The Twenty-Fifth Dynasty is also known as the Nubian Dynasty. Under the Libyan kings, Nubia had ceased to be an Egyptian possession or dependency. When priest-

kings of Thebes were attacked by the Libyans, many of the priesthood took refuge in Nubia. The temple at Napata in Nubia became a sort of Thebes in exile. For two centuries of Libyan domination the tradition of the Amun-Ra cult was maintained. Egyptian language stayed the official language of the government and the Nubians took pride that they were still Egyptians (Silverman 1991:37-38).

At approximately 747 B.C.E. the Nubian king, Piankhy, launched an invasion of Egypt from the south. His army encountered Tefnakhte, the local prince or governor of Sais, at Thebes and defeated him there, then fought their way on down-river, taking Hermopolis, Memphis and finally overrunning the Delta. The Egyptians made submission to Piankhy. Tefnakhte, on his surrender, was treated honorably by the Nubian king. Then, his conquest complete, Piankhy and his army abandoned Egypt and returned up the Nile to their distant capital. No attempt was made to leave an administration. The last king of the Libyan Dynasty, Osorkon V, re-occupied Thebes and set up his own rule again. Tefnakhte temporarily resumed his control of Memphis and the Delta (Redford 2006: 72-73).

The temporary reinstatement of the Twenty-Fourth Dynasty did not last long. In approximately 716 B.C.E. Piankhy's son and successor, Shabaka (ruled 716-702 B.C.E.) reinvaded Egypt with a more permanent purpose. He effectively brought the Libyan Dynasty (the Twenty-Fourth Dynasty) to an end and set up his capital at Thebes. He apparently was a pious king and during his reign temples and shrines were renovated and new ones built (especially for the Memphis god Ptah) throughout the country. He made a treaty with the Assyrians, avoiding war on that front (Kitchen 2006:95; Myśliwiec 2000:88-90).

His successor was Shebiktu (ruled 702-690 B.C.E.), during whose reign confrontation with the Assyria could not be avoided and an alliance was made with the kingdom of Judah (Schipper 1999:205; Kaiser 1998:268). This alliance probably led to closer relationships between Egypt and Judah, politically, commercially as well as on personal levels with (probably) cultural exchanges. Shebiktu's uncle, Taharqa, led an army into Palestine where Sennacherib, king of Assyria, was besieging Jerusalem. At this time the Assyrians were struck by a mysterious plague and war was again delayed (Kitchen 2006:95).

In 690 B.C.E., Taharqa had Shebiktu assassinated and assumed the throne himself. He moved his capital to Tanis in the eastern Delta, from which forward position he hoped to mount an empire-building campaign into Asia. Taharqa was an efficient administrator and planner. Military governors were installed at Thebes and Napta.

In 671 B.C.E. the Assyrian king, Esarhaddon, finally launched a direct attack on Egypt. Whilst Taharqa awaited him in the Delta, the Assyrian marched directly on Memphis, capturing the city and cutting the Egyptians' lines of communication. Taharqa's family was captured by the Assyrians and the Pharaoh himself fled back to Nubia (Boardman 1991:694-698).

Esarhaddon by now had captured a great deal of the Middle East and did not remain in Egypt. Thus, Taharqa returned and retook Memphis. His possession was only for a few years before Esarhaddon's successor, Assurbanipal, came with a vast force and captured Memphis and Thebes. Taharqa died in 664 B.C.E. and was followed by Tantamani (ruled 664-656 B.C.E.). He invaded Egypt from Napata in order to drive

out the Assyrians, but Assurbanipal forced him back into Nubia. The Nubian Dynasty was at an end (James 1983:74).

The Nubians regarded themselves as Egyptians and was Egyptianised enough to maintain classical Egyptian cultural and religious practices (Silverman 1991:38). Devotion to Amun continued but the other national gods of Egypt were not neglected (James 1983:73). The Nubian kings, however, abolished the post of High Priests of Amun and instead appointed their own daughters high priestesses, also called consorts of Amun or God's wives of Amun (Mosjow 2005:950). The position God's wife of Amun in the temple of Amun at Karnak was a very important position. It was usually held by a daughter of the king and she would never marry but adopt her successor. Although her true role in the temple is not known, she probably participated in some of the temple rituals. The role of God's wife had its origins at the beginning of the New Kingdom when King Ahmosis bestowed this title on his wife. Later during the Eighteenth Dynasty Queen Hatshepsut carried this title before she became Pharaoh. This office disappeared to be revived during the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty in another form where the 'God's wife' had to remain celibate (Silverman 1991:87). During this period this function of 'God's wife' was politically very important in view of the great possession she owned and administered (Bresciani 1984:371). Furthermore there was a burgeoning Osiris-cult and several chapels for the worship of this god were erected at Karnak (Redford 2006:132). The Nubians also revived religious cult and ritual of the Old Kingdom (Sweeney 2006:45).

The first king of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty was Necho I (who ruled from 672 to 664 B.C.E.) and he was installed by the Assyrians. He was a descendant of king

Tefnakhte. He collaborated with the Assyrian kings Sennacherib and Assurbanipal and had been rewarded with gold and the honor of being enthroned as a puppet king. His capital was Sais and this dynasty is referred to as the Saite Dynasty. They regarded themselves as rightful successors to the Egyptian throne which had been neglected by the descendants of Rameses II (Grimal 1994:365). Necho's son and successor, Psammetichus I, shook off the dominion of the Assyrians and re-established an independent Egypt. He made careful moves in order to establish his own control in Upper Egypt whose spiritual leader, the chief priestess of Amun or 'God's wife', was Amenirdis II, who was a daughter of the great Piankhy. He persuaded her to adopt his own daughter Nitiquet as her successor, once again showing the political importance of the office, for through this agreement the allegiance was changed peacefully from the Twenty-Fifth to the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty (Sidebotham, Hense & Nouwens 2008:15; Robins 1993:154,156). The Egyptians started to rid themselves of Assyrian influences and to revive their old ways and religion.

Necho II (ruled 610-595 B.C.E.), the son of Psammetichus, pursued an ambitious foreign policy. He made allies with the Assyrians against the Babylonians and sent an expedition to Syria to assist the Assyrians against the Babylonians. At Megiddo his army was confronted by the army of the Judahite king Josiah. It seems that Judah at that time was an Egyptian vassal state, although it has not yet been established beyond reasonable doubt (Schipper 1999:235). During the battle King Josiah was killed and the Judahite army destroyed, after which the Egyptians marched into Syria (Sykes 2003:127; Cf. Cline 2002:90).

Necho's successor, Psammetichus II (ruled 595-589 B.C.E.), appeared to have been more interested in keeping the Nubians at bay and he sent an expedition as far south as the second cataract. His successor, Apries (ruled 589-570 B.C.E.), attacked the Phoenician cities of Tyre and Sidon, probably as a result of trading disputes. In 570 B.C.E. Apries was overthrown by his own general, Amasis (ruled 570-526 B.C.E.), who repulsed a Babylonian attack and kept Egypt in prosperity (Myśliwiec 2000:120). Stelae found in Phoenicia of Psammetichus II and Necho II indicate that during that period Phoenicia was controlled by Egypt (Naman 2006:308). During the reign of Apries Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians in 587 B.C.E.

Later, as a result of the threat of the Persians, Amasis was obliged to make an alliance with the Babylonians. During the short reign of Psammetichus III (526-525 B.C.E.), the Persians, guided across the Sinai desert by the Bedouins and assisted by the treacherous Greek mercenaries, comprehensively defeated the Egyptians at Pelusium and Psammetichus III committed suicide (Boardman et al 1988:48).

During the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty we find one of the best examples in history of foreigners settling in the Delta-region. Not only were there Greek commercial colonies, but large numbers of Judahite migrants were found there (Finkelstein & Silberman 2002:66). Some of these Judahites (during the latter part of the Dynasty) could have been fugitives from the Babylonian occupation of Judah. In the history of Judah as a separate kingdom it seems that during the Twenty-Second and Twenty-Sixth Dynasty (especially during the first eighty years) the best opportunities for cultural exchanges between Egypt and Judah existed. When scholars allege that Judah was influenced by Egypt it was most probably during the Third Intermediate Period,

especially the Twenty-Second Dynasty and the period of the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty of the Late Dynastic Period before the exile of the Judahites. The Egyptian religion during the Twenty-Second Dynasty was a continuation of the concepts developed during the New Kingdom, but during the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty the Saite rulers revolutionized the religion. In the premises I will briefly deal with Egyptian religion during the New Kingdom and the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty.

4.4. EGYPTIAN RELIGION DURING RELEVANT PERIODS

4.4.1 The Eighteenth to Twentieth Dynasties

I have indicated in the previous paragraph that on a balance of probabilities the closest contact between Egypt and Syro-Palestine occurred during the zenith of the Egyptian empire, which lasted for nearly five hundred years from the Eighteenth to the early part of the Twentieth Dynasty. Continuous Egyptian presence in Syro-Palestine would have made regular cultural exchanges unavoidable.

It is highly improbable that the monotheistic Aten-religion during the Amarna-period at the end of the Eighteenth Dynasty would have played a significant role in any cultural exchanges between Egypt and Syro-Palestine as such. On the other hand the Amarna-period is the focal point of the ancient Near East. During this period there occurred unprecedented international contacts and the cultural resources of the Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Hittites, Hurrians, Caphtorians, Canaanites and numerous other ethnic elements intermingled. The hub of all these activities was Canaan and the Hebrews came at just the right time to inherit the maximum cultural legacy of the Near East. The Hebrews in the region ran their course between the

Amarna-Period and the Hellenistic Period. Although the Amarna-period lasted for a only a short while (approximately 15 years) it changed the course of history (Gordon and Rendsburg 1997:82-83). During that period, however, the relationship between Egypt and Syro-Palestine deteriorated, especially as a result of the lack of concern of Akhenaten (Amenophis IV) regarding Egypt's empire status and in particular developments in Syro-Palestine (Najovits 2004:127; Kuhrt 1997:194-198). After the demise of the Aten-religion, Horemheb reinstated the previous religion of Egypt, especially the state religion of Amun-Ra (Najovits 2004:129).

I will therefore ignore the short, but interesting, Amarna-interlude for purposes of this study and concentrate on the main trends of Egyptian religion during the time of the New Kingdom.

An interesting outcome of the preceding Hyksos-interlude was that a new vision regarding religion developed in Egypt. The Hyksos identified their main god with the Egyptian god Seth, the god of warfare and chaos. This acceptance of an Egyptian god by a foreign power ruling a major portion of Egypt resulted in the incorporation of gods of conquered territories into the Egyptian pantheon throughout the period of the New Kingdom (Meskell 2002:27).

Despite the presence of new foreign gods, the Egyptians continued to identify with a principal god, the patron god of the Theban rulers, Amun-Ra. During the Eighteenth Dynasty before the amalgamation of Amun and Ra, the three gods Amun, Ra and Ptah actually formed a triad (Baines 1991:188). Amun as the main god of Thebes, within the context of divine kingship, became as a result of the emergence of the Theban kings, a Theban manifestation of Ra and henceforth became Amun-Ra. The

theologies of Heliopolis and Thebes were integrated (Troy 2006:124). Extensive building projects were undertaken at Thebes, Amun-Ra's cult centre, reaching their height during the reign of Amenophis III of the Eighteenth Dynasty and Rameses II of the Nineteenth Dynasty. In addition to Amun's pre-eminence throughout most of the New Kingdom, allegiance to local gods was equally important. The priesthood of Amun was actively involved in the government and came to assume great importance.

During this period nearly all the traditional gods and goddesses are officially worshipped. Hathor was initially seen as the consort of Amun, but she was gradually replaced in this capacity by Mut, who finally, during this period, became the 'mother of the gods', a title originally granted to Hathor. Other gods and goddesses who played a prominent official role were *inter alia* Horus, Ptah, Thoth, Wadjet, Sakhmet, Ma'at, Montu, Osiris, Isis, Anubis, Seth, Khnum, Khonsu and Buto (Troy 2006:125-129).

The king as priest was responsible for the independent exchange between the mortal and divine worlds, a duty which he fulfilled by means of ritual offerings. Each temple served as the residence of a primary deity and each god was theoretically entitled to a daily ritual that renewed the life of the god inhabiting the cult statue or effigy. In practise these rituals were performed by priests who received their divine authority from the king (Troy 2006:135-136).

At the same time religion became increasingly personal, with more ways for ordinary people to communicate with the gods—through worship at local chapels and community shrines, pilgrimages to great temples during festival times, the

maintenance of statuettes of deities in local settings. The vast majority of scarab seals during this period no longer functioned as seals but had the purely amuletic and religious purpose 'of providing protection, attracting good luck or associating their wearers with desired powers or conditions' (Andrews 1994:55).

Scenes with deities offered protection and demonstrate divine patronage or the wearer's special devotion. Not only are all the chief gods and goddesses, such as Amun-Ra, Mut, Khonsu, Horus, Hathor, Osiris, Isis, Thoth, Ptah, and Anubis represented, but also household deities (where Bes is a favourite). We find the same tendency during Iron II in Syro-Palestine (see Chapters 5 and 6). Even those gods, who hitherto had rarely been represented, such as Haapi, the Nile god, Astarte, the imported Canaanite goddess of love and war and Reshep, the imported Canaanite warrior god, are represented on these scarabs (Andrews 1994:55; Meskell 2002:21).

Sometimes it was regarded as sufficient protection just to include the name of a god or a king in an inscription on a seal, especially if the king's name was accompanied by a potent epithet such as 'smiter of the Nine Bows' (Egypt's traditional enemies), 'trampler of foreign land', 'builder of monuments' etcetera (Andrews 1994:55).

As a result of cultural exchanges similar scarabs probably became of amuletic (or religious) importance during this time in Syro-Palestine. This may account for the multitude of anepigraphic seal-amulets dating to the Late Bronze Age and Iron I and II (as well as epigraphic seals during Iron IIB and C) discovered in Palestine and which contain similar iconography as those Egyptian ones dating to the New Kingdom.

4.4.2 The Twenty-Sixth Dynasty

During the Third Intermediate Period one finds that the rulers of Egypt adhered to the same gods as those revered during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties. Sheshonq I, for instance served Amun, Mut, Horus, Atum and Ptah, important state gods during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties (Tiele 2009:189). During the Late Dynastic Period (beginning with the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty of the Nubians and later the Saïtes of the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty) there came changes in the New Kingdom concepts of religion.

As already stated in paragraph 4.3.9 above, Psammetichus I, after he had shaken off the dominion of the Assyrians and re-established an independent Egypt, made careful moves in order to establish his own control in Upper Egypt, whose spiritual leader, the chief priestess of Amun (or God's wife) was a daughter of the great Piankhy. The Egyptians started to rid themselves of Assyrian influences and revive their old ways and religion.

'As has often been discussed, the Pharaohs of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty launched a campaign to restore the culture of the old days, in art, literature, religion, and so on. This cultural "renaissance" very appropriately served as a landmark for the eventual loss of traditional Egyptian culture' (Poo 2005:138).

The term 'old days' is really a very vague statement and is not completely borne out by the events which are described as 'the renaissance'. It seems that the Saïtes embarked on a mission to revive gods ('dead gods') that for centuries had played no prominent role in the Egyptian pantheon, thus returning to an archaic period (Assmann & Jenkins 2003:362). In Saïs, Neith, a goddess of the hunt, who dated back

to the First Dynasty, was regarded as the oldest, the creator goddess and the leader of all the gods. According to Johnson (1994:132) she was known as the 'Oldest One'. Her symbol is the shield with the crossed arrows (Geddes & Grosset 1997:408; Hart 2002:100; Edwards 1970:493; Ellis 1999:115). When the Saite princes became the rulers of the whole of Egypt, Neith replaced the long-time state deity, Amun-Ra, at the head of the pantheon as the ruler of all the gods. She seems to have retained the place at the head of the pantheon until the time of the Ptolemies (Lesko 1999:58; Wendel 2009:125; Cf. Pinch 2004:34).

The office of 'God's wife' at the temple of Karnak, in view of its political importance, was retained. Despite the official state religion, the ordinary people of Egypt, in addition to their veneration of local and household gods, continued to center their religion on Amun-Ra and Osiris. The cultic worship of animals also became very popular (Lesko 1991:112).

These religious changes in Egypt during the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty do not appear to be reflected on Egyptian religious symbolism which appears on contemporary seal-amulets from Israel and Judah. This may indicate that no important cultural exchanges between Egypt and Judah occurred during this period or that cultural exchanges involving religious concepts were confined on the level of ordinary citizens who did not accept the changes initiated by the rulers. I venture the opinion that the Egyptian religious symbolism on Hebrew seals during Iron IIB and C was probably the result of cultural exchanges during the New Kingdom and in particular the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties.

4.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have briefly investigated the contact between ancient Egypt and Syro-Palestine during which contact cultural exchanges could have occurred. During the Dynastic Period, preceding the Eighteenth Dynasty, Egypt's presence in Syro-Palestine was confined to commerce and occasional military raids. For approximately one hundred years an Asiatic people, the Hyksos, probably from Canaan or Syria, occupied a large portion of Egypt. Cultural exchanges would have been unavoidable, but the extent of such exchanges has not been established, except that the Hyksos associated their main god with the Egyptian god Seth and also accepted other Egyptian gods.

After the Hyksos had been driven from Egypt at the beginning of the Eighteenth Dynasty, the beginning of the New Kingdom, Egypt's foreign policy changed dramatically in that the rulers now started to establish an Egyptian empire, which included Syro-Palestine. This empire lasted for nearly five hundred years and during this period, with a continuous Egyptian presence in Syro-Palestine, the best opportunity for cultural exchanges was created. Syrian gods such as Baal, Astarte and Reshef were imported into the Egyptian pantheon, especially by Thutmose III. I also made the point that during the Third Intermediate Period in Egypt the basic religious concepts of the New Kingdom were retained. It was only during the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty (the abolition of the office of High Priest of Amun who was replaced by a God's wife) and the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty (Neith as principal goddess and the reinstatement of various archaic concepts) that drastic changes to the New Kingdom

religion were introduced. I conclude that these latter changes do not appear to have been incorporated in the Egyptian symbolism on Hebrew seals.

I also briefly looked at relevant Egyptian religious concepts and symbolism and the importance of seal-amulets as a religious or cult object and the role magic played in the religion of the ordinary Egyptians. I concentrated on deities that were prominent during the New Kingdom, the Third Intermediate Period and the first part of the Late Dynastic Period.

The purpose of this chapter is to establish the most likely periods of cultural exchanges between Egypt and Syro-Palestine and to lay a foundation to understand Egyptian symbolism on seals from Israel and Judah during Iron IIB and C.

Scholars aver that during the time of the divided monarchy of the Israelites, Israel was influenced by Phoenicia and Judah by Egypt.

It should be emphasised that Egypt's influence in the Levant from the Chalcolithic to Iron Age II, whether directly through military invasion and settlement or indirectly through trade, cannot be underestimated. The Egyptians left their mark not only on the Israelites but also on other nations such as the Canaanites, Moabites, Edomites, Ammonites and finally on the Phoenicians. When it is suggested that Israel was influenced by the Phoenicians, one should also investigate if this influence, especially with regard to seal iconography, which is the subject of this study, is not the result of earlier cultural exchanges between Egypt and Phoenicia (or their predecessors) and that Israel was therefore indirectly influenced by Egypt via Phoenicia. This could only be established by investigating contemporary Phoenician seals and which I will do in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

EGYPTIAN SYMBOLISM ON PHOENICIAN SEALS DURING IRON IIB

AND C

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The Phoenicians, who apparently developed from the remnants of the Canaanites, during Iron II, were initially settled along the Mediterranean coastline of present day Lebanon and the northern part of the same coastline of present Israel. The first sea voyages of which we have direct knowledge, were undertaken by the Egyptians, but ‘the people to whom the art of navigation was most indebted, who excelled all others in nautical skill, and who carried the spirit of adventure far beyond any contemporary nation, were the Phoenicians...’ (Wilkinson 1847a:213-214). ‘As explorers in antiquity, the Phoenicians were second to none’ (Harden 1963:20). ‘Phoenician sailors mastered the waterways, braving treacherous winds and reefs to explore paths previously uncharted’ (Markoe 2000:12).

They were the first people to make extensive use of seafaring for trade purposes and thus played a major role in the development of the ancient world

‘Thanks to the Phoenician expansion, the different regions and populations of the Mediterranean basin were linked together for the first time in the framework of intense communication and trading networks, which bound extensive zones of production and supply, as never before, with the great centres of demand for raw materials’ (Aubet 2001:305).

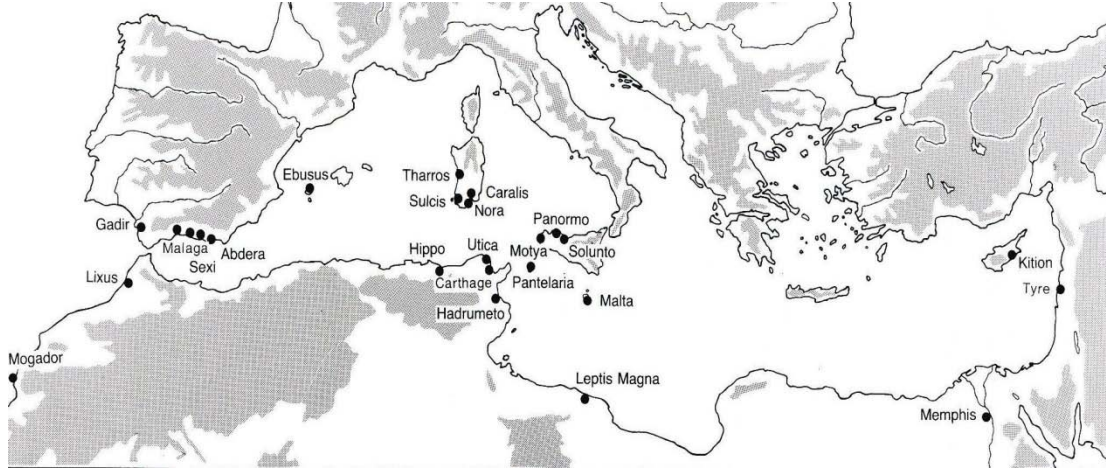


Figure 8: Commercial network of the Phoenician expansion in the Mediterranean.

(Aubet 2001:160)

From the Bible it appears that close relationships existed between the kings of the United Kingdom of Israel, David and Solomon, and the king of Tyre, Hiram (1 Ki 5:1-18; 9:10). During the Divided Monarchy, King Ahab of Israel married the daughter of Ethbaal, the king of another Phoenician city, Sidon (1 Ki 16:31) and cultural exchanges between Israel and the city states of Phoenicia would have been unavoidable.

Large numbers of Phoenicians migrated to other parts of the known world, some of them settled on the northern Mediterranean coastline of Africa at places like Carthage and Utica; others on the southern coastline of Europe, for instance Italy, as well as Mediterranean islands (such as Sicily and Cyprus).

An inherent danger in a discussion of peoples like the Canaanites³⁵ and the

³⁵ This diversity of city states is especially evident in the Amarna letters where the vassal Canaanite rulers are continuously complaining about the threats and conduct of other such states and in which letters the Egyptian pharaoh is requested for assistance.

Phoenicians is to approach the subject from the vantage point of a sovereign and/or united nation.

When one considers 'the Phoenicians', one should continuously keep in mind that several city states were involved where each one apparently had its own pantheon of gods and where the principal gods of Byblos was not necessarily the same as those of other cities such as Tyre and Sidon (Peckham 1987:79-80; Aubet 2001:152).

Another problem is the lack of direct textual evidence of the history of the Phoenicians. Iron Age texts from mainland Phoenicia for the most part are funerary documents or are concerned with the building and repair of temples and the dedication of objects to the gods. 'Much of what is recorded about Iron Age Phoenicia comes from Greek and Roman historians, the Old Testament, Mesopotamian and Egyptian records and myths and legends from Homer...' (Ward 2004:184; Cf. Aubet 2001:11-13).

What seems to be clear, as discussed in chapters 1 and 4 above, is that from the earliest times there was continuous contact between Egypt and Syro-Palestine, including those areas later occupied by the Phoenicians, being the descendants of the Canaanites. These contact situations inevitably led to cultural exchanges. A prime example, as discussed in chapter 4 above (see p.95), is the importation into Egypt by Thutmosis III of Syrian (Canaanite) gods. One would expect these exchanges not to be unilateral but that the conquered nations (including the Canaanites, the later Phoenicians) would also accept some of the religious concepts of the conqueror, Egypt.

5.2 EGYPTIAN RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS ON PHOENICIAN SEALS

Despite thousands of Phoenician inscriptions that have been discovered, relatively few relate to Phoenician religious concepts and rituals. Although the major gods are mentioned, their nature and function are unknown. The ruins of temples do not reveal the cults and rituals that were practised in them (Ward 2004:201).

Another problem, in addition to the lack of Phoenician literature, contributing to the fact that we know less about Phoenician religion than most of the other nations of antiquity, is that we ‘cannot always differentiate between true Phoenician elements and borrowings from other cults. The long-standing Egyptian influence—and at times domination—in the Syrian coastal cities brought with it much contact with Egyptian religion’ (Harden 1963:84).

Some of the gods and goddesses in the earlier Canaanite pantheon show remarkable resemblances to certain Egyptian gods. This is more fully discussed, where relevant, during the analysis of some of the seals. Furthermore the Phoenicians sometimes associated their gods with Egyptian counterparts, giving their own gods attributes and characteristics previously peculiar to the gods of the much older civilization. It also seems that when the situation required it, they simply borrowed Egyptian gods or gods from other nations without association with gods of their own pantheons³⁶. The traditional views on Phoenicia are that it had far fewer gods in their pantheon than for instance a country like Egypt.

³⁶ The choice of the plural ‘pantheons’ is deliberate because every city state had its own pantheon and although there are similarities, the emphasis on the importance of certain gods varied from city to city. King Hiram of Tyre introduced a new god, Melqart, as the principal deity of the city. The other cities do not seem to have followed suit. Phoenician religion was not static but changed as it was influenced by their contact with other nations, whether forced by invasion or the result of friendly contact. Thus, Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman influences found their way into Phoenician religion.

Here again I want to extend a cautionary note; one should be careful not to generalise and confine oneself to texts and inscriptions. From the iconography on Phoenician seals it appears that their pantheon was much more extensive than suggested by the meagre written evidence available to us. I submit that a comprehensive study of Phoenician seals will reveal many more gods, most of whom were 'borrowed' from Egypt. The scope of this study, however, does not allow for such an extensive investigation. I shall, while analysing a few Phoenician seals later in this chapter, endeavour to point out those gods who do not seem to be associated with known Phoenician gods.

The worship of these foreign, mostly Egyptian gods has a cumulative effect in that it would also have influenced those other nations with whom the Phoenicians were in close contact, like the Northern Kingdom of Israel during the ninth and eighth centuries (Cf. Miller & Hayes 1986: 267).

We are mainly acquainted with the Canaanite/ Phoenician religion from the middle of the 2nd millennium to approximately the beginning of the 1st millennium B.C.E. as a result of the discovery of the clay tablets at Ugarit (Bonanno 1986:186).

'The Ugaritic texts have taught us much about the mythology and religion accepted at Ugarit in the Late Bronze Age, but we have no comparable sources for Phoenicia proper' (Baumgarten 1981:262). Our knowledge of the Phoenician religion during Iron IIB and C is very sketchy and for the most part based on Philo of Byblos and a small number of inscriptions (Azize 2005:5).

Despite these limitations it has been said that the religion of the Phoenicians is of the utmost importance, as relating to a people who were the most polished of the Semitic

tribes, and exercised the greatest and most lasting influence on the civilization of the ancient world, partly by means of their commercial relations and partly through the extensive migrations of Phoenician tribes' (Cf. Ball 2001: 442; Bondi 2001:42-43).

Despite this influence by the Phoenicians on other nations it was not one-sided; their commercial intercourse with other peoples is clearly reflected in the development of their own religion and mythology (Cf. Aubet 2001:354-355; Marti 2009:96; Albright 1980:10; Hitti 2004:125; Bondi 2001:24).

In Phoenician religion there was a variety of dying and rising gods. One of these was Adonis who was mostly revered at the city of Byblos. His name means simply the title 'Lord' which title is also found as *Adonai* in the religion of Israel (Smart 1998:209).

Many of the gods they worshiped were localized and are now known only under their local names. A pantheon was presided over by the father of the gods, but a goddess was the principal figure in the pantheons of some of the Phoenician cities. It must again be emphasised that since there was no national Phoenician state, there was obviously no national Phoenician pantheon (Aubet 2001:151; Barclay 2001:204).

It seems that most of the gods and goddesses of the Phoenicians were the result of their Canaanite origins, but the importance of some of them appears to have dwindled, while others became more important. In Canaanite tradition El was the supreme god and king. His wife Asherah was regarded as the mother goddess.³⁷

³⁷As regards Asherah (mentioned in the Bible and currently the subject of much controversy, which does not form part of this study, relating to a consort of Yahweh and asherah poles and trees), Smith (2002:115) investigates the possibility that the tree was originally the symbol of this goddess. He points out, that, according to tradition, the tree was regarded as a cultic object in Phoenician religion and speculates that this tradition as well as the biblical references may point to a Canaanite tradition.

In the religion of the Phoenician cities they were relegated to lower positions, while Baal for instance became a supreme god in most of the cities. Astarte, who was a relative minor goddess in the pantheon of Ugarit, became very important at Tyre and Sidon.

The chief god of Tyre was Melqart, elevated to that position by king Hiram of Tyre. This god was not a member of the earlier Canaanite pantheon. Other Tyrian deities The principal gods at Sidon were Astarte and Eshmun (Peckham 1987:84), while other gods included Baal-Sidon (just another form of Baal) and Reshep.³⁸ At Byblos (Gubla) the chief deity was Baalat Gubla or the 'Mistress of Byblos', who appears to include Baal-Shamen and Baal- Saphon (Ward 2004:202; Markoe 2000:115-116).

the same goddess as Anat or Astarte, who had a long association with the city (Ward 2004:202). Baal and Baal-Shamen are also connected to the city.

Only the principal gods of some of the city states are dealt with in this chapter. Other gods (for a more complete picture) are discussed under **PHOENICIAN GODS** in **ANNEXURE B**.

The purpose of this chapter is, however, not to investigate the religion of the Phoenicians but to investigate some Phoenician seals dating to Iron IIB and C to illustrate that, despite the existence of Phoenician pantheons and an established Phoenician religion, which apparently evolved over centuries from their Canaanite ancestors, Egyptian religious symbolism played an important role in the iconography of some Phoenician seals.

³⁸ The word '*baal*' simply means 'lord', for instance Lord of Sidon or Lord of Heaven or Lord of the North.

It seems that the Phoenicians had a limited assortment of motifs that they used again and again, but in endless variations and compositions, on seals. During the ninth and eighth centuries B.C.E., before the arrival of the Assyrians, there were, in addition to local motifs, mainly two styles employed, the northern style and the southern style. The northern style appears to have been influenced by for instance Hittite and Aramaic prototypes. The southern style was clearly influenced by Egyptian motifs. Depicted on these seals are various Egyptian deities such as Ra, Horus, Isis, Sekhmet, Nephtys, Khonsu, Thoth, Ptah etcetera. In addition Egyptian emblems such as the *djed*-pillar, the winged *ureaus*, the head of Bes, the winged sun disk, the *ankh*, the lotus flower, the Horus eye (*udjat*) and others as the seals themselves will reveal, are depicted. Egyptian hieroglyphs and pseudo-hieroglyphs (for the most part unreadable and meaningless) are added. Furthermore cartouches and the figures of Egyptian kings and 'priests are depicted in various attitudes: fighting, standing, or leading prisoners of war' (Stern 2001:91).

'The iconography of the Phoenician seal engraver reflects a strong interest in Egyptian religious and magical themes...' (Markoe 2000:156). If the Phoenician seal iconography was influenced by Egyptian religious motifs and the Northern Kingdom of Israel was influenced by Phoenicia it is obvious, in my opinion, that Israel was indirectly influenced by Egypt via Phoenicia.

5.3 ANALYSIS OF PHOENICIAN SEALS WITH EGYPTIAN MOTIFS

5.3.1 Introduction

Although a large number seals (Phoenician⁴⁷ and Hebrew) are available, whether, iconic, epigraphic or anepigraphic, for analysis and study, only a limited number of Phoenician and Hebrew seals can be used to illustrate the purpose of this study.

The purpose of this section is not to give an extensive catalogue of Phoenician seals with Egyptian iconography. This serves merely as an introduction to the subject of this study, the Egyptian iconography on Hebrew seals. The seals chosen here are random examples to illustrate the variety of Egyptian religious symbolism adopted by the Phoenicians.³⁹

The first three of the epigraphic seals were chosen to illustrate that despite the fact that the owners were followers of traditional principal Phoenician gods (Astarte, Eshmun and Baal), they still used Egyptian symbolism on their seals. The remaining two seals were selected because they represent a high government official and a royal person, possibly a prince. This indicates that Egyptian symbolism was employed by the highest ranks in Phoenician society.

The anepigraphic seals, which probably belonged to ordinary citizens, were chosen to illustrate that all levels of society employed Egyptian symbolism. The fact that these are seal amulets indicate that they were regarded as having protective (or magical) powers. These seals are not included in a particular sequence but were chosen to illustrate the variety of Egyptian symbols used.

³⁹ It is interesting to note that from the seventh century onwards there is a marked decline in Phoenician epigraphic seals in Phoenicia Proper, though anepigraphic seals abound. Sass and Uehlinger (1993:126) speculates that in Phoenicia only wealthy merchantmen and officials (I submit that royalty should be included) had their names inscribed on their seals. The later extensive movement of these merchants and officials to other regions may be the reason for this decline.

5.3.2 Analysis of some Phoenician epigraphic seals

5.3.2.1 *The seal of Ger 'ashtart*



Figure 9: The seal of Ger 'ashtart .
(Avigad & Sass 1997:273)

a. Description

The context in which this seal was discovered is not known. According to Avigad & Sass (1997:273), it was bought in Tartus and is currently part of a collection in Paris. It is a scarab made of green jasper. It is perforated and its dimensions are 17 x 12 x 9 mm. It has a single-line border. It contains the following inscription (Cf. Avigad & Sass 1997:273):

This reads: 'Ger 'ashtar t.'

As the inscription implies the owner was a follower of Astarte, the word 'ger' is typical of Phoenician seals. The word 'ger' meant 'protected' or 'protected person', in Phoenician society, thus indicating that the person was protected by a particular deity (Heltzer 1987:312). In this particular instance the name of the owner implies protection by Astarte. Astarte and Eshmun were the chief deities of Sidon (Markoe 2000:115).

The seal has a single register with various Egyptian symbols:

At the top, a winged solar disk covers (shelters or protects) a ritual scene.

In the centre is a falcon-headed 'goddess' in a long robe on a throne. Her left hand is raised in blessing. Above her head is a solar disk and a *uraeus*. In front of her is the god Thoth, depicted in human form with the head of an ibis. With his right hand the goddess is either giving to or receiving from Thoth an object, which, according to Avigad & Sass (1997:273), is a flower, but which could also be a drinking cup. Behind her is the god Ptah, depicted in his normal form with a mummified body. Both Thoth and Ptah have solar disks above their heads. Both these gods are not associated with known Phoenician gods and can thus be regarded as foreign (Egyptian) additions to the Phoenician pantheon.

The 'floor' of the ritual scene consists of a woven neb hieroglyph.

According to Avigad & Sass (1997:273) this seal dates to the Sixth-Fifth centuries B.C.E.

b. Discussion

Although various gods are portrayed, the protective role of Ra is clearly defined. As a winged disk he guards over the rest of the scene. The wings are not straight but are hanging down, like those of a hen protecting her chickens, as in Figure 10 on the next page.



Figure 10: Hen protecting her children. Mosaic from the Church of Dominus Flevit, Mount of Olives, Jerusalem.
(Photo: F N Vermeulen)

This Ra-protection is further emphasized by the solar disks above the heads of the three other gods.

This seal has an interesting aspect in that the rarity of a falcon headed goddess is portrayed. This may lead to various interpretations. This may be a depiction of Haroeris (Haruris, Haroris), or Horus the Elder. Haroeris is one of the oldest forms of the god Horus, which is already mentioned in the Pyramid Texts. It may be that a zealous Phoenician engraver made a mistake in the dress of the god Horus, but this is

doubtful because the god Thoth is dressed in the correct Egyptian male attire. On the other hand Hatshepsut called herself the 'Female Horus' (Eaton et al 1973:317) and in the Roman period some people referred to Cleopatra VI as the 'Female Horus' . There are five clues, however, which seem to provide the correct answer to the identity of the goddess:

- (i) It is a Phoenician seal;
- (ii) The fact that a long robe and not a kilt is worn indicates that a goddess, rather than a god is probably represented;
- (iii) Being inscribed, it probably belonged to an official or royal person;
- (iv) The goddess has a lotus flower, signifying *inter alia* fertility; and
- (v) The seal belongs to a follower of Astarte.

The solution therefore seems to be clear. Astarte was the goddess of fertility. This is a depiction of Astarte associated with Horus, being the chief goddess; she is enthroned and the taller of the three gods depicted, clearly to emphasise her superiority. Thoth, in Egyptian mythology, was the scribe of the gods, the inventor of language, writing and magic but also the god of medicine. Ptah was the creator of everything, including the other gods. It was said that Horus was his heart and Thoth his tongue. During the Late Period in Egypt (Iron IIB and C in Phoenicia and Palestine), the importance of the latter two gods had waned and the scene on this seal seems to represent the *status quo* (see a discussion of Astarte, Horus, Thoth and Ptah, with references in Annexure B).

5.3.2.2 Seal belonging to Ger 'Eshmun, son of Himelek⁴⁰



Figure 11: Belonging to Ger 'Eshmun, son of Himelek .

(Avigad & Sass 1997: (273))

⁴⁰ All my efforts to trace the original seal were fruitless. Professor Benjamin Sass, who revised and completed Avigad & Sass's 'Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals' advised me by e-mail as follows: 'If you will take a good look at the said item (733) in the book, you will immediately realize that I had the same problem as you: With no access to an original photograph, I reproduced the one in Uberti 1977, no. 2.' It is considerably enlarged in order to capture the most detail.

a. Description

The find context of this seal is not known. It is currently reported to be in the Biggio collection in Sant' Antiocho, Italy. It is a scarab made of steatite, perforated with dimensions 35 x 25 x 16 mm. It has a single-line border and a double-line field divider, dividing the seal into two registers. In the bottom register is a two-line inscription:

(Cf. Avigad & Sass 1997:273) 'Belonging to Ger'Eshmun son of Himelek.'

Here again we have a ritual scene, similar to the one on the seal discussed in paragraph 5.3.2.1. At the top of the top register there is the winged sun of Ra, with hanging wings protecting the scene below it.

The central theme of the scene consists of a lotus flower standard:



Figure 12: Section from seal showing lotus standard

Above the lotus flower, in his normal sitting position is the sun child Harpocrates (see Jung & Kerényi 2002:57:58).



Figure 13: Section of seal showing sun child



Figure 14: Horus the sun child
(Cartwright 1929:180)

The sun child is facing an unidentified animal-headed goddess with a long robe



Figure 15: Section of seal showing unidentified deity

The lotus standard is flanked (on the left) and held by a falcon-headed Khonsu, in this depiction identical with Horus, wearing the double crown of Egypt. Holding the standard on the other side is Isis with a horned disk. To avoid confusion with the images of these two gods (Khonsu with Horus and Isis with Hathor), both are identified by hieroglyphic inscriptions: *ḥnsw di ' nḥ* and *3st di ' nḥ* (Khonsu, Isis, given life).⁴¹

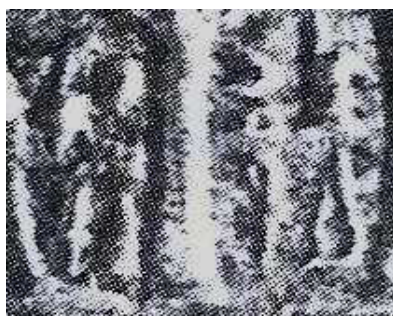


Figure 16: Section of seal showing hieroglyphics

Behind Khonsu is the goddess Sekhmet, surmounted by a solar disk and holding a papyrus scepter with her left hand.

b. Discussion

According to the inscription the name of the seal's owner was Ger'Eshmun. The name of the chief god of Sidon (together with the chief goddess Astarte) was Eshmun; he was also the Phoenician god of healing (comparable with Egyptian gods such as Thoth and Imhotep). Eshmun's temple was situated near Sidon (Cross 1994:95).

⁴¹All hieroglyphs discussed in this study are derived from Gardiner's Sign List as contained in Gardiner 1950:438-548.

In this scene Eshmun is portrayed as Khonsu (both were gods of healing). The theme of the ritual scene appears to centre on 'life' or 'new life'. Khonsu was closely associated with Horus as a protector and healer and was sometimes portrayed in the same form as Horus. Khonsu was instrumental in the creation of new life in all living creatures. The Sun Child symbolized awakening and new life, the lotus flower, like Ra, represents resurrection. Isis resurrected Osiris and was also closely associated with birth and death. Sekhmet was believed to protect the pharaoh in battle, thus a protector of life.

As regards the papyrus sceptre held by Sekhmet:

'To the Egyptians the green of fresh vegetation which symbolised new life and, by extension, resurrection, was exemplified by the papyrus plant, which as the *wadj* or papyrus sceptre in amuletic form was first mentioned in the Coffin Texts' (Andrews 1994:82-83).

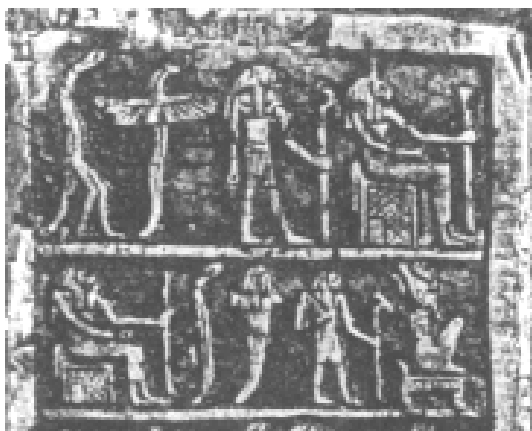


Figure 17: Sekhmet holding a papyrus sceptre
(Shorter 1932: Plate X)

This symbol, therefore, also represent, life, new life and resurrection. Just to stress the point, the hieroglyphs 'Khonsu, Isis, given life' also appear on the seal. On this seal, although I have made the association between Eshmun and Khonsu, the hieroglyphs

clearly identify Khonsu and Isis by their Egyptian names. Two other gods, not associated with Phoenician counterparts are the sun child Harpocrates and Sekhmet. The lotus standard and papyrus scepter are also concepts foreign to Phoenician culture.

5.3.2.3 *Seal belonging to Yahziba al*



Figure 18: Seal of Yahziba al
(Avigad 1968:45)

a. Description

The find context of this seal is unknown and it is currently in the Borowski collection, Jerusalem. Avigad (1968:49) dates it to not later than the eighth century.

It is a scaraboid of brown quartzite with dimensions 20 x x14 x 9 mm. It has a single-line border with no field-divider.

In the centre of the seal is a depiction of a falcon, in the form in which Horus is normally portrayed, wearing the double crown of Egypt and looking towards the left. The falcon is looking towards a cartouche surrounding decorative pseudo-hieroglyphs. On top of the cartouche is a strange symbol not reminiscent of any other Egyptian symbol. Avigad (1968:49) suggests it may be the top half of an ankh. It may be a stylized form, but my problem with that suggestion is that an ankh with its circular or inverted conical shaped upper half easily fits into the hand of a god or king, as it is sometimes portrayed. The shape of this particular symbol (a type of diamond shape or parallelogram) does not make it conducive to be carried in the same manner. Due to the lack of a better explanation, however, I have to accept Avigad's suggestion.

Behind the falcon is a two-winged *uraeus*, with its wings stretched forward towards the falcon. The *uraeus* is perched on top of a lotus flower.

Next to the sun is a *neb* symbol (also not mentioned by Avigad). Avigad (1968:49) points out, quite correctly, that the combination of a winged *uraeus* perched on a lotus flower is a unique symbol in Egyptian and Phoenician iconography. At the bottom of the seal is winged solar disk, depicted horizontally.

Between the falcon and the winged solar disk is an inscription with six Phoenician letters:

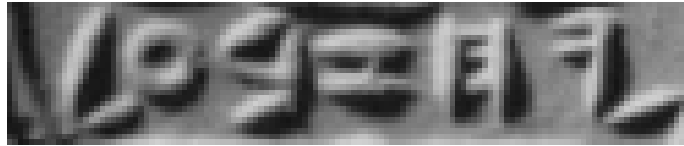


Figure 19 Phoenician inscription on seal

The inscription reads YHZB'L 'May Ba' al look (in favour of the child)' (Avigad 1968:49).

b. Discussion

As discussed earlier (see p. 112 fn 39) Phoenician seals, during the late ninth and eighth centuries which were inscribed with the owner's name, for the most part, probably belonged to royalty or officials.

The central and predominant symbol on this seal is the falcon. Horus, in the form of the falcon, had throughout dynastic times in ancient Egypt been the one god associated with kings (see p. 36 above and **HORUS** in **ANNEXURE B**) and especially as the protector of kings. The double crown is a further indication of royalty as is the cartouche in front of the falcon. The latter in ancient Egypt was worn only by the Pharaohs, and represented the Pharaohs' insignia.

The winged sun disk (at the bottom of the seal) always represented the close association between Horus, the Sun god Ra and the pharaoh and the protection of the god. The winged sun disk is the 'great protector' and it is astonishing that it is depicted at the bottom of the seal and not at the top.

The winged *uraeus* has been associated with various gods, but mostly with Ra and the wings emphasised the celestial aspect. The winged *uraeus* was seen as a protective power and with its wings stretched towards somebody or something it clearly directs its protection towards the subject, in this instance the falcon. The fact that the *uraeus* is perched on a lotus, may point to the sun child Harpocrates, but in any event, it is clearly a symbol of resurrection.

The strange aspect of the symbolism on this seal is not only the *uraeus* perched on the lotus flower, but also the flail on the back of the *uraeus*, a very unique symbol. Although the flail can also be interpreted as a symbol of authority, in this instance, in my opinion, the combination of the flail and the lotus flower extends the protective powers to the owner's fertility (Min with flail at back = fertility) and his prospects of resurrection in the afterlife.

On this seal we thus find various royal symbols combined with religious symbols. The probabilities are that the seal belonged to a member of the royalty. The seal is bigger than a normal seal and according to Avigad (1968:49) the carving is of a high standard. I suggest that the Horus-falcon, in this instance, is representative of Baal, but more in particular the owner's own association with Baal, as can be deduced from his name. A further factor in this regard favouring the owner's association with the falcon is the fact that his name appears directly beneath the falcon and the cartouche, without a separating field divider.

5.3.2.4 Seal belonging to Heddai



Figure 20 Belonging to Heddai
(Avigad & Sass 1997:274)

a. Description

This seal is currently in the Louvre Museum, Paris, but its origin is unknown.

It is a reddish brown and white agate scaraboid, unperforated with dimensions 24 x 18 x 10 mm.

It has a single-line border and two single-line field dividers, with three registers.

In the top register two men, identical like a mirror image, in a striding position, confront each other. It is submitted that it is indeed intended that the man to the right is a mirror image of the one on the left, the right hand raised in greeting and the left

holding a sceptre. If not so, the one on the right raises his left hand in greeting with the sceptre in his right hand, which seems extremely improbable. The man is dressed in an Egyptian kilt with an Egyptian style wig (Cf. Woodforde 1971:5-7). On top of each sceptre are two feathers. Behind each man is an ankh. Above their heads is the following inscription:

(Cf. Avigad & Sass 1997:274) 'Belonging to Heddai'.

Avigad & Sass (1997:274-275) is of the opinion that although the name of the seal owner is not a known Phoenician name, the Egyptianizing of the scene and the round-angled *yod* indicate Phoenician origin.

The middle register contains a couchant roaring lion with a triangle above him.

The bottom register is vestigial.

According to Avigad & Sass (1997:275) this seal dates to the late ninth-eighth centuries. Avigad (1978:67) assigns this seal to the eighth century.

b. Discussion

c.

The scene in the top register of this seal can hardly be described as a religious ritual in itself except for the ankh and feathers which may be regarded as religious symbols. It rather seems that the owner of the seal was an official and more in particular a judge of some sort. The sceptre symbolises the authority and power of an official. The feathers represent justice and order as symbols of Ma'at. Ma'at is normally portrayed with three symbols (a) the well known feather on her head; (b) a sceptre in her one hand and (c) an ankh in her other hand (Armour 2001:133). All three these symbols are present in this scene. This person (Heddai) associates himself with the three

symbols of Ma'at. The staffs indicate the authority and power of officialdom. This representation is further enhanced by the symbol of the lion in the middle register as 'powerful' (van der Horst 1987:33; Wilkinson 1841:169 and Spence 1990:291) and as a guardian (Ruiz 2001:219). Furthermore, according to Bordreuil (1986:54), in Egyptian symbolism a striding man with a sceptre in one hand and the other hand raised with its palm forward signified a dignitary or official.

The final symbol to be considered is the triangle in the middle register. Various explanations have been given by scholars for the symbolism of the triangle in Egyptian mythology. The possibility of it just being a space filler was suggested (Avigad 1978:67). It has also been explained as representing a holy trinity of gods (for instance Osiris, Isis and Horus or Amun, Mut and Khonsu) (Doane 1882:35; Massey 2008a:281). Another explanation is that it represents 'God', without reference to any trinity (Zelinsky-Wibbelt 2003:225). Some scholars regard it as representative of the *benben* stone and thus the pyramids, resembling the sun's rays and therefore the sun god Ra. According to these scholars it amounts to resurrection or rebirth as represented by Ra. The triangle is therefore, according to them, a symbol for rebirth (Cf. Alford 2004: 334-338 and the authorities quoted). I do not agree with this interpretation and in this particular context I rather agree with the proposition that the triangle in this depiction represents the hieroglyph for 'good' (Hawkins 2000:3).

In the final analysis we seem to have the seal of a Phoenician official, who demonstrates his power and authority, but at the same time represents himself as a just person and a good guardian. Here again we see concepts foreign to Phoenician culture and religion, such as Ma'at, the triangle and the ankh.

5.3.2.5



Figure 21 The seal of Yašda

(Avigad 1978:67-69)

(See also Avigad 1997:276)

a. Description

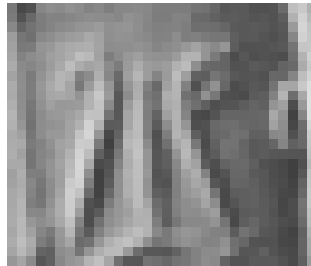
It is a scaraboid of brown agate and is perforated. This seal is exceptionally large with dimensions 32 x 24 x 12 mm. It has a single-line border and one double-line field divider, dividing the seal into a large register on top and a small one below.


The origin of the seal is unknown and it is currently in the Louvre Museum in Paris.

The central theme in the top register is of a striding young boy, wearing the Egyptian double crown, looking to the right and holding an ankh in his right hand and a

papyrus sceptre in his left. He is dressed in an Egyptian kilt with a long robe which lightly covers his shoulders.

In front of the youth is a plain cartouche. Avigad (978:68) states that the cartouche is surmounted by two ostrich feathers. I am not in total agreement with this conclusion, although I am prepared to admit that ostrich feathers are involved.



To me it seems as if the *atef*-crown  is involved, (if a bit stylized), thus representing Osiris, the final judge.

Below the cartouche is a lotus flower.

Behind the youth is a baboon (Avigad describes it as a monkey, but I do not agree; a monkey has a flat face and baboon a 'dog' face) standing on another lotus flower with an object in his left hand. The object in the baboon's hand is difficult to discern. Avigad speculates that it may be some fruit, but it seems more like a papyrus scroll.



Above the baboon is a combination of a solar disk and a crescent moon. At the top of the seal are two stars, the one on the left hand side is possibly an eight-pointed star and the one on the right definitely one.

In the bottom register of the seal is an inscription which seems to be .

Avigad (1978:68) declares that the name Yašda is well attested to in Phoenician inscriptions but the meaning is unknown. The arrangement of the iconography and the inscription signify a Phoenician seal.

b. Discussion

The central figure in the seal is the youth who Avigad (1997:276) describes as a youthful pharaoh. I cannot disagree with this view. The double crown and the cartouche are indicators that this may indeed be a young pharaoh. A striding figure with a crown was normally a depiction of a king. Young princes had their hair shaven



Figure 22 Young Egyptian prince with hair lock.

(Weekes 1999: front cover)

with only a lock of hair on the one side (as an imitation of the youthful god Horus) (Wilkinson 1854:311-312). It seems therefore that it is not a young prince being

depicted, but probably a young pharaoh. The papyrus sceptre represents new life or resurrection and the ankh eternal life. The two lotus flowers also represent new life. As far as the baboon is concerned there are several possibilities. Thoth, the god of wisdom, magic, healing and scribes, was sometimes depicted as a baboon (if not as an ibis) (Nunn 2002:102). According to Wallis Budge (1972b:290) the baboon is the assistant of Thoth. Thoth as a moon god is seen in his form as a baboon with a moon-disk on his head (Curl 2005:220:423). Baboons make a lot of noise at dawn and were therefore regarded as moon gods paying homage to Ra, the rising sun (Hart 2002:157). The moon god Khonsu was also depicted in the form of a baboon (Pinch 2004:113; Dunand, Zivie-Coche & Lorton 2005:15).



Figure 23: Thoth as a baboon with a scribe sitting in front of him
(Peck 1978: Plate XIII)

The varying actions of baboons during the different phases of the moon convinced the ancient Egyptian that there was a relationship with Thoth, the traditional moon god (Bleeker 1973:111). On this seal the moon disk and the crescent moon clearly

indicate that the baboon is Thoth as the moon god. A further indicator is the object in the baboon's hand, which seems to be a scroll, thus indicating a scribe and wisdom.

In the language of the ancient Egyptians the word *seba* (to teach) was written with a star. It means that the teacher opens the mind of the pupil to let in the light (star) (Wiredu 2004:34). The star also played a role regarding the *ka* or soul. Stars were particularly associated with Isis and the pharaoh was known as 'the morning star' (Curl 2005:464-465).

"The Bright Morning Star", the star with eight rays also represents Horus...It originally represented "Orion," the eightfold one—the highest' (Churchward 1913:206). The Egyptian pharaohs, after death were identified with the Pole star (Keister 2004:125).

The size of the seal and the quality of the iconography would suggest that the owner was a person of high standing, but the rough workmanship of the inscription points in another direction. One gets the impression that two different carvers were at work. It seems as if the iconography was prepared by one carver and that the bottom register was left unfinished for the owner to have his name carved at a later stage and that it was not custom-made from the start. A comparison can be made with a modern readymade piece of jewellery on which the purchaser has a name inscribed at a later stage. On the other hand, it does not necessarily follow that it was not made for a royal person or an official, only that the carver of the inscription could have been less experienced than the original carver. As I have already indicated, the tendency was that only royalty and officials had their names inscribed on seals.

Overall it seems that it was the seal of either a royal person or an official. The depiction of the young pharaoh was probably intended to represent his own king. The symbolism could read as follows: 'May Horus guard our king and Thoth teach him wisdom and may he be well judged by Osiris to be reborn into eternal life.'

5.3.3 Phoenician anepigraphic seals

In this section I want to discuss a few anepigraphic Phoenician seals dating to Iron IIB and C. Egyptian symbolism on Phoenician seals was not confined to royalty and government officials but appears also on the seals of ordinary citizens. Hundreds, if not thousands, of these seals have been found at sites of traditional Phoenician settlements, especially as grave goods that were buried with the deceased (in the majority of cases his cremated remains). During Iron IIB and C it appears that there was a tendency amongst the Phoenicians that only royalty and government officials had their names inscribed on their personal seals. Ordinary citizens confined themselves to anepigraphic seals.

The reason for this tendency is not clear, but I venture the following solution. Royalty and officials were required to seal documents and to use it for other official purposes; their seals had an official role to play and were in the public domain. It was important that the identity of the person who sealed a document be known.

For ordinary citizens the importance of the seal was vested in the magic potency of the symbols. It was used as a personal amulet (lucky charm?) and for his/her own private well being. Personal names were therefore not required for identification purposes. It should also be remembered that the superstition about the unnecessary

publication of personal names and the magic involved in that regard, prevailed and was still a strong factor. In my opinion it is a misconception that this tendency by ordinary citizens towards anepigraphic seals was a new one that suddenly arose during Iron IIB. Perusing Keel (1997) one finds that the vast majority of Phoenician seals from that period, contained in that *corpus*, came from cemeteries and this tendency is therefore more obvious during this period.

5.3.3.1 *Phoenician anepigraphic seal (1)*



Figure 24: Phoenician anepigraphic seal (1)
(Keel 1997:21)

a. Description

This seal was discovered in the southern cemetery at Minet ez-zib (Achziv) in tomb Z 24 and is currently in Jerusalem (IAA). It is a scaraboid, made of steatite. It is white with yellow glazing; it has a single-line border. Its dimensions are 16 x 10,6 x 7,7

mm. It has only one register which contains the Egyptian hieroglyphic inscription. 'Khonsu is my protection'. It is dated to Iron IIC (*ca* 700-539 B.C.E.).

b. Discussion

Achziv is situated about 15 kilometres north of Akko on the eastern Mediterranean coast. This region was inhabited by the Phoenicians during Iron IIB and C and one can assume with certainty that it belonged to a Phoenician. It is not possible to establish the gender of the owner, but the lack of a personal name indicates an ordinary citizen and not an official or a royal person. Another indication to an ordinary citizen is the fact that the grave was in the southern cemetery. The elite of the town was buried in the eastern cemetery (Markoe 2000:194).

The hieroglyphic inscription inevitably leads to the conclusion that they were not used purely for decorative purposes. It has a religious message signifying the owner's faith in his/her guardian god. The god in this instance is the Egyptian moon god Khonsu. Khonsu was one of the Theban triad, being the son of Amun and Mut. It can therefore not be said that we are dealing with a Phoenician god dressed up as an Egyptian god. According to Givon (1988:24) there are a lot of parallels of this seal in collections.

Khonsu's main role was associated with the moon. His name means '*runner*', who soars the sky (Wallis Budge 1972a:172) and this may relate to the nightly travel of the moon across the sky. Along with Thoth he marked the passage of time. Khonsu was instrumental in the creation of new life in all living creatures, but he was also a

war god. It is not possible to ascertain on which characteristic of Khonsu the owner relied for his protection, but probably his power to create new life.

5.3.3.2 *Phoenician anepigraphic seal (2).*



Figure 25: Phoenician anepigraphic seal (2).

(Keel 1997: 43)

a. Description

This seal is a scaraboid made of steatite or a very hard composite material and a blue glazing. The engraving is shallow with hatching. The dimensions are 13,6 x 9,8 x 5,5 mm. It was found in the Gešer 'akzīv or eastern cemetery at Achziv in tomb Z R 36, no 144 and is currently held in Jerusalem (IAA).

It has a single-line border and no field divider. In the centre, in a kneeling position, is Isis with cow (Hathor) horns on her head. The Horus-child is standing on her thighs

and with her right arm she is breastfeeding him, while she is holding him tight with her left arm. Keel (1997:43) describes that the latter arm is depicting a protective bow over the child.

Behind her back is an *ankh* and a *t*-hieroglyph (bread). In front of her and above the head of the child is a *st* (throne) and behind the child is an obelisk. At the bottom of the seal is a *neb* sign.

a. Discussion

The central theme of this seal is Isis breastfeeding Horus. This depiction may have various interpretations. In the development of the history of ancient Egypt, the image of Isis grew to such an extent that she finally usurped the powerful position of Hathor as mother of the gods. Her magical powers and ability to go to the netherworld and resurrect Osiris in order to conceive Horus and later the act of saving the life of Horus, carved a special niche for her in the Egyptian mind. She became the prime example of the devoted wife and mother with the power over life and death (Clarysse, Schoors & Willems 1998:542-545). In many of the tombs or funerary temples of deceased pharaohs this symbol represents the pharaoh as the infant Horus being breastfed by Isis in order to resurrect him into a new life. She was also the protector of children especially against disease. The *st* emphasises the presence of Isis (see discussion on pp 79-80 above).

The ankh not only represents the union between Osiris and Isis but also eternal life.

The obelisk represented the sun's power and thus also the power of the ruler who erected it (Roullet 1972:43).

‘According to Francois Daumas, the erection of an obelisk was a mighty gesture reproducing the symbolism of the *Djed* pillar, the familiar Osirian symbol standing for the backbone (i.e. support) of the physical world and the channel through which the divine spirit might rise through matter to rejoin its source’ (West 1995:251). The normal symbolism is, however, concerned with the sun, the top representing the *benben* stone, spraying the sun’s rays ‘thus appearing weightless carried aloft over the world’ (Curl 2005:138). The sun is of course the prime symbol of resurrection, thus new life. The *t*-hieroglyph represents bread or food.

The *neb* appears at the bottom of the seal. The *neb*-hieroglyph was mostly used to indicate ‘lord’ or ‘master of the house’ (Bunsen 1846:167).

In my opinion the symbolism reads: ‘The lord Horus, giver of food and new as well as eternal life’.

5.3.3.3 *Phoenician anepigraphic seal (3)*



Figure 26: Phoenician anepigraphic seal (3).

(Keel 1997:43)

a. Description

This is a scaraboid with the left side, in the length, broken away. It is made of white steatite with dimensions 15,7 x 12? x 8,1 mm.

It was found in the Gešer'akzīv or eastern cemetery at Achziv in tomb Z R 36, no 145 and is currently held in Jerusalem (IAA).

It has a single-line border and two field dividers, dividing the seal into three registers.

In the centre of the top register is an *ankh* sign flanked by two falcons with their wings outstretched towards the inside in the direction of the *ankh*.

In the centre of the middle register is a *djed*-pillar flanked by two squatting male figures with beards, looking to the right, with *maat*-feathers on their knees.

In the bottom register there are an *ankh* and a falcon with a flail. Flanking these two symbols are two outward looking *uraei*; their tails are linked in the middle as if it is a unit and form a semi-circle above the *ankh* and the falcon. Keel (1997:43) calls this semi-circle an 'arch'.

Keel (1997:43) dates this seal to the 22nd Dynasty (945-713 B.C.E.).

b. Discussion

The symbolism on this seal is rather straightforward. In the top register the *ankh*, representing eternal life, is protected by the wings of the falcons, thus by Horus.

In the middle register is the *djed*-pillar. This symbol became an important symbol of stability symbolizing the backbone and body of Osiris (Pinch 2002:127). The Djed amulet was used to cure and protect the wearer against injury of the spine. The Djed funerary amulet was laid upon the neck of the deceased, to whom it gave the power to

reconstitute the body and to become a perfect Ka and reborn with a strong spine in the underworld.

Armour (2001:30) describes it as ‘a phallic symbol of the rejuvenation and strength of Osiris — as a sign that he has been born again and that the land would be fertile for yet another year’. Brown (1998:65) regards it as ‘a symbol of strength’.

The two male figures flanking the *Djed*-pillar can, as a result of the beards, be either kings or gods. I opt for gods because one of the hieroglyphic symbols for a god is seated male figure with a beard:



Figure 27: God with beard
(McDermott 2002:68)

On the knees of the gods are *ma'at* feathers which represent order, stability and justice.

In the bottom register we again have the *ankh* representing eternal life, but it is combined with a falcon (Horus) with a flail. In this instance it cannot be said that the flail is representing Min, but rather that it is a symbol of authority, a reminder that the gods may punish a person for wrongdoing (Perl & Weihs 1990:20). Here again we have the protection of the gods symbolised by the arch of the *uraei*.

I see the sum total of the symbols on this seal as follows. The owner relies on the gods for protection of stability, order, authority and eternal life.

5.3.3.4 *Phoenician anepigraphic seal (4)*

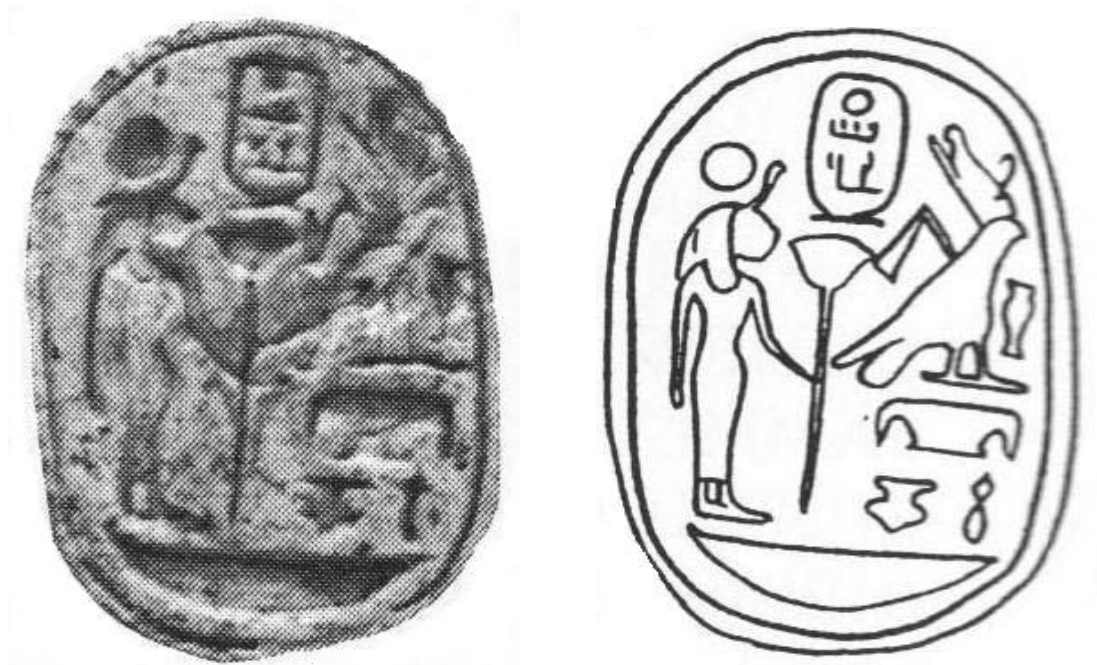


Figure 28: Phoenician anepigraphic seal (4).

(Keel 1997:39)

a. Description

It is a scaraboid with shallow engraving and hatching, steatite with white cover. Its dimensions are 15,1 x 11 x 7,7 mm.

It has a single-line border and no field divider

It was found in the Gešer 'aḳzīv or eastern cemetery at Achziv in tomb Z R 34, no 3 and is currently held in Jerusalem (IAA). Keel (1997:38) dates it to the 26th Dynasty (664-610 B.C.E.).

At the top of the seal is a cartouche with the name Menkaure in hieroglyphics. To its right is a falcon with the double crown and a flail on its back with a *hz*-vase (in front

of the falcon. Below the falcon and the *hZ*-vase is a *nbw*-sign (gold). Below this the letters $\square\square$ and *jb*.

On the left side of the seal is Sakhmet in human form with a lion head with a *uraeus* on her head and a solar disk above her. In her left hand she holds a papyrus sceptre.

At the bottom of the seal is a *neb*.

a. Discussion.

The interesting aspect about this seal is the names of the two Egyptian pharaohs that appear on this seal. At the top in the cartouche appears the name of Menkaure (*ca.* 2575-2500 B.C.E. a pharaoh of the Fourth Dynasty and the builder of the third and smallest of the pyramids on the Giza plateau (he lived nearly 2000 years before the owner of the seal). The other pharaoh, represented by his Horus-name (the hieroglyphics $\square\square$ and *jb*) was Wahibre Psammetichus I (Keel 1997:38; James 1983: 265). The latter Pharaoh ruled in Egypt from 664 to 610 B.C.E., during the 26th Dynasty (Iron IIC in Palestine).

Menkaure was regarded as a sort of folk hero in ancient Egypt. He succeeded in relieving a great deal of the suffering of the Egyptian people, incurred by his father Khufu when he built the Great Pyramid at Giza. His own pyramid is much smaller than those of his father and his uncle Khafre. ‘... Menkaure was a good king. The Egyptians loved him because he prayed to the gods and he looked after the temples’ (Filer 2006:28). Except for the fact that he was a good king, there seems to be no reason whatsoever that his name should appear on the seal of an ordinary Phoenician citizen two thousand years later, unless it was purely for decorative purposes. The reason why the Horus-name of Wahibre Psammetichus I appears on the seal gives us

an approximate date for the seal for it was apparently carved during the reign of that king, although Keel (1997:38) suggests it is on the seal purely as decoration.

Here again we have the interesting phenomenon of the Horus-falcon with a flail at its back (see the seal of Jezebel on p. 32 above). The flail in itself was a symbol of royal authority. With Min holding it behind his back it represents fertility. I submit that the flail should be seen in conjunction with the papyrus sceptre, which symbolised new life and resurrection (Andrews 1994:82-83). Sakhmet symbolises strength, for it was essential to wear amulets in the image of powerful gods for protection. The *hZ*-vase, in this instance, is placed in front of the Horus-falcon and seems to mean ‘to praise’ (Keel 1995:171). The *nbw*-sign represents gold which was regarded by the Egyptians to be a godly metal. It was a symbol of brilliance, light and purity (McClintock & Strong 1881:139). It indicates to shine or be resplendent (Portal 1904:66). Its shiny surface was related to the brilliance of the sun. Gold was important to the afterlife as it represents aspects of immortality.

In combination I suggest that the symbols would read something like this: ‘Praise (the *hZ*-vase) the lord (*neb*) Horus (falcon) who is strong (Sekhmet) and brings fertility (flail), new life (papyrus sceptre) and immortality (*nbw*-sign)’.

5.3.3.5 *Phoenician anepigraphic seal (5)*



Figure 29: Phoenician anepigraphic seal (5).

(Keel 1997:29)

Description

It is a scaraboid made of white steatite and dimensions 14,3 x 10 x 6,8 mm. It has a single-line border and no field divider. It was found in the Gešer'akzīv or eastern cemetery at Achziv in tomb Z R 9, no 124 and is currently held in Jerusalem (IAA). Keel (1997:38) dates it to the 25th-26th Dynasty (728-525 B.C.E.), but according to my own dates it should be 745-525 B.C.E. (see ANNEXURE A).

At the top of the seal is a solar disk flanked by two *uraei*. On the left hand side is the Egyptian god Ptah sitting on a throne. He is holding a lotus flower with a bent stalk. Facing Ptah is the goddess Ma'at. At the bottom of the seal is a *neb*.

a. **Discussion**

The solar disk with the flanking *uraei* at the top of the seal represents Ra as the supreme god. The central theme of this depiction consists of Ptah, Ma'at and the big *neb* at the bottom (which serves as a basis for the enthroned Ptah). It signifies 'Ptah,

lord of.’ The fact that he is facing the goddess Ma’at leads to the interpretation ‘Ptah, lord of Ma’at’ (Keel 1997:28). It does not mean that he is the lord and master of the goddess Ma’at, but rather that he is the lord of the concept *ma’at*, thus ‘order’. In terms of the Memphite creation myth he was after all regarded as the supreme creator of the universe who had brought everything into existence through his thoughts (expressed by the heart) and his will (expressed by his tongue). He created the world, the other gods, their centers, shrines and images as well as the cities, food, drink and all the requirements for life. He also established abstract concepts and principles such as divine utterance and ethics, thus including the concept of *ma’at*.

Ptah was the ‘patron god of all artisans and workers in stone and metal, and even wielders of the artist’s brush and crayon’ (Wallis Budge 1972b:158). The owner of this seal was probably an artisan who depended on the patronage of Ptah to ensure order, justice and stability.

The bent lotus flower poses a bit of a mystery. Keel (1997:28), with reference to other scholars, poses various possible solutions. It could be a stylized flail or signifying a deceased person, the lotus being a symbol for the dead during Canaanite times and also a death symbol in the Neo-Assyrian iconography. I suggest that one should rather see the lotus flower in this instance in its traditional concept as a symbol of resurrection.

To the owner of this seal the Memphite god Ptah was apparently still a god of greatness, despite the decline in his position amongst the Egyptian gods during the relevant period. The owner relies on his powers as the god of creation and thus his powers over life and death and to resurrect the dead.

5.3.3.6 *Phoenician anepigraphic seal (6)*

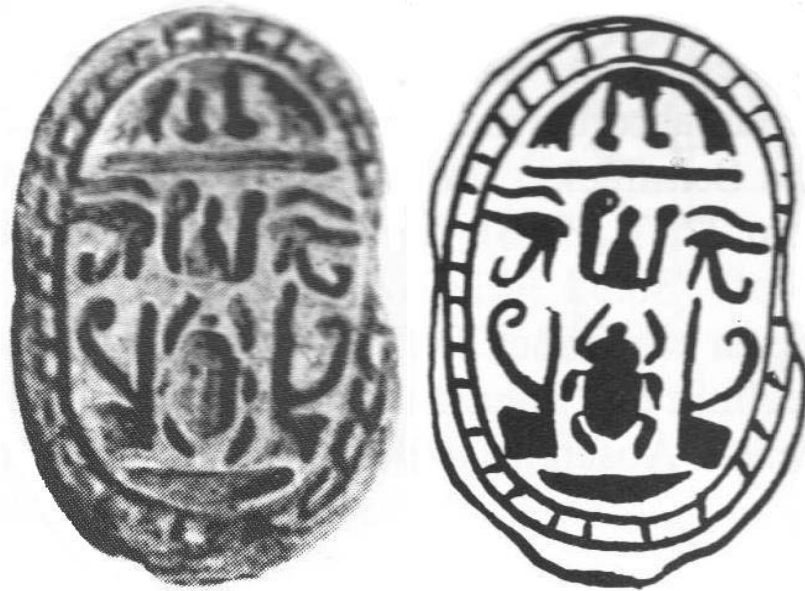


Figure 30: Phoenician anepigraphic seal (6).

(Keel 1996:769)

a. Description

It is a scaraboid made from bright yellow steatite. Its dimensions are 20 x 14,4 x 8,6 mm. It has a beaded border between two single-line ovals and one single-line field divider.

It was found in the south-eastern cemetery at Atlit, cremation no 14. It is currently in the Rockefeller Museum, Jerusalem.

Keel (1997:768) dates it to Iron IIB (8th century B.C.E.).

In the top register of the seal is a winged sun with two hanging *uraei*.

In the upper section of the lower register is a *k* with a white crown in the middle and flanked by two *Wd*-eyes. Just below this is a scarab beetle (*hpr*) flanked by two red crowns. At the bottom of the seal is a *neb*.

b. Discussion

Here we have the protective powers in the top register guarding the totality of the scene in the bottom register where the determinative factor seems to be the *neb* which signifies lord or master.

Central to the theme is the scarab representing renewal and regeneration. The two *Wd3t*-eyes protect against evil and also assist recovery from illness. The *k* or *ka* is the soul. The white and red crowns represent Upper and Lower Egypt respectively.

The crowns pose a bit of a problem. If the owner was an Egyptian his association with the crowns would be clear. The fact that the owner was cremated indicates a Phoenician. I can only surmise that the owner (or the person who wanted the amulet made) wanted to involve the gods of Egypt.

It is a fitting amulet to place with a deceased person and the theme has the appearance that it was specially made to accompany the deceased to the 'grave'. Amulets were, after all, essential adornments for both the living and the dead (Andrews 1994:6). This appears to be a funerary amulet placed by the relatives of the deceased with his cremated remains. In that event the theme could be interpreted to read: 'May the gods of Egypt protect the soul of our lord against evil and give him new life'.

5.3.3.7 *Phoenician anepigraphic seal (7)*

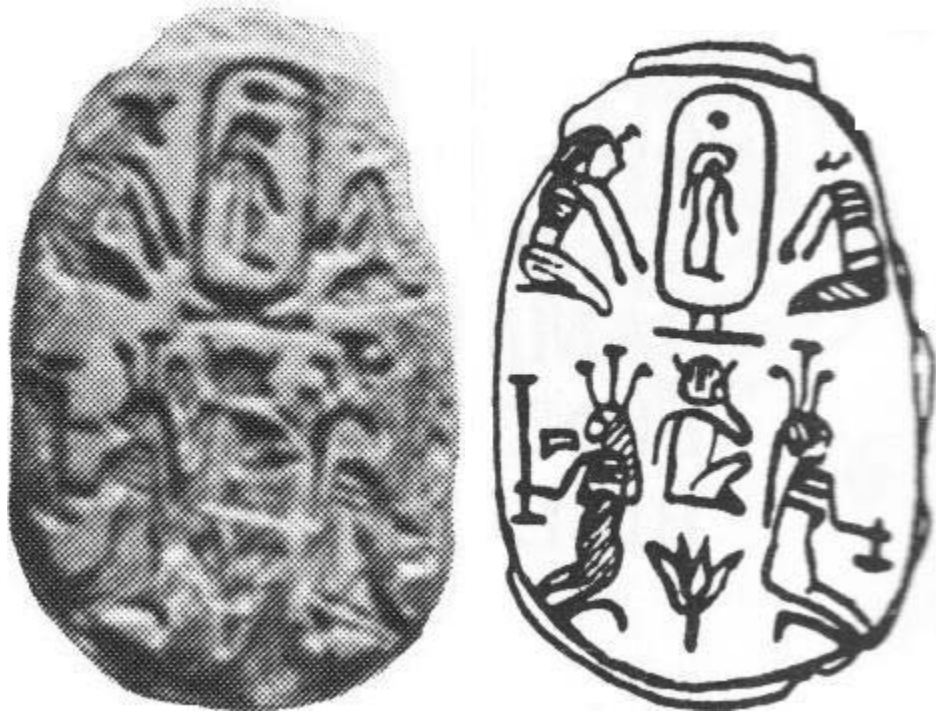


Figure 31: Phoenician anepigraphic seal (7)
(Keel 1997:555)

a. Description

It is a scaraboid of steatite with hatching. Its dimensions are 14 x 9 x 7,5 mm. It has no border and no field divider. It seems to be damaged on the right hand side.

It was found on the surface of the tell at Akko and is currently in Jerusalem (IAA).

According to Keel (1997:554) it dates to the 26th Dynasty (664-525 B.C.E.).

In the top section of the seal is a cartouche with lion headed Sakhmet with a solar disk above her head. She is flanked by two inward looking male figures, with *uraei* on their foreheads, in a kneeling position, bowing forward with their hands stretched downwards.

In the lower section of the seal is the sun child in his squatting position on a lotus flower. The sun child is flanked by two outward looking squatting figures. Each one has three lotus flowers on his head. Each one has a *hZ*-vase in the right hand (the top part of the *hZ*-vase on the right is lost as a result of the seal damage).

b. Discussion

The two squatting figures in the top section of the seal appear to be kings, as indicated by the *uraei* on their foreheads. They submit in adoration to Sakhmet who they acknowledge to be their king (queen?). The name ‘Sakhmet’ means ‘the mighty one’ and is derived from the Egyptian hieroglyphs ‘to be strong’ (Wallis Budge 1972b:160). She was the daughter of Ra and also represents the manifestation of the eye of Ra (Zaki & Atiya 2008:68). She was the instrument of divine retribution (Pinch 2004:187). She was also the goddess of war and accompanied the king into battle. Her power was so great that she was said to even dominate Osiris on occasions. She was also a fiercely protective mother (Armour 2001:103-104).

We have encountered the sun child several times and he represents new life, the hot sun after the winter, thus resurrection. The two squatting figures flanking the sun child seem to be representations of the Nile-god Haapi. ‘He is represented in the form of a man with a woman’s breast (sic), and wearing a cluster of water plants on his head. The plant worn by the Nile-god of the North was the lotus and by the Nile-god of the South the papyrus’ (Wallis Budge 1925:8). I suggest that Wallis Budge has it wrong and that it should be the other way round. The lotus flower has always been associated with Upper Egypt, thus the south and the papyrus with Lower Egypt, the north (Portal 1904:42). Scott Littleton (2005:609) describes it as ‘a crown of aquatic

flowers'. The fact that he was represented with a woman's breasts was to signify fertility (Wiedemann 2001:145). The Nile (Haapi) which brought fresh fertile soil to the Egyptians every year during the inundation was a main symbol of fertility. He has also been described as a hermaphrodite 'the fertilizer male and the nourisher female' (Bromley 1988:537).

Overall one gets the impression that this seal belonged to a woman. The emphasis on fertility and new life and the powerful goddess Sekhmet, not only a goddess of war but also a protective mother lead to this conclusion. The seal emphasises that even kings gave homage to her. The theme seems to read: 'Praise the powerful Sekhmet, who gives fertility and the ability to bear new life.'

5.4 CONCLUSION

In this Chapter the role of the Phoenicians in the Mediterranean during Iron IIB and C and their main gods were briefly investigated and some Phoenician seals with Egyptian symbols were analysed. The purpose was threefold::

- a) To demonstrate the preference of the Phoenicians for Egyptian symbols in their seal iconography during Iron IIB and C; thus showing
- b) Egyptian cultural and religious influences in the Levant, with Phoenicia as a starting point during Iron IIB and C; and
- c) To establish a basis for arguing that Egypt, not only directly from the south, but also indirectly via Phoenicia, had an impact on the religion of the Israelites during Iron IIB and C.

According to the Bible there appeared to have been close relations with Phoenicia, especially Tyre during the time of the United Kingdom. Again it would be unscientific to rely solely on the Bible in this regard. In the next chapter I will therefore, *inter alia*, have a look at archaeological finds, such as the Samaria ivories, to substantiate the biblical allegations.

I emphasised that one should not regard Phoenicia as a political entity but as different city states, each with its own pantheon. After the division of the Israelite kingdoms, this relationship with Phoenicia was apparently continued, in particular by the Northern Kingdom. Some scholars (*inter alia* Keel, Uehlinger and Cornelius) are of the opinion that as a result of the geography of the area, there were Phoenician influences on the Northern Kingdom of Israel while the Southern Kingdom of Judah was to a large extent influenced by Egypt. I made the point that Phoenicia itself had been influenced by Egypt and that these Egyptian influences were indirectly conveyed to the Northern Kingdom via Phoenicia.

Since the earliest time contact occurred between Egypt and the mainland region occupied by the Canaanites and their descendants the Phoenicians. Cultural exchanges between the peoples of the regions would have been unavoidable, including Egyptian influences on Phoenician culture. In order to prove the Egyptian influences on Phoenicia, I analysed epigraphic and anepigraphic Phoenician seals. The result of this analysis was that the Phoenicians during Iron IIB and C, to a large extent, made use of Egyptian religious symbolism in their seal iconography. This tendency pertained to royalty, government officials and ordinary citizens. It also seems that epigraphic seals were confined to royalty, government officials and merchantmen, while ordinary citizens used

anepigraphic seals. It seems that the Phoenicians substituted depictions of Egyptian gods for their own gods, but they apparently also imported Egyptian gods to form part of their pantheons. They also made use of various other Egyptian religious symbols to emphasise aspects of their own religion.

CHAPTER 6
AN ANALYSIS OF SEALS FROM ISRAEL AND JUDAH
DATING TO IRON IIB AND C

6.1. INTRODUCTION

During the eighth century B.C.E. there was a clear tendency amongst Phoenician and Israelite royalty to use Egyptian symbols in specialty craft (Keel & Uehlinger 1998:262). The Samaria ivories discovered are a prime example, displaying mostly Egyptian motifs. An analysis of the seals in the *corpi* of scholars such as Keel (1997) and Avigad & Sass (1997) shows the same tendency amongst Phoenician royalty as well as ordinary citizens.

In the previous chapter some Phoenician seals with Egyptian symbols were analysed. The purpose was threefold:

- d) To demonstrate the preference of the Phoenicians for Egyptian symbols in their seal iconography during Iron IIB and C; thus showing
- e) Egyptian cultural and religious influences in the Levant, with Phoenicia as a starting point during Iron IIB and C; and
- f) To establish a basis for arguing that Egypt, not only directly from the south, but also indirectly via Phoenicia, had an impact on the religion of the Israelites during Iron IIB and C.

From the latter part of Iron IIB onwards, it seemed that epigraphic seals were mostly confined to royalty and officialdom in Phoenicia. The seals of the ordinary citizens, recovered from Phoenician sites, especially the cemeteries and thus easily identified as such, appear, without exception, to be anepigraphic. In this chapter one avenue of

investigation will be to investigate if the same tendency was prevalent amongst the Israelites in both kingdoms.

A further aspect that requires closer inspection is whether the preferred Egyptian symbols in Phoenicia correspond with those prevalent in Israel and/or Judah.

An important factor to keep in mind is that officially the Phoenicians had a polytheistic religion. They could, therefore, more readily associate some of their gods with those of Egypt. A further aspect, as has been indicated in the previous chapter, is that it seems that, despite the continuation from their Canaanite origins and heritage, the Phoenician pantheon, compared to the pantheon of the Canaanites during the Late Bronze Age, had severely dwindled in numbers. Being a polytheistic society, it would be acceptable for them to supplement their stock of gods from the Egyptian pantheon whenever a need or situation required the attention of a specific god not provided for in their own pantheon.

In Israel and Judah, with their official monotheistic religion, the situation was much more complicated. They were not only restricted to one God, but by the time of Isaiah of Jerusalem this God had become the only supreme deity of the universe, ‘the other gods are lifeless statues with no power to affect human destiny’ (Mills 1998:60).

A further problem for the Israelites was their God’s prohibition of graven images:

‘You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth below or in the waters below’ (Ex 20:4). This placed severe restrictions on the Israelites; they had to worship an invisible God, one whom they were not even allowed to refer to or address by his real name. This, however, did not deter them

from taking names which indicated their alliance with him, a sort of *contradictio in terminis*.

Despite the 'official religion' the Bible abounds with transgressions of the monotheistic doctrine. Not only were the common people involved in idol worship, but, according to the Bible, most of the kings of Judah and Israel as well. The abundance of figurines, altars, private shrines and other ritual objects discovered in Palestine, confirms those assertions.

Earlier in this study, it has been argued that the imaging on seals, especially those worn as amulets, falls in the same category as figurines and other idols. To dismiss them as mere adornment is a grave miscalculation of the true situation. By analysing Phoenician seals (as well as the seals of Jezebel and Hezekiah) it was endeavoured to show that a message was conveyed which for the most part was of a religious nature.

During Iron IIB and C, due mostly to Phoenician influences on the Northern Kingdom of Israel and more direct Egyptian influences on the Southern Kingdom of Judah, a situation developed where the iconographic symbol systems of the two kingdoms did not coincide exactly. In the Northern Kingdom with their continuous contact with *inter alia* Phoenicia, new ideas seemed to have developed faster and became more quickly established than in their more isolated and more conservative southern neighbour, for instance the *winged uraeus* made its appearance much later in the iconography of the Southern Kingdom of Judah than in the Northern Kingdom of Israel (Keel & Uehlinger 1998:272).

During the late ninth and the eighth centuries B.C.E., as evidenced *inter alia* by some of the motifs on the Samaria ivories, Phoenician/Egyptian religious symbolism made

its appearance in the iconography of the Northern Kingdom. More than 500 ivory fragments dating to eighth century B.C.E. were found at Samaria. These ivories have Egyptian motifs, although the style seems to have been inspired from Phoenicia and were most probably carved in one of the Phoenician cities.⁴² Egyptian symbolism on these ivories includes various deities, such as Horus, Ra, Heh, Isis, Nephthys and Osiris.

The most frequent depiction is the Horus child on a lotus flower, a symbol also popular in Phoenicia, as already discussed in the previous chapter (see the discussion of the seal belonging to Ger'Eshmun on pp. 127-132 above).

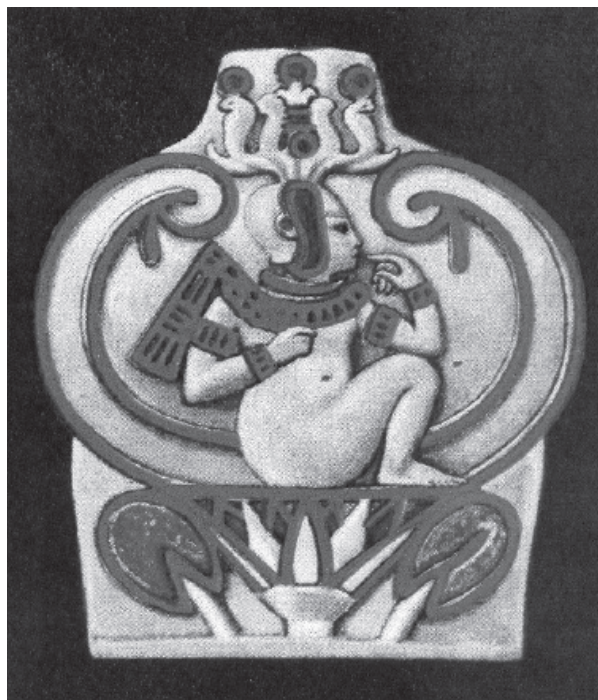


Figure 32: Harpocrates seated on a lotus. Ivory from Samaria
(Pienaar 2008:51)

⁴² I only touch on the Samaria ivories to illustrate the extent of Egyptian influences in the Northern Kingdom during the ninth and eighth centuries B.C.E. It is not practical to analyse them in detail within the scope of this study.

A recurring symbol is the *Djed* pillar, symbolising Osiris, guarded on both sides by Isis and Nephthys, the sister of Isis who helped her resurrect Osiris after his murder and dismemberment by Seth. Above them and the *Djed* pillar are solar disks, personifying perhaps a union between the sun god Ra and Osiris (Figure 36).

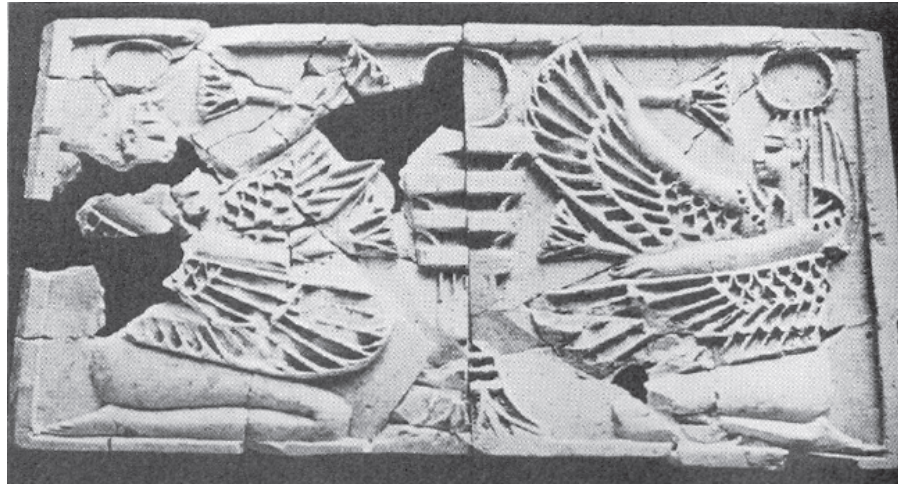


Figure 33: Isis and Nephthys guarding the Djed pillar. Ivory plaque from Samaria
(Pienaar 2008:53)

Other Egyptian religious symbols prevailing at this time in the Northern Kingdom are, amongst others, protective wings, winged *uraei*, falcons and hybrid winged creatures such as cherubs and winged falcon headed sphinxes, winged solar disks (also popular in Phoenicia), Bes, the eye of Horus, Ma'at and the Ankh. Egyptian symbolism, in addition to portraying religious concepts also dominate royal and courtly rule in Phoenicia and the Northern Kingdom during this period: the double crown of Egypt; kings smiting their enemies with clubs and kings in the form of sphinxes trampling their enemies (Keel & Uehlinger 1998:248-265). These symbols

and others together with their significance as religious symbols are discussed in this study where they appear on seals which are analyzed.

Similarly designed Hebrew bone seals have been found from the northern parts of the Northern Kingdom all over Palestine to the southern parts of Judah, for instance at Tell el-Oreime, Acre and Megiddo in the north to Shechem, Gezer, Tell en-Nashbeh, Lachish in the central hill country and Jerusalem and as far south as Tell Beit Mirsim, Arad and Tell el-Far'ah. These seals apparently originated in southern Palestine and there is a possibility that these seals were produced in Judah. It also seems that these seals originated during the ninth century B.C.E. and were used into the eighth century B.C.E. 'The iconography on these bone seals gives evidence of an intense fascination with Egyptian power symbols' (Keel & Uehlinger 1998:265-266).

These seals portray Egyptian royal symbols such as cartouches, falcons, lions and caprids which may be the result of the close proximity of Egypt to Judah and the lack in Israelite society of a tradition of such symbols. An emerging desire to symbolise royal power may have led to the borrowing of symbols, traditionally representing power, from their southern neighbours.

Towards the end of the eighth century B.C.E. there came a change in the Judahite seal iconography, a movement away from Egyptian royal symbols towards Egyptian religious symbolism. This tendency is detectable during the reign of King Ahaz (742-726 B.C.E.), continued throughout the reign of his son, the reformist King Hezekiah and was still alive and well into the 7th century B.C.E. during the time of the other great reformist, Judahite King Josiah (640-609 B.C.E.) (Keel & Uehlinger 1998:272-274). This trend seemed to have continued until the exile to Babylon in 587 B.C.E. I

submit that this was the result of Judah's forced isolation from the north due to the Assyrian occupation of the erstwhile Northern Kingdom, as well as a continuous Assyrian threat at Judah's borders which necessitated a closer relationship with Egypt to the south (see also the discussion of the seal of Hezekiah above on pp. 38-42 and hereinafter on pp. 183-184).

The contemporary Biblical prophets seemed to be fully aware of these Egyptianizing tendencies of the Judahites:

'Woe to the obstinate children, declares the Lord, "to those who carry out plans that are not mine, forming an alliance, but not by my Spirit, heaping sin upon sin; who go down to Egypt without consulting me; who look for help to Pharaoh's protection, to Egypt's shade for refuge"' (Is 30:1-2).

'I will punish those who dwell in the land of Egypt, as I have punished Jerusalem, with the sword, with famine, and with pestilence, so that none of the remnant of Judah who have come to live in the land of Egypt shall escape or survive or return to the land of Judah, to which they desire to return to dwell there; for they shall not return, except some fugitives' (Jr 44:13-14).

The Egyptian religious symbols that most commonly appear, first in the Northern Kingdom and later in Judah are the winged *uraeus* (two-winged and four-winged), the winged solar disk and two- and four-winged scarabs pushing the solar disk. The winged *uraeus* was a clearly Egyptian protective symbol and in Judah it seemed to have represented the protective power of Yahweh 'enthroned on Mount Zion' (sic) (Keel & Uehlinger 1998:274).

The winged suns and the winged scarabs pushing the solar disk are clearly representing the sun god. As emphatically stated by Keel & Uehlinger (1998:276) ‘The close contacts that existed with neighboring Egypt, particularly at the end of the eighth century, make it quite improbable that the people of Judah, just like the people of Israel..., would not have known what the winged solar disk, a scarab or a *uraei* (sic) meant...people in Judah and Israel had some very definite notions about what was at the root of the use of winged *uraei* as guarding powers and of the scarab as a mysterious embodiment of or metaphor for the sun that rose victoriously anew each day.’

The fact that Yahweh seemed to have remained the sovereign God in both Israel and Judah leads to the conclusion that the Israelites during this period, did not necessarily accept an Egyptian Ra (Amun-Ra) or a Phoenician Baal as a sun god replacing Yahweh. Those, devout to Yahweh, rather associated Yahweh symbolically with the most prominent celestial body and used Egyptian religious solar symbols to convey his status (position) or supremacy as the highest god. Even those devout to Yahweh accepted, however, that there were other gods. Yahweh was the god of the Israelites and he was superior to all other gods. The concept of only one God in the universe did not at that time exist amongst the Israelites. Isaiah, during the late eighth century B.C.E., may have started preaching this new concept, but it is highly unlikely that the ordinary Israelite/Judahite would have been converted to it. This belief in more than one god most probably existed up to the highest levels (including royalty) of their society. Furthermore, one should always keep in mind that the Israelites themselves had no tradition of symbolising gods and their powers. By using these Egyptian

symbols, those devout to Yahweh had no intention (the graven image prohibition) to portray Yahweh himself, but rather some aspect of him, such as his supremacy or his protective and other powers.⁴³

It does not follow that there were not factions amongst the Israelites who worshipped other gods. The contrary seems to be true and the Bible is very clear in this respect in that kings, devout to Yahweh, like Hezekiah and Josiah, seem to be the exceptions rather than the rule. In analysing and interpreting the iconography on seals, one has to examine the symbols in the context of the times during which the seals were produced. A sun disk during the time of King Hezekiah may represent the supremacy of Yahweh, but during the reign of his father, King Ahaz or his son Manasseh, it could have represented Baal or even Amun-Ra. The significant factor is that during Iron IIB and C the Israelites used Egyptian religious symbols in demonstrating their own religion, whether such religion was Yahwistic, Phoenician, Egyptian or a polytheistic combination. One should be very careful in reaching final conclusions regarding the religious meaning and implications of such symbolism and I will endeavour to motivate my submissions as far as possible in the light of available evidence and authority.

The ultimate purpose of this study being to indicate the acceptance of Egyptian symbolism in the religion of Israel and Judah, I am now going to proceed with the analysis of seals to illustrate my hypothesis. I want to emphasise that this study is not intended to be a catalogue of Hebrew seals, whether published or unpublished, but the

⁴³ See also the arguments of Keel and Uehlinger (1998:272-281) and Ornan (2005:231-235) in this regard.

seals being analysed are selected to be representative of various Egyptian gods and religious rituals and principles. It should also be noted that most of the relevant seals ‘which appear with great frequency during Iron age IIB ... are ... as yet unpublished’ (Keel & Uehlinger 1998:280). It is therefore impossible to discuss all the seals pertaining to the periods under discussion. For the same reason it is impossible to make a complete list of archaeological sites where seals dating to the relevant period have been found. Such seals have been at sites all over the erstwhile Israel and Judah. A perusal of Avigad & Sass (1997) and Keel (1997) reveals *inter alia* the following sites: Akko, Acre, Arad, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Bethlehem, Beth Shean, Beth Shemesh, En Gedi, Gezer, Hebron, Jerusalem, Megiddo, Samaria, Tel Dan, Tel Dor, Tell en-Nashbeh, Tell es-Safi etcetera.

For easier identification, I am mostly going to concentrate on inscribed seals. The name of the owner may be of assistance in establishing his religious orientation. Similarly the name of the king, of whom he was a servant, may serve as an indicator of the period during which he lived. The name of the king may also bear witness of the prevailing state religion in the particular kingdom.

The following criteria were used in selecting the seals for analysis and discussion:

- a) To be representative of the wide distribution of Egyptian religious symbols portrayed on Hebrew seals during the period;
- b) To illustrate the involvement of royalty and officialdom and
- c) To avoid as far as possible repetitive themes, such as winged solar disks and winged uraei which constitute the majority of the themes on the published seals.

The first four epigraphic seals were chosen because they apparently represented royalty, including a queen, a king and two princes. The rest of the epigraphic seals were chosen because they represented high officials such as ministers, priests and military officers. They were not included with a particular sequence in mind. They all date from the same period but it is impossible to date them precisely, so a chronological sequence is not possible.

6.2 SEALS WITH HEBREW INSCRIPTIONS AND EGYPTIANISED ICONOGRAPHY

During the early eighth century B.C.E. there was a clear tendency amongst Phoenician and Israelite royalty (with Judahite royalty to follow suit later in that century) to use Egyptian symbolism.

At this stage, by means of introduction to the analysis of the Hebrew seals, it seems appropriate to again look at the seals of Jezebel and Hezekiah, especially in view of the discussions of Egyptian symbolism and Phoenician seals, in an endeavour to understand the meaning of the symbolism portrayed on those two seals.

6.2.1 The seal of Jezebel revisited



Figure 34: Seal of Jezebel (2)

a. Discussion

For various reasons I work on the premises that this seal most probably belonged to Queen Jezebel, wife of King Ahab of Israel.⁴⁴ There are several significant pointers in

⁴⁴ This is also the conclusion of Professor M Korpel (2008a:32-37, 80). According to *BAR* (28 [2]:38-39, 80), this conclusion is contested by other scholars, (for instance A Mazar [2008]). Rollston (2008a) contends that the writing on the seal dates to a period later than the 9th Century B.C.E., during which period Queen Jezebel lived, according to the Bible. The editor of *BAR* contacted several other renowned palaeographers and not one of them was prepared to state that the writing did not date to the 9th Century. Rollston (2008b) responded. Byrne (2008) basically agrees with Rollston. Korpel (2008b) defended her position. The main argument against the seal belonging to Queen Jezebel is that all other seals dating to the 9th century that have been discovered in Palestine are anepigraphic. Avigad & Sass dates it to the late 9th-8th century, 'based to a great extent on the style considered early' (1997:275). It seems that other palaeographers, according to Shanks, are also not prepared to confine the writing to the 8th century. Since most of the other aspects (only the century [9th or 8th] being contested) of the seal point to the owner being a royal lady, not being a palaeographer myself, on a balance of probabilities, it would not be unreasonable to give Korpel the benefit of the doubt. In the final analysis it will make no difference to the conclusions of this study regarding the Egyptianizing of Hebrew seals of the period.

that direction:

- i) The size of the seal, 30 x 22 x 10 mm. This is considerably bigger than the average seal from the period, which on average was about half to two-thirds of that size. It may indicate the importance and/or wealth of the owner (Korpel 2008a:37). The quality of the carving and overall is one of excellence and even Avigad, who was not prepared to identify the seal positively as belonging to the biblical Queen Jezebel, admitted that the quality of the seal was worthy of a queen (Avigad 1964:275).
- ii) The symbol of the *uraeus* had been a symbol of kingship and royalty from the earliest times (Geddes & Grosset 1997:471). It represented their power (Ions 1997:15). During the Eighteenth Dynasty, Egyptian queens began to wear the double *ureaus*. It apparently represented Upper and Lower Egypt; one cobra was sometimes depicted with the red crown and the other with the white crown, the one cobra most probably was Wadjet (Buto) and the other a representation of Nekhabet in the form of a snake for uniformity. The crowns on the *uraei* were often replaced with Hathor horns with solar discs. The double *ureaus* was not confined to queens but were also sometimes worn by goddesses. The concept 'queen' refers to the pharaoh's principal wife or his mother (Robins 1993:23-24). In the seal under discussion, it seems therefore to represent a queen. I submit that, despite the statement of Avigad & Sass (1997:275) that the 'Gender of the owner is uncertain', there is a further indicator that the owner was a woman. The flail at the back of the falcon

represents Min, a god of fertility, who was depicted on many amulets worn by women (Oakes & Gahlin 2007:456).

- iii) Various other royal symbols such as the double crown are portrayed on the seal. Although no specific ritual scene seems to be intended, the symbols do not only to represent royalty, but also an association with and the protection and influence of the gods.

From the earliest times Horus, represented as a falcon, was closely associated with Egyptian royalty and regarded as a special protector of kings. The symbol of the falcon was often used on a royal seal. The first of the array of the king's names was always a Horus-name, denoting that particular king. It associated the king with a particular aspect of the god (Geddes & Grosset 1997:379-380).

The winged sun disk became known through the Egyptian 'Legend of the Winged Sun Disk' which concludes 'and this is the winged sun disk which is over the sanctuaries of all the gods and goddesses of Egypt, for their sanctuary is also that of Horbehûdti' (Wiedemann 2001:75). It is also known as the Great Protector of not only the gods and goddesses, but also of royalty (Wiedemann 2001:76-77).

The winged sphinx seldom appeared in Egyptian history and mythology. During the New Kingdom the winged sphinx became to symbolize the power of the pharaoh who tramples his enemies during war.



Figure 35: Line drawing of a wooden side panel from Pharaoh Thutmose IV's throne found in his tomb. He is shown as a winged sphinx trampling Egypt's Asiatic enemies.
(Smith 1960:123)

Albright (1938:2) argues that the biblical cherubim and the winged sphinx were the same: '...the Lord Almighty, who is enthroned between the cherubim' (1 Sm 4:4). The description of the positioning of the cherubim on the Ark of the Covenant in Exodus 37:7-9 shows them in a position guarding the central part of the Ark and that is the section where Yahweh is enthroned. It creates the impression that they act as guardians (Cf, Botterweck, Ringgren & Fabry 1995:318, where it is argued that other creatures may be in contention for the concept 'cherubim'). According to Albright the wingless sphinx prevailed in Egypt, but in Syria and Palestine, the winged sphinx (griffin) is more prominent. Regarding the cherub throne where Yahweh appears to have been seated:

‘It is more probable that the impulse for the use of the throne came from Phoenicia, where (sometimes empty) cherub thrones appear in widespread and fairly continuous use from the end of the second millennium all the way into the Hellenistic/Roman Period, being used in Iron Age IIC seals ...’ (Keel & Uehlinger 1998:168).

The popularity of the winged sphinx in Phoenicia also points to the possibility of the owner having a Phoenician background, like the biblical Jezebel. This popularity also appeared in the Northern Kingdom as evidenced *inter alia* by the Samaria ivories where three examples of winged sphinxes were found.



Figure 36: Winged sphinx. Ivory from Samaria
(Pienaar 2008:57)

Although the original meaning of sphinxes seems to have been lost through the millennia, it apparently started with the Great Sphinx at Giza, from where the concept spread throughout the ancient Middle East. What is clear, however, is that it was always associated with power, whether relating to the gods or a pharaoh (Werness 2006:231). In Egypt it probably started with Pharaoh Khafre of the Fourth Dynasty and was used throughout the history of

Ancient Egypt. Even the Eighteenth Dynasty female Pharaoh Hatshepsut attempted to have herself immortalised in this form (see Figure 37 on the next page). Thus, it is contended that the winged sphinx on the seal of Jezebel denotes royalty. Although impossible to prove, the face of the sphinx may even be the face of the owner, in which event it is submitted that only a king or queen would have the audacity to depict him or herself in that form to demonstrate his or her authority. On the other hand, it is more likely that it is a portrayal of Astarte (Anath), the main goddess of Sidon, from where Queen Jezebel hailed. If Korpel (see p.35 footnote 16 above) is correct in her contention that it is but a Hathor headdress, then it is most probably Astarte. There was a close association of Astarte with Hathor by the Phoenicians (see 'ANATH' under '**PHOENICIAN GODS AND GODDESSES**' in **ANNEXURE B**).



Figure 37: Sphinx of Hatshepsut at Memphis.

(Photo: F N Vermeulen)

At the bottom of the seal is a bent flower, which appears to be either a lotus or a lotus bud. The lotus closing its petals every night and reopening them in the morning became in ancient Egypt a symbol of rebirth and of Ra who died every night and was reborn every morning. Korpel (2006:3600 and her quoted sources) alleges that it also portrays a vain lady and that Egyptian queens were often depicted with lotus flowers in their hair. It is also known that Egyptian women in general used to wear lotus flowers in their hair (Armour 2001:1).

I do not think one should attach too much importance to the assertion that the lotus flower necessarily represents a queen. It may however be symbolic of a woman.

Another obstacle (one being the relevant century [see footnote 16 on p.35 above]) in identifying this seal with Queen Jezebel, seems to be that the spelling of the name Jezebel on the seal (YZBL) seems to be different from the spelling in the Bible where

it is 'YZBL. A third factor is that it does not contain the prefix 'belonging to', which was normally in front of a name on a seal to depict ownership. I agree with Korpel (2008:36-37) that the *aleph* () and the *lamed* () 'to' or 'belonging to,' most probably were in the damaged top section of the seal.

A further factor to be kept in mind is that Jezebel was apparently a rare Phoenician name (Korpel 2008a:35), so there could not have been many Jezebels around during the period, especially not one who rated such a fancy seal.

b. Conclusion

Unless another similar seal or bulla is found in context, we will probably never finally solve the mystery surrounding this seal. I submit that in all the circumstances, probabilities point to this seal belonging to the biblical Queen Jezebel. This is, in my opinion, an example of the adoption of Egyptian religious concepts in Palestine, probably the Northern Kingdom, via Phoenicia (Cf. Uehlinger 2005:158).

Finally as regards this seal; the various gods and other symbols portrayed do not point, for instance, to a certain aspect of Yahweh, but rather in the tradition of Phoenician seals of the period, to the protection of and reliance on various gods. The symbolism on the seal reflects divinely sanctioned royal authority.

6.2.2 The seal of Hezekiah revisited



Figure 38: Seal Hezekiah (2)

a. Discussion

The fact that the Bible describes Hezekiah as a king devout to the religion of Yahweh, should be seen in the context of geography and the time of his reign. These factors also account for the Egyptians. In 733 B.C.E. the Assyrians invaded and destroyed the northern part of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. By 720 B.C.E. the rest of Israel and Philistia was in the hands of the Assyrians who also started a resettlement program. Judah only escaped by paying tribute to the Assyrians, but was now, except for Egypt to the south, isolated from the rest of the world. For Egypt the trade routes to the north, excluding contact with Judah, were closed. This was the inheritance of King Hezekiah when he became king of Judah in *ca.* 715 B.C.E. In the event a closer relationship between Egypt and Judah was unavoidable. In 701 B.C.E., as a result of King Hezekiah's rebellion against Assyria, Judah, except for Jerusalem, was also lost to the Assyrians, further isolating the Judahites and confined them to Jerusalem.

In this context, it is, therefore, to be expected that Egyptian influences would infiltrate Judahite society even up to the highest level, including royalty and government officials. Earlier during the eighth century there had indeed been a movement towards the application of Egyptian royal symbolism on Judahite seals. It could have been a good political and diplomatic ploy for Hezekiah to take an Egyptian royal symbol for his official seal. In a strange and inexplicable turn of events the Judahites, as has been noted previously in this study (see pp. 40-41 and 166-174), moved away from Egyptian royal symbols towards Egyptian religious symbols and despite the reformist image of Hezekiah, this trend continued during his reign.

On the other hand, as Keel and Uehlinger have observed (1998:279), in view of the abundance of Yahwistic names in the Bible during Iron IIB and C, the impression is created that Yahweh continued to be the sovereign God in Judah and Israel.

b. Conclusion

One should not read too much into the symbol of the two-winged scarab pushing the solar disk. As discussed above in subparagraph 6.1, this symbol was probably used to portray God's supremacy in the universe in the same vein as the sun rules supreme over the other celestial bodies. In various religions this symbol were not always used to portray the sun god *per se* (Ornan 2005:209). Yahweh Himself is not portrayed; neither is Amun-Ra or any other sun god, but rather his authority as the supreme God. There is not necessarily an adherence by Hezekiah to the religious principles of the Egyptians, but it could be the acceptance of an Egyptian religious symbol to represent an aspect of his own God, Yahweh.

6.2.3 Seal Belonging to Elishama 'son of the king'



Figure 39: Seal belonging to Elishama 'son of the king.'

(Avigad & Sass 1997:53)

a. Description

According to Avigad & Sass (1997:53), the current location of this seal is not known and was bought in Jaffa and it allegedly originated in Tyre.

The seal is a scaraboid carved from an unknown greenish stone. Its dimensions are 24x 20 x ? mm. It has a single-line border with two double-line field dividers.

In the top register is a four-winged *ureaus* with a double-crown depicted.

The lower two registers contain the inscription:

'Belonging to Elishama 'son of the king .'

According to Avigad & Sass (1997:53) this seal dates to the eighth-seventh centuries B.C.E.

b. Discussion

Several people with the name Elishama⁴⁵ are mentioned in the Bible. In Numbers 1:18, Elishama, son of Ammihud is chosen as leader of the half-tribe of Ephraim. In 1 Chronicles 7:26 this same Elishama is shown to be the grandfather of Joshua. According to 2 Samuel 2:16 and 1 Chronicles 3:6, two of King David's sons were named Elishama. One of the priests sent by Jehoshaphat to teach the people the law (2 Chr. 17:8) had the same name. The secretary of king Jehoiakim was also a person called Elishama (Jr 36:13). Another possibility as owner of this particular seal is to be found in 2 Kings 25:25 and Jeremiah 41:1, where the exploits of a Judahite rebel leader is described. He is referred to as: '...Ishmael son of Nethaniah and grandson of Elishama, who was of the royal family....' The latter two seem to be the strongest contenders in biblical context as a probable owner of the seal. The fact that the Judahite rebel is described as being of the royal family makes his grandfather a stronger contender than the secretary of the king. There are two Egyptian symbols in the top register of this seal. At the top is a four-winged *uraeus* wearing the double crown of Egypt.

⁴⁵ The name Elishama means 'my God has heard' or 'whom God hears' or 'God hears' or 'the Lord heard'. It has been suggested that the name is Yahwistic because an inscription dated to about 700 from *Khirbet Bet Lei* assumes that Yahweh is identical with El and the owner was probably a Judahite (Keel & Uehlinger 1998:311). Cornelius (2008:112) points out that this surmise was the result of an identification by Dalman (1906) who deduced the YHWH-name from the El in Elishama but according to Keel & Uehlinger (1998:312) other deities are also possible candidates and perhaps it is best described as YHWH as a lunar El.

Although it has been suggested that the four-winged scarab was a symbol for the Northern Kingdom of Israel (Tushingham 1992:61-65), this does not seem to also apply to the four-winged *uraeus*.

In Egypt the 'double crown' (pshent), also known as 'Two Mighty Ones' was a combination of the red crown of Lower Egypt and the white crown of Upper Egypt signifying the unification of the two lands (Harris 2001:100). On the other hand it also illustrated the authority of the pharaoh as the ruler of a unified land, thus it is a symbol of kingship. In this depiction I submit that the double crown is used to signify royalty and perhaps a direct relationship with the king. This may therefore be a further indicator that the Elishama involved, is the person referred to in 2 Kings 25:25 and Jeremiah 41:1.

In 2 Kings 25:25, Elishama is described as the grandfather of the rebel, Ishmael. This takes Elishama probably back to the reign of the reformer king, Josiah.⁴⁶

In Egypt, the *uraeus* had always been a symbol, not only as representing the sun god, but also of royalty (Geddes & Grosset 1997:471). In this instance we have the winged *uraeus*, which should be regarded as representing a deity rather than royalty. The wings stress not only the protective element, but also the celestial aspect, in that the four wings show that the god who is protecting is also a celestial being (Keel & Uehlinger 1998:195, 251). The winged *uraeus* is above the name of the owner, thus

⁴⁶After, Josiah (who reigned for 31 years), Jehoahaz only ruled for three months, before Pharaoh Neco, replaced him with Josiah's son Eliakim and renamed him Jehoiakim. The latter ruled for eleven years and was succeeded by his son Jehoiachin, who only ruled for three months before he was taken captive to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar made Mattaniah king and renamed him Zedekiah, during whose reign Ishmael lived and rebelled (2 Ki 23-25). The time spans involved, place Elishama in the time of Josiah.

protecting him, most probably indicating that the owner (living in the time of King Josiah, loyal to Yahweh) regarded himself to be under the protection of Yahweh, the winged *uraeus* being a symbol of Yahweh's protective powers.

6.2.4 Seal belonging to Manasseh son of the king



Figure 40: Seal belonging to Manasseh son of the king
(Avigad & Sass 1997: 55)

a. Description

It is a scaraboid of a dark brown conglomerate stone with white and pink veins. It is perforated and its dimensions are 17 x 14,5 x 9 mm. It has a single-line border and two double-line field dividers, thus dividing the seal into three registers. Its find context and present location are unknown.

In the top register is a two-winged scarab pushing a solar disk with two more solar disks below the tips of the wings.

In the middle and bottom registers are the words:

Avigad & Sass (1997:55) translate this inscription to read ‘Belonging to Manasseh son of the king.’

b. Discussion

According to the Bible (2 Ki 20:21 and 2 Ch 32:33), Manasseh succeeded his father, king Hezekiah, as king of Judah.

Avigad & Sass (1987:202) states that Manasseh, the owner of this seal, was ‘perhaps’ the son of Hezekiah. It seems that it is not a mere possibility, but a strong probability, although the Bible states that he was only twelve years old when he succeeded his father as king. Comparing this seal with the one of King Hezekiah (see the discussion in paragraphs 1.5.1 (pp. 38-42 above) and 6.2.2 (pp. 183-184 above), the same symbol of the two-winged scarab appears on both these seals.

The two-winged scarabs are known in particular from the *lmlk* seal impressions on storage jar handles found all over the territory of the former Judah, all positively dated to the late 8th century B.C.E. and during the time of King Hezekiah. It seems, therefore, that the scarab was the official state emblem in Judah during the reign of King Hezekiah (Mazar 1992:455-458; Cf Tushingham 1992:61-65).

In Hezekiah’s time the symbol of the two-winged scarab was probably connected in some way with Yahweh. The Bible tells us that Manasseh was an evil king who did not worship Yahweh. At this stage it is not possible to establish if Manasseh continued using this symbol as the official state emblem after his succession as king.

It stands to reason that while he was still the crown prince his seal would reflect the official emblem of his father.

6.2.5 Seal belonging to Ushnâ servant of Ahaz



Figure 41: Belonging to Ushnâ servant of Ahaz
(Avigad & Sass 1997:5, 51)

a. Description

According to Avigad & Sass (1997:510) this seal is currently in the Yale Babylonian Collection at New Haven. It is a scaraboid (the popular form in the region during the relevant period) of orange carnelian, perforated, with dimensions 15,5 x 11,5 x 4 mm. It has a double-line border and two field dividers.

In the top register is a solar disk with ram's horns, flanked by two outward looking *uraei*. On top of the ram's horns are three *Atef* crowns flanked by *uraei* (also outward looking). An inscription with field dividers is contained in the two lower registers. It reads:

'Belonging to Ushnâ servant of Ahaz.' (see also Avigad & Sass (1997:81 para 99,100). Ushna is a Hebrew personal name which does not appear in the Bible. It is probably a shortened form of a theophoric name such as *snyhw* with the root *ws*, to give (strength) (Fowler 1988:335).

The use of the scarab (beetle) shape of the seal as well as the motifs of the *uraeus* (the sacred asp of the headdress of the Pharaohs) and the Osiris crowns suggest that the iconography is borrowed from Egyptian prototypes. The inscription is written in the ancient Hebrew script and not the square Assyrian characters which were introduced in the Second Temple period and are in use till the present. Though we do not know who Ushnâ was, the Ahaz mentioned in this seal, was most probably the eighth century B.C.E. king of Judah (742-726 B.C.E.) mentioned in 2 Kings 16-17 and 2 Chronicles 28.

b. Discussion

The Bible tells us that King Ahaz, in contrast to his son Hezekiah who was a devout worshipper of Yahweh, deviated from the Yahweh-religion and despite several punishments by the hand of Yahweh, he persisted with these religious practises: 'In

his time of trouble King Ahaz became even more unfaithful to the Lord... In every town in Judah he built high places to burn sacrifices to other gods...' (2 Chr 2:22-25).

Although we do not know exactly who Ushna was, the quality of the seal, the fact that it contains both an inscription and iconography and the description that he was a servant of Ahaz, signify that he was a high official, probably a minister. Since he was attached to a sacrilegious king, it will also affect the meaning of the symbolism on the seal. An important factor is the ram's horns attached to the solar disk.

In Egypt the god Amun is represented on many monuments with ram's horns (Farnell 2004:96; Sansone 2004:175; Ellis 1994:7) (see Figures 66 and 67 on p. 272). Originally, before the advent of Amun, the ram headed Khnum was the patron god of royalty in Upper Egypt (Clark 2000:137). Alexander the Great was always shown with the ram's horns of Amun-Ra (Fage 1976:150). Sometimes Osiris was shown with ram's horns (Najovits 2004:203) or ram's horns were added to his atef-crown (Shorter 1937:46). According to Hastings (1910b:792), Ra and also Nephthys were sometimes shown with a solar disk and ram's horns. Isis, although in the later history of Egypt depicted with the cow horns of Hathor, was sometimes, as a female counterpart of the Ram of Mendes, shown with ram's horns (Wallis Budge 1973:281; 2003b:203.)

The depiction on this particular seal is also reminiscent of the *trj*-crown of Tutu being 'two ostrich feathers with a solar disk, set upon ram's horns and flanked by cobras' (Clarysse, Schoors & Willems 1998:142).

It is extremely doubtful that the intention was to portray Khnum, Nephthys or the crown of Tutu. During the relevant period not one of these gods was of any

importance, not even in Egypt. Isis, outside of Egypt, was normally depicted in her accepted form of the period, i.e. with Hathor horns and a solar disk. The *atef*-crowns are definitely indicating Osiris and this crown was sometimes shown with ram's horns, but again it is doubtful in this instance for they are attached to a solar disk. It rather seems as if the owner wanted to portray Amun-Ra with this combination.

Thus we have the following scenario: Osiris flanked by two *uraei* and Amun-Ra flanked by two *uraei*. The *uraeus* represented the essential meaning of kingship in Egypt, that of protector (Stanwick 2002:34). Wadjet, symbolised as the *uraeus* was the protector of Ra (Te Velde 1971:81). The *uraei* on this seal can only be interpreted as representing the protective forces of the gods. Thus we have Amun-Ra as the protector in life and the symbol of resurrection and Osiris (here represented by the *atef*-crowns) as the protector in the afterlife.

The variety of Egyptian symbols on this seal (Osiris, Amun-Ra and the *uraei*) convinces me that the owner of the seal did not intend to reproduce certain aspects of Yahweh but rather that he relied in the original Egyptian gods themselves. The fact that Osiris is included makes it doubtful that Phoenician gods were intended. The description in the Bible 'high places to burn sacrifices to other gods' seems to include gods of Egypt and was not confined to Phoenician gods such as Baal and Astarte.

6.2.6 Seal belonging to Abiyau servant of 'Uzziyau



Figure 42: Belonging to Abiyau servant of
'Uzziyau .

(Avigad & Sass 1997:51)

a. Description

This seal is currently in the Chandon de Briailles collection in Paris. It is a scaraboid, unperforated with a single-line border. Its dimensions are 16 x 12 x 4 mm.

It contains the inscription:

'Belonging to Abiyau servant of 'Uzziyau .'

The motif is clearly Egyptian. It depicts the child Horus kneeling on lotus flowers. On his head are Hathor horns with a solar disk.

b. Discussion.

There can be little doubt that the ‘Uzziah referred to on this seal is the one who became the tenth king of Judah in *ca.* 767 B.C.E. His name is Yahwistic meaning ‘Yahweh is my strength.’ Abiyahu appeared to have been a minister or high official in the court of king Uzziah (Keel & Uehlinger 1998:272), whose name is also Yahwistic, ‘my father is Yahweh.’⁴⁷

According to the Bible (2 Chr 26), Uzziah was sixteen years old when he became king and he ruled for fifty-two years. ‘He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord...’ (2 Chr 26:4). The Bible does not record where King Uzziah was buried but states that he was not buried in the royal necropolis but outside the city because he died a leper (2 Chr 26:23). Direct proof, outside the Bible, of his existence came in the form of a discovery made in 1931. It was a plaque (Figure 45 on the following page) which referred to his second burial and ossuary containing the Aramaic inscription: ‘Hither were brought the bones of Uzziah king of Judah; not to be opened’. The ossuary containing the bones has been lost (Paul & Dever 1973:125). This is one of the few instances where there is a direct connection between a particular Israelite/Judahite king and an archaeological discovery. In more recent times, the seals of King Ahaz and King Hezekiah contributed to this meagre collection

⁴⁷ Abijah is a name borne by several men and women in the Bible. The most important are the second son of Samuel (1 Sa 8:2; 1 Ch 6:28); the son of Jeroboam I (1 Ki 14:1-18) and the second king of Judah, the son and successor of Rehoboam (1 Ch 3:10; 2 Ch 11:20; 13:11).

of the heirlooms of the royalty of the Israelite kingdoms. There are also indirect evidence, such as the seals of officials, like the current one, referring to their royal masters by name.



Figure 43: Plaque referring to the second burial ossuary of King Uzziah
(Paul & Dever 1973:126)

In this instance we have a king loyal to Yahweh with a Yahwistic name and an official of the king, also with a Yahwistic name. We can state with a fair degree of confidence that the iconography on the seal, although Egyptianised, did not intend to portray foreign gods as such. The ‘borrowed symbolism’ will have to be interpreted in the context of Yahwistic concepts.

The central figure is the naked young Horus kneeling on a lotus flower.⁴⁸ I submit that a further factor contributing to the conclusion that it is the young Horus, is the horns with the sun disk. The statement by Avigad & Sass (1997:51) that they are ‘Hathor’ horns, may be correct in essence, but it should be remembered that during this period (Late Period) Isis, especially when shown with the infant Horus, was often depicted with ‘Hathor’ horns and a sun disk.



Figure 44: Isis with Hathor horns and sun disk suckling the child Horus.
(Harris 2001:67)

My conclusion is that one should not attach any other meaning to the ‘Hathor’ horns with the sun disk. It is significant that the horns seem to be attached to the head of Horus; it shows a bond between the two symbols and one could not get a closer physical bond than that between mother and child; the one growing from the other.

⁴⁸ Avigad & Sass (1997:51) suggest that it may also be papyrus plants. I cannot agree. The central plant is clearly an open lotus flower, flanked by two closed flowers or lotus buds. There is no comparison with papyrus plants (see Figure 101[p.305] for lotus flower under ‘**LOTUS FLOWER**’ and Figures 111 and 112 [p.318] for papyrus flowers under ‘**PAPYRUS**’ flowers in **ANNEXURE. B**).

Sass 1993:238 speculates that these horns could be a Phoenician misrepresentation of the double crown of Egypt. I do not agree, these are clearly Hathor horns with a sun disk identical to those in Figure 44 (see previous page). This suggestion by Sass is not repeated in the later work by Avigad and himself (Avigad & Sass 1997:51).

I submit that these horns (with sun disk) are Hathor horns and were intended as such, but were attributed to Isis to merely emphasise that the figure is indeed the son of Isis, the infant Horus.

In Egyptian mythology the fact that the young Horus is depicted on top of a lotus flower means that he is symbolising the sun child. The child Horus (Harpocrates, as he was Hellenized by the Greeks) personifies the first strength of the sun after the winter, thus the 'sun child', and also the image of early vegetation, thus fresh growth. The lotus flower in itself as a symbol of Ra, represents resurrection and the combination with the infant Horus enhances this concept. Horus, after all, was conceived in the underworld (the world of the dead) when Isis went there to be impregnated by Osiris. The fact that Horus was then born in the world of the living is a strong symbol for signifying new life after death (the summer after the winter) and thus resurrection.

6.2.7 Seal belonging to Asap



Figure 45: Seal belonging to Asap
(Avigad & Sass 1997:77)

a. Description

This seal was found at Megiddo and is dated by Avigad & Sass (1997:77) to the eighth century B.C.E. According to Ussishkin (1994:421-422) this seal is somehow related to the gate at Megiddo; it was found at the elevation of the floor near the front, left chamber of the gate in an area covered by brick debris of the fallen gatehouse. The strata are unknown, but are possibly III-II. It is currently in the Archaeological Museum, Istanbul. It is a scaraboid made of lapis lazuli, unperforated with dimensions 19 x 14 x 6 mm. It has a single-line border and one field divider.

In the top register is a winged 'griffin' wearing a kilt and the double crown of Egypt. It faces an ankh on a pedestal (Avigad & Sass 1997:77).

In the bottom register the name _____ is inscribed. The closest we get to the name 'Asaph' in the Bible is Asaph, an anglicised name of the Hebrew 'Asaf', a name attributed to various persons in the Bible (1 Chr 6:39; 1 Chr 9:15; 1 Chr 15:17; 1 Chr 16:5-6); 1 Chr 25:2 Is 36:3). It means 'he collected', 'gathered', 'gatherer' (Boyd 1952:14; Stabnow 2006:109). It is obviously the same name, especially if one looks at the *pey* (Ancient Hebrew: פ) at the end which can be pronounced either 'p' or 'ph'.

b. Discussion

Avigad and Sass (1997:77) call the creature on the seal a 'griffin.' I submit that it is, in Egyptian tradition, a sphinx with a falcon head (to which the wings of the falcon were added), the original Egyptian *seref*, which in classical times developed into the well-known griffin with the body of a lion and the head of an eagle. In ancient Egypt both the lion and the falcon (Horus) were associated with the pharaoh and this combined creature also symbolised the pharaoh (i Parcerisa 1980:50). This conclusion is justified by the fact that in most of the depictions of this Egyptian creature that I have studied, it wears the *Pshent* (double crown) of Egypt.

The falcon headed sphinx seems to have been a very popular symbol during the 8th century B.C.E. on Phoenician, Israelite and other West Semitic personal seals, especially on seals from the Northern Kingdom (see for instance Avigad & Sass 1997 para. 44, 85, 116, 135, 143, 160, 168, 182, 190, 193 198, 345, 370, 1069, 1112, 1123 and 1172). For brevity sake and to conform to the various scholars, I will also call the creature a griffin.

In front of the griffin is a cartouche on a pedestal, enclosing the *ankh*-sign. The cartouche is a further indicator that the griffin is intended as a king. The *ankh* is intended for the king's functions to maintain order and be a just ruler.

Here we have a seal from the Northern Kingdom during the eighth century B.C.E. bearing Egyptian symbols. The *ankh* is clearly a religious symbol while the association of the sphinx, not only with the king, but also with the Egyptian god Horus, also signifies a religious connotation. The Phoenician tradition of inscribed seals belonging to royalty and officials were probably followed in the Northern Kingdom. This would make Asap a minister or other official and would explain the symbolic representation of the king. On the other hand, the name Asap was mostly a priestly name, so the probabilities are that he was a priest, thus a religious official. If this is indeed the case, the griffin might have been intended to signify a cherub (May 1936:197-198).

In order to illustrate the point and without going into detail with each individual seal, I am going to show and briefly discuss two more seals with griffins, which have Israelite connotations. The comments in the current paragraph will apply *mutatis mutandis* to these seals.

6.2.8 Seal belonging to *hmn*



Figure 46: Seal belonging to *hmn*
(Avigad & Sass 1997:99)

a. Description

It is a scaraboid of black serpentine with white spots, unperforated with dimensions 15,5 x 11 x 5 mm. It has a single-line border and a single-line field divider dividing the seal into two registers.

It was discovered at Megiddo, but was unstratified. It is currently in Jerusalem (IAA).

The seal is dated to the eighth century B.C.E. (Avigad & Sass 1997:99).

In the top register is a striding winged griffin, wearing an Egyptian kilt and the double crown, looking to the right and facing an ankh. Interspersed between the legs of the

griffin (one leg doubling as a *lamed*) are letters forming an inscription (Avigad & Sass 1997:99).

The inscription reads: —belonging to *hmn*.

In the bottom register is a locust.


b. Discussion

The pronunciation and meaning of the name of the owner is uncertain. According to Avigad & Sass (1997:498-499) it could be ' *hmn* with aphaeresis, or Ḥammon, a hypocoristicon or 'hot spring'.

Avigad & Sass (1998:99) states that three bullae from one anepigraphic seal and with a similar pictorial arrangement than the current one were discovered in 1994 at Megiddo in a clear eighth century B.C.E. context, thus assisting the dating of this seal. This seal, being from Megiddo and dating to the eighth century B.C.E., leads to the conclusion that it belonged to an Israelite from the Northern Kingdom.

I do not deal with the griffin and the ankh (see discussion under previous seal) but will concentrate on the locust.

Since both the griffin and the ankh are Egyptian symbols, the probabilities are that the locust was also intended to be interpreted in an Egyptian context. According to Bodenheimer (1972:10) the locust in ancient Egypt was a symbol of multitude and weakness. The 'multitude' refers to the swarms of locusts that sporadically devastated the fields and crops of the Egyptians and the 'weakness' to their inability to take preventive measures to avoid such devastation.

The locust hieroglyph , under normal circumstances, is merely a symbol for the insect itself, but it may also represent large numbers of people, especially soldiers.

According to Biblicus (1824:554), with reference to the Greek writer Horapollo and the Roman writer Pierius, the ancient Egyptians used the locust symbol to denote *'men received into the fellowship of sacred things and practised in the discipline of holy mysteries*. In other words, the locust is the proper and legitimate for a *priest* or a *minister of religion*.' A single locust was also sometimes used to symbolise a person's soul (Werness 2006:201).

I do not think one should seriously consider the locust as portraying a negative aspect on this seal. If Pierius is correct it could indicate that the owner was a priest, but it could also pertain to 'multitude' in a positive sense, thus a multitude of descendants or riches. This is, of course, pure speculation and without further information it would be nearly impossible to arrive at a final solution.

The double crown of Egypt and the striding griffin both have the stamp of authority and the double crown may indicate a royal person, which it normally does. I would venture that this was the seal of at least a high official in the Northern Kingdom.

As far as I could establish the locust as a symbol appears on only three Hebrew stamp seals so far discovered, as well as a few cylinder seals (Avigad 1968:46). I am going to briefly refer to two more of these stamp seals.

6.2.8.1 Seal belonging to Azaryaw (son of) *hgbh* (Haggobeh or Haggebah)



Figure 47: Seal belonging to Azaryaw (son of) *hgbh* (Haggobeh or Haggebah)
(Avigad 1966: Plate 4c)

a. Description.

This seal is a scaraboid of reddish-white carnelian, with dimensions 16 x 11.5 x 9 mm. It is pieced lengthwise and is slightly damaged at one end (Avigad 1966:50). It has no field divider and it contains an inscription in Ancient Hebrew on top with a picture of a locust below it. The inscription reads as follows:

‘Belonging to Azaryaw (son of) *hgbh* (Haggobeh or Haggebah)’

b. Discussion

With reference to this seal, King (1988:136) writes as follows: ‘The latter has a two-line ancient Hebrew inscription as well as a carved locust. Dating to the eighth to

seventh century B.C.E., this scarab is especially relevant for the study of Amos, because the word for “locust” inscribed on the scarab is *hgbh*, as is Amos 7:1’. Avigad (1966:51-52) reads the inscription as ‘Belonging to Azaryaw (son of) *hgbh*, to be pronounced ‘Haggobeh’ or ‘Haggebah.’

Avigad (1966:52) comments: ‘Our seal is the first known instance among Hebrew and related seals where a name is accompanied by a pictorial illustration of its meaning. The locust obviously serves here as the emblem of the Haggobeh or Haggebah family.’

In Hebrew the word for locust is *hgbh* which is probably derived from *hgbh* which means ‘to multiply’ or to become numerous (Watson 1832:589; Marshall et al 1996:47; Cf. Ryken et al 1998:516; Bromley 1988:149-150). In the Bible there are no less than nine different Hebrew names for locusts (Marshall et al 1996:46-47) and large numbers of armed forces, especially hostile forces are compared with swarms of locusts (Jdg 6:5; 7:12; Ps 105:34; Jr 46:23; Jl 1:4 and Nah 3:15). Their numbers are such that they, like the stars and the sand of the sea, cannot be counted. As a symbol in the Bible it is mostly used in a negative context as an instrument of destruction. They are also regarded as instruments of the wrath of God (Ex 10:4-19; Dt 28:38, 42; 2 Ch 7:13; Ps 78:46; 105:34; Nah 3:15-17).

6.2.8.2 Seal of Aḥiṣ ūr



Figure 48: Seal of Aḥiṣ ūr
(Avigad 1968:45)

a. Description

It is a scarab of red carnelian with dimensions 15 x 12 x 9 mm. The find context is unknown and is currently in the Borowski-collection in Jerusalem. It has a single-line border and no field divider.

At the top of the seal is a winged solar disk with its wings spread downwards. In the centre part is a kneeling male figure with his arms reaching upwards and his hands touching the wings of the solar disk. He has a curly beard and his hair is bound back with a bandeau, with locks falling to his shoulders. He is wearing a kilt held at his waist with a heavy belt. Round his legs are ropes which seem to be part of sandals

with ropes that were tightened above the knee. Avigad (1968:45) states that they are muscles but they are too prominent and are without doubt not part of the man's legs.

In front of him (on the left hand side of the seal) is the head of an ibex or goat and a locust in an upright position. Behind him is an inscription which reads Aḥiṣ Ūr .

b. Discussion

The central figure in this seal, the kneeling man, seems to be rather Assyrian than Egyptian as witnessed by the curly beard and the hair locks. Even the sandals (?) seem to be Assyrian (Baikie 1916:31).

According to Wilkinson (1847b:190-191) the ibex, in contrast to sheep, was not a sacred animal in ancient Egypt, whilst the goat was sacred in the nome of Mendes. On the other hand various Sumerian gods took the form of a goat (Mackenzie 1931:273). According to Avigad (1968:45) such motifs, as this goat or ibex, sometimes served as space fillers on Mesopotamian seals.

The overall symbolism of this seal seems to be Mesopotamian and more in particular Assyrian (Avigad 1968:44) although there are Egyptian undertones. Even the symbol of the winged sun was taken over by the Assyrians (Avigad 1968:44-45). I have included it just to illustrate another seal with the locust symbol. One can only surmise that it also symbolises 'multitude.'

6.2.9 Seal belonging to Ushna




Figure 49: Seal belonging to Ushna

Deutsch 2004:27

a. Description.⁴⁹

This seal and the one in paragraph 6.2.13 is discussed by Deutsch (2004). It is a scaraboid, made of white and brown banded agate and is perforated. Its dimensions are 11.8×15.4×3.9.mm. It has a single-line border and one single line field divider.

⁴⁹ The discussion of this seal, as well as the one in paragraph 6.2.13, is based on an article written by Robert Deutsch. There is currently a controversy about the scholarly standing of Deutsch in view of his indictment in the forgery trial in Jerusalem regarding an ossuary allegedly bearing a forged Aramaic inscription 'Yaakov bar Yosef akhui di Yeshua' ('James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus'). At this stage Deutsch has not yet been proven guilty and I agree with the editor of *BAR* (see *BAR* 35(3):6,62), that he is innocent until proven guilty. In any event this situation should not have any effect on the value of the article. It should also be noted that I do not necessarily agree with Deutsch on certain interpretations of palaeography and symbolism. I do not approach Deutsch as an authoritative scholar, but as a supplier of information. By publishing works like *Biblical Period Hebrew Bullae: The Josef Chaim Kaufman Collection* and the more recent *Teshurot LaAvishur: Studies in the Bible and the Ancient Near East in Hebrew and Semitic Languages*, information, previously difficult to access, has become freely available.

Its find context and present location are unknown and it appeared on the Jerusalem antiquities market in March 2000. It is dated to the eighth century B.C.E. (Deutsch 2004:26). In the top register is a seated winged griffin, with a raised left leg, looking towards the right. Below his raised left leg is a papyrus plant and above it is an *ankh* with the top part in the form of a triangle, rather than the normal oval.⁵⁰ He is wearing the double crown of Egypt. Above his back is the hieroglyph for the sedge plant *nswt or shen*  the symbol for Upper Egypt (Morkot 2005:5). 'It symbolised infinity or eternity, as it has no beginning and no end. The word "shen" come from *shenu*, "that which encircles." The shen is the origin of the cartouche...' (Ruiz 2001: 139). The Egyptian word for cartouche is *shenew* (David 1999:219). The sedge is sometimes combined with the bee (symbol of Lower Egypt) to indicate the Pharaoh's authority over both lands (Curl 2005:424).


In the bottom register are five Ancient Hebrew letters inscribed, which reads:

'Belonging to Ushna.' This inscription in Ancient Hebrew is identical to the first five letters of the inscription on the seal in paragraph 6.2 (pp. 177-180 above), where the name was discussed. I will therefore only discuss the iconography on this seal.

⁵⁰ See the discussion of another variation of the shape of the *ankh* in paragraph 5.3.2.4 on pp.136-138above.

b. Discussion

This seal, allegedly, comes from Sebaste,⁵¹ which would make its place of origin the Northern Kingdom. We have already discussed the symbolism of the griffin (paragraph 6.2.6 on pp. 187-188). The ankh symbolises eternity or eternal life and it seems that the sedge has a similar meaning. I do not think one should give serious consideration to the possibility that this symbol may represent Upper Egypt on this Hebrew seal, even though the papyrus plant (like the bee and the cobra) was a symbol representing Lower Egypt (Armour 2001:1). If one, however, considers the other symbols on the seal (the *ankh* and the papyrus plant), I propose that its original meaning of infinity or eternity was intended on this seal.

The hieroglyph for a papyrus stem is . Not only was the papyrus plant the symbol of Lower Egypt but also the symbol of life, new life and resurrection itself (Andrews 1994:82-83). The fact that the griffin, representing the king, has his left leg raised above the papyrus plant symbolises, in my opinion, the power of the king over the lives of his subordinates and over the owner's own life. Here again the quality of the seal, especially the carving of the symbols and the inscription, indicates a person of importance and wealth, probably an official in the king's service, thus his acknowledgement of dependence on and subordination to the highest authority in the land. The symbols further demonstrate his belief in resurrection and eternal life.

⁵¹ Sebaste, known in Hebrew as Shomron, was the capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel during the 9th and 8th centuries B.C. The Bible tells us that it was established by Omri, King of Israel, who bought it from a man named Shemer and called it Samaria (1 Ki 16:24).

6.2.10 Seal belonging to Elishama' (son of) Šarmelek



Figure 50: Belonging to Elishama' (son of) Šarmelek
(Avigad & Sass 1997:77)

a. Description

A scaraboid of reddish sandstone, perforated with dimensions 17,7 x 16 x 7,6 mm. It has a double-line border and one field divider in the form of two back-to-back concaves connected at the end with lotus flowers. The inscription appears in both registers and read:

‘ Belonging to Elishama' (son of) Šarmelek .’

There are also some dots on the seal. The seal attests to fine workmanship.

The find context and current location of this seal are unknown.

b. Discussion

As discussed in paragraph 6.2.3 (p.175 above), the name Elishama appears seven times in the Bible and means ‘my God has heard’. The only ‘symbols’ that appear on this seal are the two lotus flowers making up the ends of the field divider. They may be there purely for decorative purposes but they may also be there to represent Ra, the sun god and the powers of resurrection. In Yahwistic terms it may represent the aspect of Yahweh regarding his powers to create new life and to resurrect after death. The lack of other Egyptianizing symbols on the seal, to my mind, signifies that the lotus flowers are either purely decorative or used to indicate a power-aspect of Yahweh.

6.2.11 Seal belonging to Dalā



Figure 51: Belonging to Dalā
(Avigad & Sass 1997:89)

a. Description

It is a scaraboid of brownish red stone (possibly granite), perforated with dimensions 16 x 12 x 8 mm. It has a single-line border and no field divider. The find context of the seal is unknown and it is currently in the Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

The dominant figure in the seal is a youthful Horus with *uraei* and a solar disk on his head (Avigad & Sass [1997:89] who describes the *uraei* as horns, but they are clearly mistaken). He is kneeling on a lotus flower and his arms and hands are stretched forward in a sort of blessing (defensive?) gesture.

From the stem of the lotus flower two stalks extend to the right and the left with flowers (buds) at their ends. From each such flower, flanking Horus, seemingly sprouts an unidentified creature (only their heads and upper body parts are visible). They are falcon-headed, wearing the double crown of Egypt. Their bodies resemble the upper parts of humans. Avigad & Sass (1997:89) describe them as ‘anthropomorphic, falcon-headed, stick holding deities.’ I cannot give a better description and the anthropomorphic forms identify them as deities. The ‘sticks’ may also be papyrus scrolls.

At the bottom of the seal in a crescent shaped area, formed by the stalks and the border line, is the inscription ‘Belonging to Dalā.’

Avigad & Sass (1997:89) date this seal to the eighth century B.C.E.

b. Discussion

The personal name Dalā is unattested in the Bible. The closest we get is Delaiah (Dalaiah) (1 Chr 3:24). The Hebrew letter *daleth* () however, goes to the root =

dala = draw (water). Avigad & Sass (1997:494) states that the reading is uncertain and the name is unexplained and undefined. The name is Hebrew and one can accept that the owner was an Israelite from one of the two kingdoms during the eighth century B.C.E. The script is Ancient Hebrew but it is not possible to state whether it was early eighth century B.C.E. or later. If it was early eighth century B.C.E. it would probably have been from the Northern Kingdom and if it was late eighth century B.C.E. it probably originated from Judah. The rest would be guesswork.

The solar disk with the flanking *uraei* at the top of the seal represents Ra as the supreme god and guarding Horus. Horus is presented in the form of the sun child, Harpocrates, thus representing new life or resurrection. The two gods emerging from the adjacent, but linked, flowers seem to emphasise the concept. They are both falcon-headed and could also be representative of Horus, albeit in other, more mature form. As Osiris was the king of the dead, Horus became the king of the living (Harris 2001:163). The objects in the hands of the two deities are obscure, but they seem to be handing it to the young Horus. To me it seems like papyrus scrolls, which may represent knowledge. Horus appears to be blessing the deities.

Overall the depiction of the symbols, to my mind, does not reflect a representation of any aspect of Yahwistic powers. One should interpret these symbols at face value and not endeavour to find some hidden Yahwistic message. In this seal the owner relies on the protection of the gods (probably Egyptian or Phoenician) to give him a good life and after death a new life.

6.2.12 Seal belonging to Ḥabli



Figure 52: Seal belonging to Ḥabli
(Avigad & Sass 1997: 95)

a. Description

This seal is a scaraboid of pale amethyst and is unperforated. Its dimensions are 19 x 14 x 6 mm. It has a single-line border and a single-line field divider dividing the seal into a large (top) and a small (bottom) register.

Its find context is unknown and it is currently held in the Hecht Museum in Haifa. It is dated to the eighth century B.C.E.

The central figure in the top register is a striding man looking towards the right. He has an Egyptian hairstyle and is wearing an Egyptian kilt covered by a transparent garment. He is raising his right hand in blessing and in his left hand he is holding a sceptre with two *Ma'at* feathers on top. Behind him is a papyrus sceptre.

In the small bottom register is an inscription in Ancient Hebrew which reads

— Ḥabli.

b. Discussion

The name Ḥabli is unattested to in the Bible and not a known Hebrew name. Its roots are also uncertain. The name probably means 'to share' (Avigad & Sass 1997:496).

The conclusion that it is a Hebrew seal is based on the writing itself.

As regards the sceptre with the *Ma'at* feathers, see the discussion in paragraph 5.3.2.3 (p.124 above), where identical sceptres are depicted. The sceptre symbolises the authority and power of an official. The feathers represent justice as a symbol of *Ma'at*.

The papyrus sceptre was discussed in paragraph 5.3.2.2 (p.131) above. This symbol represents life, new life and resurrection.

The workmanship of the seal is excellent and this together with the arrangement of the symbols and the similarity of the sceptre (with feathers) to the one in paragraph 5.3.2.3, indicate a Phoenician carver and Phoenician inspiration. These facts point to the owner being from the Northern Kingdom. In all probability he was an official, for the same reasons as were discussed in paragraph 5.3.2.3. He raises his right hand in blessing. This also indicates that he is a person in authority.

6.2.13 Seal belonging to Zaka⁵²



Figure 53: Seal belonging to Zaka
(Deutsch 2004:250)

a. Description.

The origin and current location of this seal is unknown. It was allegedly found in the vicinity of Sebaste. If correct, this seal came from the northern Kingdom of Israel. It is dated to the eighth century B.C.E.

It is a scaraboid, perforated and made of red carnelian with dimensions 9,9 x 14,1 x 6,5 mm. It has a single-line border and only one register. It is set in a silver pendant and fixed with a wire passing through the perforation without a bezel (Deutsch 2004:25).

⁵² This seal and the one in paragraph 6.2.9 are discussed by Deutsch (2004:25-28).

The central theme of the seal is a four-winged scarab with a solar disk between the front legs as well as the hind legs. Just beneath the hind legs is the following inscription, consisting of three Ancient Hebrew letters:

= : *zk* probably pronounced ‘Zaka’, either a hypocoristicon, literally meaning ‘be pure’ or a shorter theophoric name with *zkr* meaning ‘remember’ (Avigad & Sass 1997:495). This name is not attested in the Bible. A similar name with the same meaning is *zky* or ‘Zakkay’ (Ezr 2: 9; Neh. 7: 14).

b. Discussion.

According to the available information, this seal comes from Sebaste in the Northern Kingdom. The four winged scarab was the royal emblem of that Kingdom (Tushingham 1992:61-65). The workmanship on the seal is of a very high quality. The fact that it is set in a silver pendant speaks of affluence.

‘It is generally considered that a scarab pushing a ball of dung represent the movement of the rising sun, probably symbolizing divine protection. The solarized emphasis in combination with the two or four-winged scarab is a common feature of the seal iconography of both the Kingdom of Israel and eighth-to-seventh century B.C.E. Judah, and is probably a symbol of high status’ (Stavrakopoulou 2004:105).

This seal probably belonged to a high official in the Northern Kingdom. Although the owner does not have a Yahwistic name, the possibility of this symbol representing the protective powers of Yahweh cannot be excluded. Without further evidence, it is impossible to state which deity the owner had in mind with this symbol.

6.2.14 Seal belonging to Elamar



Figure 54: Seal belonging to Elamar
(May 1936:197)

a. Description

It is a scaraboid made of lapis lazuli, unperforated, with a single-line border and two single-line field dividers dividing the seal into three registers. The dimensions are not known. It was found in an unstratified context at Megiddo. Its present location is not known.

In the small register at the top of the seal is an inscription in Ancient Hebrew which reads: 'belonging to Elamar.' It means 'God has spoken.'

In the middle register are two winged *uraei* looking inwards. The way their wings are stretched is not unique. It was normally depicted with its wings stretched outwards, but it was sometimes shown with wings stretched to the front (see figures 55 and 56). In both forms protection is symbolised.

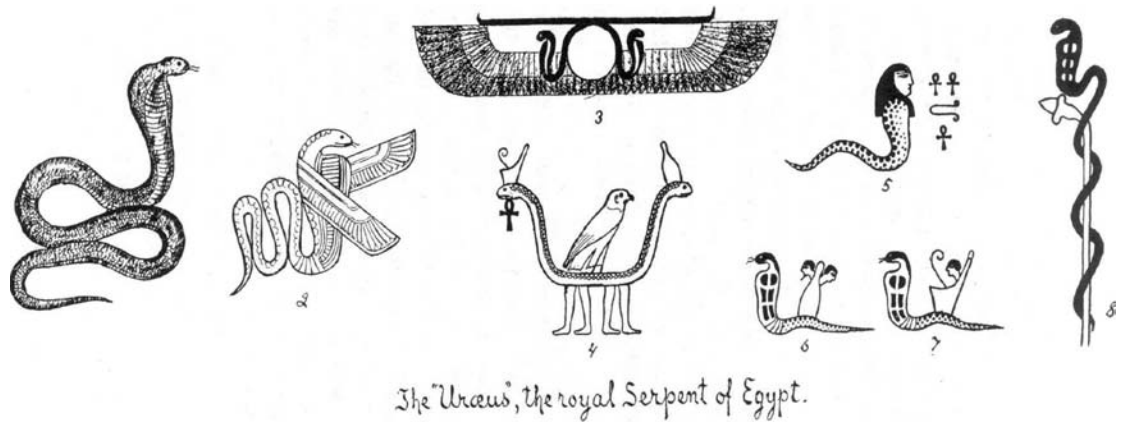


Figure 55: *Uraei*, including winged *uraei*

(Odnner 1914:32)



Figure 56: Winged *uraeus* protecting Hathor

(Abertawe 2007)

On the heads of the *uraei* are what appeared to be the red crown of Lower Egypt. May (1936:197) suggests that it may rather be a crest than a crown. This is doubtful.

In the bottom register is a winged sphinx. The wings are stretched outwards and upwards approximately 45 degrees an unusual depiction. Normally such wings are stretched backwards and not outwards (see Figures 1[p.32] and 49 [p.209] above). On the head of the sphinx is a Hathor headdress.

b. Discussion

May (1936:197) acknowledges the Egyptian influences in this seal. In this regard the winged *uraei* and the winged sphinx with Hathor headdress need no further comment. May continues with the comment that the name ‘Elamar’ can be compared to the Biblical name ‘Amariah’ (or). He states that the name ‘Amariah’ is almost exclusively a Levite or priestly name.⁵³ He suggests that Elamar might also have belonged to a priestly family. He speculates about the date of the seal and says it possibly dates to the seventh century B.C.E. On the other hand, he also places it in the same period as the seal of Asap (see paragraph 6.2.7 [pp. 199-201] above), which dates from the eighth century B.C.E. Other similar seals from Megiddo and elsewhere also date to the eighth century and keeping in mind the Assyrian occupation during the 7th century B.C.E., I suggest that this seal should also be dated to the eighth century B.C.E.⁵⁴

The interesting aspect of this seal is the position of the wings of both the *uraei* and the sphinx. Although the *uraei* and the sphinx (especially with the Hathor headdress) originate in Egypt, the way the wings are stretched does not reflect an Egyptian depiction. It reminds me of the cherubim on the Ark of the Covenant: ‘The cherubim had their wings spread upward, overshadowing the cover with them. The cherubim faced each other, looking toward the cover’ (Ex 37:9).

⁵³ The chief priest (2 Chr 19:11); a priest (2Chr 31:15; Neh 10:3, 12:2, 13; Ezr 10:42). A Levite (1 Chr 23:19; 24:23).

⁵⁴ See para 6.2.8 (pp. 202-204) and para 6.29 (pp 209-211) above.

It seems that Elamar, probably a priest or a Levite, borrowed these Egyptian symbols to represent cherubim with the outstretched wings to represent the protection of Yahweh. Mindful of the location where it was discovered (in the Northern Kingdom) and the time it was manufactured (probably the eighth century B.C.E.), the possibility exists that he could have been a priest of Baal. In this regard the 'El' in his name does not necessarily reflect a follower of Yahweh. The Baal scenario however is very unlikely. During Iron IIB and C, the Canaanite god, El, was practically non-existent in Phoenician religion and a follower of Baal would rather have used his name to create a personal name. On the other hand, it was common practise amongst the Israelites to use the name of their God in personal names. They 'either used his proper name, Yahweh, or El, which was regarded as an appellative practically equivalent to Yahweh' (Smith 1907:38). The use of the word 'el' in names was of common usage amongst the Hebrews. Normally the verb preceded the noun in these names, for example 'Ezekiel' which means 'May-El-strengthen-him.' Sometimes, as in the present case the order of the verb and the noun is reversed.⁵⁵

In my opinion the owner of the seal was an Israelite, probably from the Northern Kingdom during the eighth century, who subscribed to the Yahweh-religion and was probably a priest or a Levite.

⁵⁵ Despite using the names 'El' and 'Yahweh', the Israelites, as far as can be established, never used the name 'Elohim' in personal names (Smith 1907:38). During Iron IIB and C, the use of the name El in personal names seemed to occur very rarely in both the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah (see the discussion on p. 260 hereinafter).

6.2.15 Seal belonging to Peqah




Figure 57: Seal of Peqah
(Bordreuil 1986:54)

a. Description

This seal is a scaraboid. It first appeared near the end of the nineteenth century and was bought at Nablus and is currently held in the Vorderasiatische Museum, Berlin. It

is made of carnelian. The dimensions are: 14 x 10 x 4 mm. It is not perforated.⁵⁶ It has a single-line border and no field divider.

The central figure depicted on this seal is a striding man looking towards the left. In his upraised right hand he holds an object which seems to be a spear or javelin. He does not have a left arm (possibly as a result to the obvious damage to the seal). His head is clean shaven and he wears an Egyptian wig. He is wearing a short tunic and a long mantle (Bordreuil 1986:54). In front of him is an object that Bordreuil is unable to identify and which he calls a ‘two-pronged object.’ Keel & Uehlinger (1998:264) cannot explain the object themselves and call it ‘a cultic stand (?).’ To me it also appears to be some sort of stand. The Egyptian hieroglyph for a stand, and more particular for the stand of a scale is:

 = *ts* – stand

 scale

Another similar hieroglyph is the one for the four pillars of the sky (N, S, E &W)



On the right side of the seal, behind the man’s back, are three letters in Ancient Hebrew reading: — PQH. This is vocalised as *Peqah* (Bordreuil 1986:58).

⁵⁶ Bordreuil, but for the iconography and the inscription, fails to give any description of the features of the seal. The information given here was kindly provided by Karin Rohn, Wissenschaftliche Museumsassistentin, Staatliche Museum zu Berlin, Vorderasiatische Museum, Bodestrasse 1-3, D – 10178, Berlin.

Discussion


Bordreuil (1986:54) argues that an Egyptian seal with a striding man, wearing a crown and staff or sceptre in the one hand, raising the other with palm forward, usually depicted a king. If a similar striding man, without a crown, but with the staff and raised hand, was depicted, it normally depicted a dignitary or official.


The name 'Peqah' is known from the Bible as Pekah, son of Remaliah. In 2 Kings 15:25 he is identified as the *šālīš* of Pekahiah, the 17th king of the Northern Kingdom of Israel (760-758 B.C.E.). Pekah led a palace revolt and killed Pekahiah and seized the throne. He himself reigned from 758 to 738 B.C.E.⁵⁷ The traditional interpretation for *šālīš* is 'the third man in the chariot.' According to Bordreuil (1986:55) the more recent interpretation places a *šālīš* in the cadre of officers as an aide-de-camp of the king, who acts as his bodyguard and armor bearer during battle, the man 'on whose hand the king leans.' The raised javelin may be representing the action to protect the king. The *šālīš* as an officer and the king's bodyguard may have been allowed to have his own seal (Block 1998:745). Bordreuil (1986:54-55) argues that there is a strong possibility that the owner of this seal is the same person who killed King Pekahiah and became the 18th king of Israel. In addition to the name itself, he points out that the place where the seal was purchased, Nablus, was close to the site of Samaria, the capital of Israel at the time. The fact that the seal was offered for sale in Nablus, makes it probable that it was found in the immediate vicinity.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Pekah was killed by Hoshea, who became the last king of Israel (2Ki 15:30; 17:6).

⁵⁸ Keel & Uehlinger (1998:264) points out that a seal impression, which was made from a seal of an official very similar to this one, was found at Shechem, which shows that such seals were indeed used in the Northern Kingdom.

The writing in the seal indicates that it dates to the eighth century B.C.E.

In Egyptian hieroglyphics the meaning of a stand  is 'to raise up.' If a hieroglyph was intended for the symbolism on this seal, I am of the opinion that it could be translated as 'raising up the spear,' identifying him as a soldier, albeit a soldier of high rank to justify his own inscribed seal. The object also looks like some sort of

pillar, so it is possible that the four pillars of the sky  are intended. The same object is also similar to the ancient Hebrew letter **Y** = tent peg = add, secure, hook = waw = w,o,u. In modern Hebrew it would be = vav = v,o,u. In Latin we have the letter **F**. It has, however, a sort of round pedestal which suggests a freestanding object.

I, therefore, want to propose another possible explanation for this 'stand' and in this regard I think that the suggestion by Keel & Uehlinger that it may be some cultic object is close to the mark. In my opinion this object could represent an asherah pole. From the Bible it is impossible to arrive at a definite conclusion regarding the shape of an asherah pole or even the concept of asherah. The multitude of books, theses, articles and other writings on this controversial subject during the past two decades are indications of this uncertainty.

There is therefore still a lot to be learned about the way 'Asherah' or an 'asherah' was portrayed. As Cornelius (2004:101) correctly points out: 'The iconography of the goddess Asherah remains unclear. It is like the substance mercury, when one thinks one has a grip on it, it slips away again. Asherah is perhaps the seated ruler as well as the blessing ruler, but to go further is impossible, unless an item with an inscription is found.'

Hadley (2000:80) is of the opinion that Asherah's 'main cultic object was probably some sort of stylized tree'. According to the Bible, an *asherah* was clearly a wooden object (Ex 34:13; Dt 7:5; 16:21; Jdg 6:25-26, 28, 30; 2 Ki 18:4; 23:4, 6, 14-15; 1 Chr 19:3; Is 27:9; Mi 5:13) (Cf. McCarter 1987:146).

Smith (2002:15) speculates that the asherah symbol originated in the cultic use of an actual tree. Later a wooden pole was used to substitute for the actual tree.

Unfortunately I am in the same position as Hadley (2000:152) when she states the following: 'The iconography of sacred trees...in general, and of asherah in particular, is far too vast a subject to consider fully here (Cf. e.g. Danthine 1937; Perrot 1937; May 1939; Goodenough 1958; Meyers 1976:95-131; Wyatt 1981; Williams-Forte 1983; Wallace 1985; Cornelius 1988; among others).'⁵⁹

I submit that the object under discussion appears to be a cultic object made from wood and that it can be seen as a stylized tree or the stump of a tree. I also want to make the suggestion that the shape of the asherah pole was inspired by the Egyptian *ts*, thus the hieroglyphic symbol for stand, thus bringing an Egyptian symbol in as a religious cultic object in Israelite religion. In human form this object would represent

⁵⁹ Danthine, H 1937. *Le palmier-dattier et les arbres sacrés dans l'ic onographie de l'Asie accidentale ancienne*. Paris; Perrot, N 1937. Les Représentations de l'arbre sur les monuments de Mésopotamie et de l'Elam. *Babyloniaca* 17:5-143; May, H G 1939. The sacred tree on Palestinian painted pottery, in *JAOS* 59:251-259; Goodenough, E R 1958. *Jewish symbols in the Greco-Roman Period, 7: Pagan symbols in Judaism*. New York: Bollingen series 37; Meyers, 1976. *The Tabernacle menorah: A synthetic study of a symbol from the Biblical cult*. Missoula: ASOR dissertation series 2; Wyatt, N 1981. Interpreting the creation and fall story of Genesis, in *ZAW* 93:10:21; Williams-Forte, E 1983. The snake and the tree in the iconography and texts of Syria during the Bronze Age, in Gorelick and Williams-Forte (eds) 1983. *Ancient seals and the Bible*. Malibu: Undena:18-43; Wallace, H N 1985. *The Eden narratives*. Atlanta: Scholars; Cornelius, I 1988. 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' in Gen 2-3, in *JNSL* 14:41-83.

a figure with outstretched arms and this was exactly the way the ancient Egyptian goddess Qudshu and Astarte were sometimes depicted (Wilson 2006:230-231). The same can probably be said of Asherah.

Unfortunately Asherah has not yet been clearly identified. Cornelius (2004:99) states: '...no iconographic item has yet come to light with her name on it.' Until such a discovery is made, speculation will be rife. I am of the opinion that should the time arrive that an asherah pole is identified beyond reasonable doubt, it will closely resemble the symbol on this seal. A straight pole like a flagpole would not make sense, it would be too difficult to distinguish from other poles. A shape like the item on this seal would on the other hand make a lot of sense, not only representing a stylised tree (a tree-stump), but also a goddess with raised arms. Furthermore, with all the Egyptian influences in Syro-Palestine, the choice of the *ts*-hieroglyph as a symbol (a wooden stand) would not be far-fetched.

6.2.16 Seal belonging to *mnr*

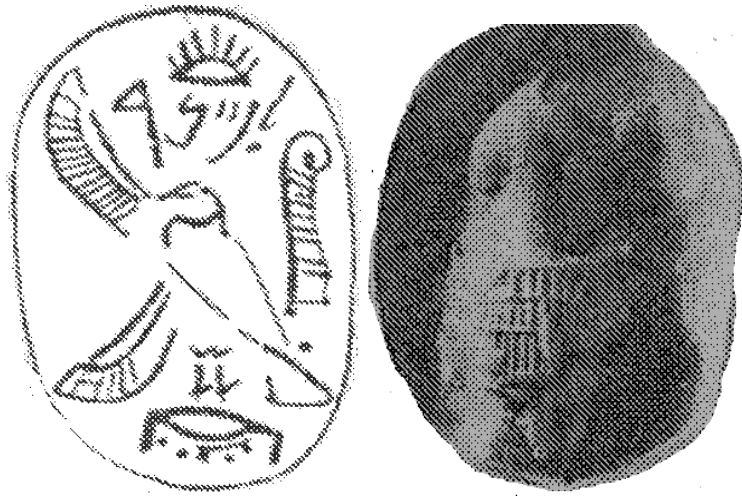


Figure 58: Seal belonging to *mnr*
(Lubetski 2007a:48; Sass 1993:247)

a. Description

It is a scaraboid of white stone, possibly steatite, with a black surface. Its dimensions are 17 x 12 x 7,5 mm. It seems that the seal was set in a ring because there are four small sockets near the edges of the seal.

At the back of the seal is a recumbent lion seen from above. On the underside, it has a single-line border and no field dividers. In the centre is a Horus falcon with wings stretched forward to the right. It is standing on a *nwb* sign and at its back is a *ma'at* feather (Avigad & Sass 1997:122). At the top of the seal is a sun rising behind a hill (*h'*) (Lubetski 2007a:49). The inscription is just below the *h'*.

The inscription in Ancient Hebrew letters reads: — belonging to *mnr*.

b. Discussion.

Amongst scholars there is a difference of opinion of what the inscription, which is written in Ancient Hebrew, means. According to Lubetski (2007c:49) the French scholars P. Bordreuil and A. Lemaire⁶⁰ propose that the word *mnr* means ‘he who enlightens.’ Avigad (1997:512) states that the meaning is uncertain. He also refers to Bordreuil and Lemaire and in addition quotes Baldacci⁶¹ who interprets it to mean ‘illuminant.’ All these scholars are in agreement that the name is linked to the Hebrew letters *nr* — which means ‘candle, the source of light.’ The ‘m’— is being perceived as a formative prefixed to the noun, or signifying *m* (*y*) as in the word ‘who’. So normally the word — would be translated as ‘belonging to *mnr*’, a name not known amongst the Hebrew names.

Lubetski (2007c:49-53) argues that the inscription should be read in conjunction with the symbols (hieroglyphs (?), as he calls them) in order to reach an acceptable interpretation. He argues that it is an Egyptian name written in Hebrew letters, to show that although the owner is a Hebrew who adheres to the Yahweh religion, he is of Egyptian descent. I agree with Lubetski (2007:50) that the symbols on the seal have a meaning and they are not merely decorative. The Horus falcon with its forward stretching wings can only be interpreted as indicating the protective powers of a god. Lubetski argues that a Horus standing on gold beads (the *nwb* sign) in

⁶⁰ Bordreuil & Lemaire 1982:6 no 15.

⁶¹ Baldacci 1985:521.

Egyptian symbolism signifies authority. The lion (on the back side of the seal) enhances the aspects of authority and protection. Both in Egyptian and Israelite tradition the lion gives a sense of security. The Israelites understood the concept of the Egyptian lion, because it formed part of their own cultural heritage. Both Solomon's temple and his throne were decorated with lions.⁶² The Israelite prophets also portrayed Yahweh as a roaring lion who protects his people.⁶³

Lubetski is of the opinion that the inscription plus the rising sun (*h'i' -m*) and the feather (*m□' t*) forms a compound name which means 'Shine' and this is the name of the owner's father while the owner's name is the rising sun plus the Hebrew inscription.

In the final analysis Lubetski (2007a:53) reads the inscription plus symbol as follows:

Belonging to (son of) *h'i' -m m□□t*,

Belonging to the one who sees ' *el* in his holy abode;

(son) of Shine (it shines): truth.

I agree with his interpretation of the symbols *per se*, but his final conclusions, (although very ingenious) seem a bit farfetched. Although I cannot offer an alternative solution for interpreting the name *mnr*, the combination of Egyptian 'hieroglyphs' with Hebrew letters to compose a name seems highly improbable.

There is no suggestion in any of the three comparative examples that he refers to

⁶² 1 Kings 7:29, 36 and 1 Kings 10:19-20.

⁶³ Jeremiah 25:30; Hosea 11:10; Joel 4:16 and Amos 1:2.

(Lubetski 2000:53 footnote 29) that the ‘hieroglyphs’ are combined with the Hebrew letters to form a name. If Lubetski is correct, this would be a unique seal. I have not encountered any other Hebrew seal with such a combination. In my opinion the name of the owner is *mnr* (whatever it means) as it is written in Hebrew and the Egyptian symbols (hieroglyphs) should be seen in the context of conveying a message rather than a name. The rising sun was originally associated with the god Khepri, but from the New Kingdom onwards, with Horus (Spence 1990:299), thus representing a god.

In my opinion, however, the protective symbol of Horus with stretched wings, the rising sun and the *ma’at* feather should be interpreted in terms of Malachi 4:2. For convenience sake I quote the whole verse again (see also paragraph 1.5.2[pp.38-42] above): ‘For you who revere my Name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings.’ Thus in this verse we have ‘the sun...shall rise;’ the ‘righteousness’ (*ma’at*) and the ‘wings’. To my mind this seal should be interpreted as referring to Yahweh. This interpretation accords with the trend of the times to express the powers of Yahweh by means of Egyptian symbols and does not create a rather unique and doubtful reading of the symbols as is done by Lubetski.

6.2.17 The seal of ŠMRYW.






Figure 59: The seal of ŠMRYW
(Scott 1964:109)

a. Description.

This seal is a scarab of steatite. Its dimensions are 19 x 13 x 7 mm. It has a single-line border. It contains three cartouches as ‘field dividers’ dividing it into four ‘registers’. It allegedly originated at Nablus in the ancient Northern Kingdom. It is dated to the eighth century B.C.E. (Scott 1964:110).

Each cartouche contains an inscription. The central one has an inscription in Ancient Hebrew with the letters — ŠMRYW, the name of the owner. The other two cartouches have corrupt forms of what seems to be attempts to imitate the names of two pharaohs of the Eighteenth Dynasty, Sethos I and Thutmose III.

In the four ‘registers’ flanking the pharaonic cartouches are various symbols which Scott (1964:110) simply calls ‘hieroglyphic or pseudo-hieroglyphic “good omen” signs’, without further analysis or discussion. The same four signs appear in all four

registers. One of them appears twice so there are actually only three different signs. They are so crudely carved that it is very difficult to identify them. One appears to be a sun disk ; The second one could be an attempt to symbolise an obelisk  and the third one appears to be a stylised ankh ($\square nh$) .

b. Discussion

In addition to the alleged place of discovery of the seal (in the Northern Kingdom), another indicator that it originated from the Northern Kingdom is the inscription itself. The name ends in YW, which signifies that it probably came from that country. ‘...while names ending in the *-io* (i.e., the *-yw*) form were common in the northern Kingdom of Israel—as evidenced by the Samaria Ostraca from the 8th century B.C., in names such as Abio, Gadio, Obadio, Shemario—in the Kingdom of Judah the theophoric element was given a fuller form, *-iahu* (i.e., *-yhw*)—as seen in the Arad Letters of the 8th-7th centuries B.C. and the Lachish Letters of the early sixth century B.C., in names such as Abiahu, Berechiah, Gemariahu, Obadiah, and Shemariahu’ (Mykytiuk 2004:143). Scott (1964:108) also states: ‘the name ŠMRYW appears on nos. 1, 13, 14 and 21 of the Samaria ostraca, which Yigael Yadin has recently and convincingly ascribed to the reign of Menahem.’⁶⁴

Regarding the ‘good luck charms’, if I am correct in my deductions, the sun could mean Ra (or Horus) as a patron god, probably Horus with all the cartouche’s involved; the power of the sun and thus the power of the king(s) intended to be

⁶⁴ Yadin 1958:9-17.

honoured (see the discussion in paragraph 5.3.3.2 on pp. 147-149 above) and the ankh for eternal life. I agree that these symbols were probably intended as 'good luck charms' and not as hieroglyphs intended to convey a composite message.

The interesting aspect about this seal is that, despite the fact that it contains a Hebrew inscription with a Yahwistic name, it also contains two cartouches with attempts to imitate the names of Thutmose III and Sethos I. Scott (1964:110) ascribes the corruptions of the names to a seal-cutter unfamiliar with the authentic hieroglyphic signs. The fact that an attempt was made to imitate the names of Thutmose III and (arguably the two greatest pharaohs of the 18th Dynasty and the 19th Dynasty respectively, although Ramses II would probably have had a different opinion) shows that the owner held them in high esteem. Both of them reaffirmed Egypt's sovereignty over Canaan and Syria (see discussion on pp. 16-18 above). A Judahite who was prepared to accept aspects of Egyptian culture and religion would probably have regarded those 'conquerors' of Canaan as personifying the power of the Egyptian gods and probably requested that their names be inscribed on the seal. I, therefore, have to agree with Scott that the corruption of their names on this seal was probably due to the ignorance of the carver.

6.2.18 Seal belonging to ‘Naveyahu (son of) ‘Azayahyu.’

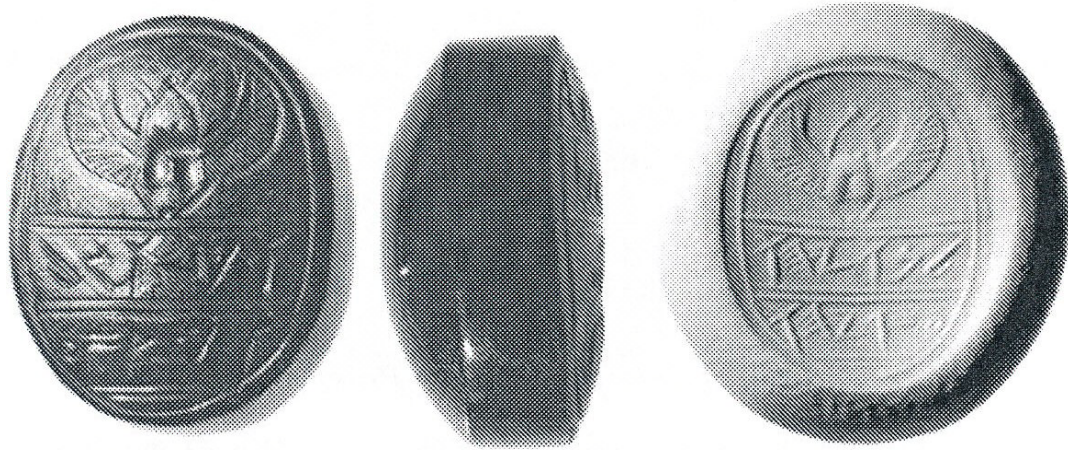


Figure 60: Seal belonging to ‘Naveyahu (son of) ‘Azayahyu.’
(Lemaire 2007:13)

a. Description

This seal is a scaraboid carved from red carnelian with dimensions 13 x 10 x (?) mm. It has a single-line border and two double-line field dividers dividing the seal into three registers. It is of unknown origin and is currently in the Moussaieff Collection, London. The workmanship of the seal is of a very high quality.

In the top register is the symbol of a two winged scarab with a ball between both the front and hind legs. In the middle register is an inscription in Ancient Hebrew which reads: LNWYHW ‘(Belonging to) Naveyahu.’ In the bottom register is an inscription in Ancient Hebrew which reads ZRYHW ‘(son of) ‘Azayahyu.’

b. Discussion

Except for the ball between the hind legs of the scarab, the symbol on this seal is very similar to the seals of King Hezekiah (paragraph 1.6.2, p. 38 above) and the seal of Manasseh (paragraph 6.2.4 pp. 188-189 above), especially in regard to the rounded

form of the wings which is identical to the one on King Hezekiah's seal. The significance of the winged scarab and the balls was dealt with in the said two paragraphs as well as paragraph 6.2.13 on pp. 218-219 above and is not repeated here. The use of this official state symbol makes the owner probably an official of the Judahite king.

The name Naveyahu is not mentioned in the Bible and literally translated it perhaps means 'praise/glorify Yahweh'. The ending of the name in –YWH indicates that the owner was rather a Judahite than an Israelite where the name would probably have ended in –YH (Lemaire 2007:13). See also the discussion in this regard in the previous paragraph (6.2.17).

In order to date the seal, the two *yods* that present a cursive 'tick' at the end give us a clue. According to Avigad & Sass 1997:53-55 such a *yod* is characteristic of the Samaria ostraca, but it is also known in Moabite script and in Judah. This seems not to be a geographical phenomenon, but rather of a chronological nature confined to the eight century B.C.E.

Taking all the relevant factors into consideration: (i) the fact that it is an inscribed seal of a high quality; (ii) that it is a Judahite seal; (iii) that the two-winged scarab is virtually identical to the one on the seal of King Hezekiah and finally (iv) that it dates from the eight century B.C.E., it seems extremely probable that the owner of the seal was a high official in the government of King Hezekiah. It is interesting to note that we have discussed three seals, one probably belonging to King Hezekiah, one probably belonging to his son Manasseh and one which probably belonged to one of his ministers, containing this symbol.

6.3 HEBREW ANEPIGRAPHIC SEALS WITH EGYPTIAN
ICONOGRAPHY

By way of introduction, I want to advance a cautionary note. The problem with all anepigraphic seals is that one is confined to the geographical location where the seal is found and an approximate period during which it was carved and used. This is especially true in Judah and Israel and Judah during Iron IIB and C. There are no inscriptions to assist in establishing whether it was from Phoenician, Hebrew, Ammonite or any other origin. For that reason I am going to have a look at only a few of these seals randomly selected to illustrate Egyptian motifs.

6.3.1 Hebrew anepigraphic seal 1.




Figure 61: Hebrew anepigraphic seal 1
(Giveon 1985:131)


a. Description

This is a scaraboid, probably made of white steatite, unperforated with dimensions 21 x 18 x 25 mm. It is set in a bronze mounting. It was discovered at Gezer and is currently in the British Museum. In Giveon (1985:131) the seal is printed upside down. Giveon (1985:130) dates this seal to the Late Period in Egypt.



It has a single-line border and has three registers with a single-line field divider separating the top register from the middle register and a pedestal separating the middle and bottom registers.

In the top register is a cartouche flanked by two *uraei* and just beneath the *uraei* two inverted Horus-eyes (*wḏ3t*). The cartouche itself contains four inverted hieroglyphs: sun with rays (*3ḥu*); the Horus-eye (*wḏ3t*); ka (*k3*) and the mouth (*r3*). Giveon (1985:130) describes the first hieroglyph as a sun (*r^c*), but this is clearly a sun with rays.

In the middle register is the hieroglyph *ḥetch-t*, the hieroglyph for white or anything bright (Wallis Budge 1978c:552). It is flanked by the hieroglyphs for the sedge 

(*nswt*) and the bee  (*bity*), signifying 'King of Upper and Lower Egypt'. The hieroglyphs are flanked by two symbols which Giveon (1985:130) describes as 'Horus falcons'. I suggest that in order to see the 'falcons' one has to use a lot of imagination. To me they appear to be closer to stylised bees than falcons (note the antennae). Since both symbols denote royalty, I submit that for purposes of this study it is not really important which interpretation is correct.

The bottom register contains a pedestal flanked by two *uraei*. Beneath the pedestal is a symbol which Giveon (1985:130) describes as a ‘cord design’. The closest I could

get to this design amongst the Egyptian symbols are  (symbol for a wick) and  (the symbol for the goddess Neith). The goddess Neith was a major deity and huntress in Egypt during the 26th Dynasty (664-525), the first dynasty of the Late Period. She was the creator goddess of Sais. Her symbol is the shield with the crossed arrows (Geddes & Grosset 1997:408). A mere symbol of a cord would not make any sense unless it was intended for decoration only, which is doubtful, since all the other symbols have a definite significance.

b. Discussion.

Giveon (1985:130) states that the hieroglyphs in the top register are meaningless. I agree that they maybe ‘meaningless’ in the sense that read together they do not make a sensible sentence or convey an idea. In my opinion they are not meaningless when regarded individually as symbols. We find the sun with rays, the Horus-eye, the ka and the mouth. The sun as giver of life, the ka as the spirit and the Horus-eye as protection against evil and giver of new life. The mouth hieroglyph stands for the ‘power of speech and thus the spoken word’ (Cirlot & Sage 1978:221). The first three hieroglyphic symbols, therefore, have a religious connotation. The rest of the symbols in the top register, the *uraei* (protection) and the Horus-eyes are also religiously inspired.

The middle register seems to be confined to the acknowledgement of the supremacy of Egyptian royalty. The *hetch-t* symbol may reflect the brightness of the god(s), but such a conclusion would be no more than speculation.

The bottom register appears to be devoted to religious symbolism. We have the *uraei* and the goddess Neith (if I am correct). Regarding the latter it appears that she was a very important goddess during the period from which this seal dates and she may well be represented here.

This seal dates probably from the time of the Assyrian occupation, so it is unlikely that its owner was an Egyptian. The meaningless arrangement of the hieroglyphs in the cartouche points in the direction of a non-Egyptian copying various Egyptian symbols. It is also unlikely that (given its Egyptian iconography) it belonged to an Assyrian official or to a person hailing from somewhere else in the Assyrian empire. It most probably belonged to a local inhabitant of the region, thus a Judahite. This is unfortunately the problem with all anepigraphic seals found in Judah and Israel. One is confined to the geographical location where the seal is found and an approximate period during which it was carved and used.

Overall, the seal does not seem to convey a specific message. It rather seems an acceptance of Egyptian symbols, especially religious symbols as 'good luck' charms. The faith in the usefulness of such charms signifies a lack of faith in the omnipotence of Yahweh.

6.3.2 Hebrew anepigraphic seal 2

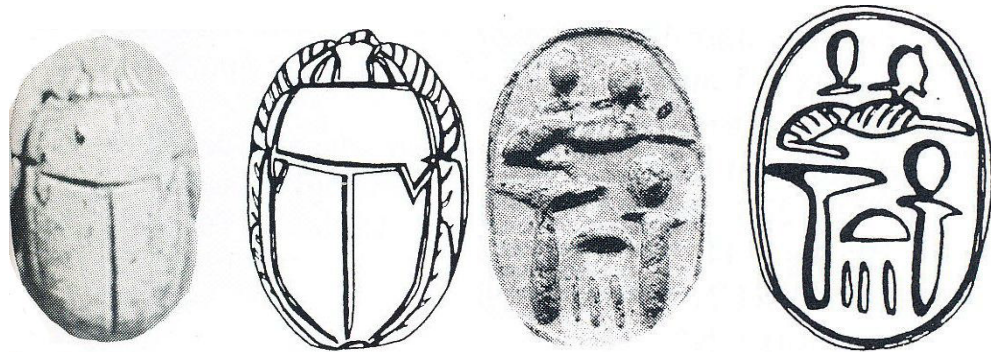


Figure 62: Hebrew anepigraphic seal 2.

(Keel 1997: 655)

a. Description

This seal was discovered in the foundation of a wall at the citadel at Tell Arad. It is a scaraboid made of steatite with dimensions 15,2 x 10,8 x 7,1 mm. It has only one register and a single-line border. The seal is dated to the 22nd Dynasty (945-712 B.C.E.).

At the top is a sphinx looking towards the right. Above his back is a sign which appears to be a vase (*hz*). Below the sphinx on the left hand side is a papyrus stem or a papyrus sceptre (*w3d*). Next to it is a *t*-hieroglyph (bread) and underneath the *t* are three vertical lines. On the right hand side is a *nh*-sign (ankh) or a lotus flower in the form of an ankh (Keel 1997:654).

b. Discussion.

The period to which this seal is dated places ancient Arad under the rule of Judah and therefore the seal most probably belonged to a Judahite.



The sphinx has always been a symbol of power, either of the gods or of the king (Werness 2006:231). The sphinx also represents a form of Horus (Myer 1994:81; Keel 1997:654).

The *h*z-vase, in this instance, is placed above the sphinx and seems to mean ‘to praise’ the king or the god Horus (Keel 1995:171).

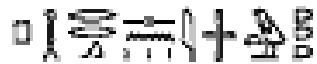
The papyrus sceptre was discussed in paragraph 5.3.2.2 (p.131) above and represents life, new life and resurrection.

According to Keel (1997:654), there are various interpretations of the symbols. He reads it as ‘Praise the lord of both lands’. This interpretation presupposes that a lotus flower is seen rather than an ankh and that the *t*-sign is inverted and thus a *nb*-sign (a *neb*, meaning lord). Keel acknowledges that the three vertical lines are difficult to explain and therefore ignores it to arrive at his explanation. I disagree with this explanation and do accept that the three vertical lines were inserted without a definite purpose or meaning and purely as decoration.

Another interpretation (Schlick-Nolte 1994:443) is along a similar line and also reads the *t*-sign as an *nb*-sign, but reads the three vertical lines as representing the Sed festival (see **SED FESTIVAL** in **ANNEXURE B**). The normal hieroglyph for such a

festival, as contained in Gardiner’s list as O23 is  or  (Cf. Gardiner 1950:495). Schlick-Nolte, however, sees the three vertical lines as representing the Sed-festival, the reasoning seems to be that in all scenes of the Sed-festival the king is

always portrayed with such lines (in triplicate) on both sides of the king. They supposedly represent the three boundary markers around which the king was required to run as part of the festival. These boundary markers symbolize the boundaries of the king's domain, around which he must travel (Spencer 1978:52). Spencer gives the following example:







‘They run between the boundary markers.’

(Spencer 1978:52)


The interpretation of Schlick-Nolte thus reads: ‘Praise the lord of both lands at the Sed-festival.’

This solution of Schlick-Nolte is very ingenious, but I am of the opinion that there is a much simpler answer. Keel when he first mentions the three lines states as follows:

‘...darunter drei vertikale Striche (Pluralstriche?)...’

In hieroglyphics three vertical lines (strokes) | | | indicate plurality, which mean that an expression or idea should be understood three times (Cf. Gardiner 1950:535). The hieroglyphs on this seal could then be interpreted to read: ‘Praise the lord of both lands three times.’ My problem with this interpretation is that one has to read the sign  as an inverted *t*-sign to get the *nb*-sign . If one compares the symbol on the seal  with the *t*-hieroglyph , one finds that they are identical. There seems to be no reason why the seal carver would have to invert a *t*-hieroglyph if he could have used a *nb*-hieroglyph in the first place.

The Egyptians also used the three vertical lines to indicate the plural of foodstuffs which are only written in the singular form (for instance bread, meat and wheat) (Cf.

Gardiner 1950:534). On the other hand if one uses it as a *t*-hieroglyph (bread) it would make no sense in the context of the interpretation of Keel: 'Praise the lord of both lands.' Furthermore to arrive at this interpretation Keel also reads the ankh as a lotus flower, but gives no explanation for the oval shaped symbol  above the 'lotus flower.'

I submit that Keel's interpretation is not correct and that it was not intended to portray Upper and Lower Egypt. This seal probably belonged to a Judahite. The fact that he worshipped Horus means that he accepted an international status for Horus and would not confine him to being the lord of Upper and Lower Egypt only.

The ankh should be seen in its normal context as the sign for eternal life; the papyrus scepter to represent new life or resurrection; the *t*-hieroglyph to represent bread (or food) and the three vertical lines to represent plurality, thus an abundance. I suggest the hieroglyphs should be read as follows:

'Praise (the vase) Horus (the sphinx) who gives us an abundance (the three vertical lines) of food (or bread, the *t*-hieroglyph), resurrects us (the papyrus sceptre) and give us everlasting life (the ankh).'

6.3.3 Hebrew anepigraphic seal 3

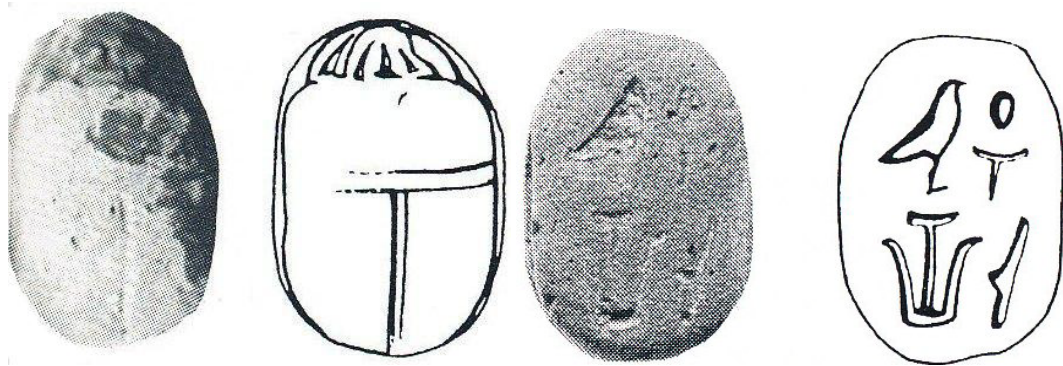


Figure 63: Hebrew anepigraphic seal 3
(Keel 1997: 655)

a. Description.

This seal was discovered in the filling material of the foundation of a brick wall at the citadel at Tell Arad. It was made of a blue composite material and its dimensions are 11,8 x 8,3 x 5,4 mm. It has a single register and no border line.

On the base of the seal the following signs are carved: On top at the left is a falcon and next to it are two signs which apparently have to be joined to form an ankh (□nh).

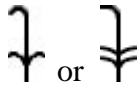

Below the falcon is a papyrus plant (ḥ3) with three umbels (cluster of papyrus). Next to it is a *i* (reed), which Keel (1997:654) incorrectly identifies as a *sw* (sedge).

Keel (1997:654) dates this seal to the 22nd Dynasty (945-712 B.C.E.).

b. Discussion

Here again, as with the previous seal, it can be argued that, keeping the period and the situation of ancient Arad in mind, this seal probably belonged to a Judahite.

The hieroglyphs of the falcon (as Horus) and the ankh (for eternity, eternal life or just life) does not pose any problems. As regards the papyrus cluster, depending on the context, it could have various explanations. If Keel is correct in his explanation that the other hieroglyph represents sedge (representative of Upper Egypt) then the papyrus could be read as the symbol for Lower Egypt (Gardiner 1950:481-482) and a reading could be: ‘Horus of Upper and Lower Egypt gives (eternal) life.’

I submit that Keel is not correct. The hieroglyph for sedge is  (Gardiner 1950:482). On the other hand the *i*-hieroglyph is represented as  (Gardiner 1950:481). The symbol on the seal is therefore not sedge but the *i*-hieroglyph.

The *i*-hieroglyph literally stands for ‘I’ or ‘I am’. In that event the papyrus plant ought not to be seen as representing Lower Egypt, but rather as a symbol for fertility or rebirth (see discussion in paragraph 5.3.2.2 on pp. 130-132 above). So these hieroglyphs could be read as ‘I (am) Horus, giver of fertility (rebirth) and eternal life’, or ‘I (believe) in Horus to give fertility (rebirth) and (eternal) life.’ The latter reading is to my mind less acceptable.

6.3.4 Hebrew anepigraphic seal 4, *lmlk*

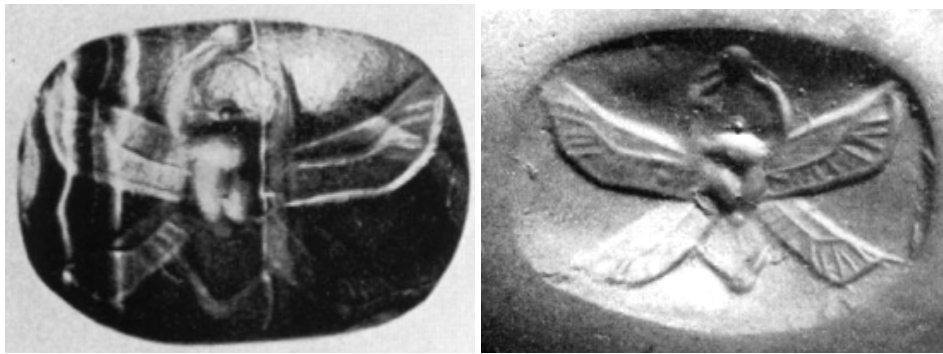


Figure 64 Hebrew anepigraphic seal 4, *lmlk*.

(Tushingham 1970:72:73)

a. Description

It is a scaraboid of banded black and white chalcedony with dimensions 15 x 11 x 9 mm. It has no border. Its origins are unknown (although the author expresses the opinion that it was found in the northern part of Israel) and it is currently owned by the author of the article (Tushingham 1970:73).

The flat base of the seal is smooth and contains no iconography or inscription. The upper, rounded, surface contains a cut intaglio of a four-winged scarab beetle. The forelegs and hind legs of the beetle clasp balls, representing the sun. It has no border line and a single register.

b. Discussion

Although stamp seals are normally carved on the flat base, examples have been found in Israel where the rounded top was carved instead of the base (Tushingham 1970:74). According to Tushingham (1970:74-76; 1992:61-62) the iconography on this seal indicates that it is a royal seal hailing from the Northern Kingdom of Israel, where, (according to Tushingham) the four-winged beetle was the royal symbol while the two-winged scarab was the royal symbol of Judah. That these symbols were mutually exclusive in the two kingdoms, is, however, not a proven fact, as discussed in paragraph 1.5.2 (p. 40 above). In a later article Tushingham (1971:34-45) argues that the four-winged scarab was originally only the royal emblem of the Northern Kingdom of Israel while the two-winged scarab was the official emblem of Judah during the time of King Hezekiah. The four-winged scarab (according to Tushingham) only became a royal emblem in Judah during the time of King Josiah. For purposes of this study, where both Israel and Judah are involved, I submit that it is not really necessary, although preferable, to make the distinction.

This seal is apparently one of the seals used on the handles of wine jars in both of the two ancient kingdoms, the so-called *lmlk*-seals (Lamed-Mem-Lamed-Kaf, commonly pronounced '*L'malekh*', meaning 'belonging to the king'). These seal impressions on jar handles were impressed with stamp seals in the soft clay before the jar was fired. I submit that the use of the rounded top (rather than the flat base) on a jar handle makes more sense than on the small clump of clay used to seal documents. Most contained the inscription (*lmlk*) as well as a symbol of a winged scarab, but some contained only the scarab-symbol (Cf. Sparks 2005:455). 'It is generally agreed that the *lmlk*-phenomenon represents a government-sponsored operation' (Fox 2000:227).

Tushingham (1971:34-35) argues that the royal seals of the Northern Kingdom of Israel did not contain the *lmlk*-inscription; only the four-winged scarab symbol. When these seals were later produced in Judah to stamp jar handles, the seals were crudely carved and he speculates that the *lmlk*-inscription was added as a sort of precautionary measure to emphasise the involvement of the government or the king (Cf. Tushingham 1992:61-65).

In this regard, whether Tushingham is correct about the kingdom involved, I have to agree that he is probably correct in his conclusion that it was a royal seal. The meaning of the four-winged symbol was discussed in paragraph 6.2.13 on pp. 219-220 above and need not be addressed here.

6.4 CONCLUSION

In Palestine, Hebrew seals with Egyptianised iconography, some epigraphic (with inscriptions in Ancient Hebrew) and some anepigraphic, dating from the ninth to the seventh centuries B.C.E., have been discovered. These seals have been found in *loci* from the northern parts of the former Northern Kingdom of Israel to the southern borders of the former Southern Kingdom of Judah. I cautioned that with anepigraphic seals it is very difficult to state with absolute certainty that the owner was indeed Hebrew. For this reason I concentrated on epigraphic seals, but discussed a few anepigraphic seals (all found in cemeteries and probably belonging to ordinary citizens). Although I had no intention to exclude cylinder seals, cylinder seals during the relevant period were very rare in the region and I had to confine myself to stamp seals.

In analysing these seals, it seems that as far as Egyptianizing iconography on seals during Iron IIB was concerned, both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms were involved. During Iron IIC (the period after the fall of Samaria), only Judah remained but continued the practise. It appeared that Egyptianizing already appeared in the Northern Kingdom during the late ninth and early eighth centuries B.C.E. and only commenced in Judah later during the eighth century B.C.E.

Symbols that appear on this selection of seals include Egyptian gods such as Ra, Amun-Ra, Horus, Isis, Min, Wadjet, Harpocrates, Hathor, Ma'at, Osiris and Nephthys. Other symbols include *inter alia* the lotus flower, ankh, winged sphinx, griffin, *uraei* and winged *uraei*, winged sun disks, scarabs and winged scarabs pushing a sun disk, the double crown of Egypt, *Atef* (Osiris) crowns, cartouche, papyrus plant, papyrus sceptre, sedge plant, sceptre with Ma'at feathers, *nwb* sign, the bee and the vase.

It is of interest to note that the ratio of Yahwistic names (including El names) to non-Yahwistic names of the epigraphic Hebrew seals discussed in this study roughly corresponds with the ratio mentioned by Avigad & Sass (1997:23). Of the 25 names on these seals, 7 have Yahwistic names and 4 have El-names, in total amounting to 44% of the total seals discussed.

It seems that kings (and maybe a queen), princes, ministers and other officials of the king, priests and army officers are involved. The few anepigraphic seals (excluding the *lmlk*-seal) apparently belonged to ordinary citizens but their find context prohibits final conclusions.

As far as the seals could be dated, the seals from the Northern Kingdom of Israel date from the 9th to the 8th centuries B.C.E. and those from the Southern Kingdom of

Judah date from the 8th to the 7th centuries B.C.E. These results are consistent with the findings of scholars such as Keel, Uehlinger, Avigad and Sass.

In the premises, after analysing Hebrew seals from Iron IIB and C, I conclude that in both Israel and Judah Egyptian religious symbols were employed to express some of the religious beliefs of the two kingdoms. *Per se* the impression is created that some of the Hebrews, including the highest echelons, adhered to Egyptian religious concepts. This may be true, but can the Bible be ignored in this regard?

On its own the Bible may not be a reliable historical source as regards the historical development of the Hebrew people, but its main purpose was to reflect a relationship between Yahweh and his 'chosen' people, the Hebrews. It contains the official religion of the Israelites, in particular as propagated by the biblical prophets.

It would be very brave to speculate that biblical descriptions of certain kings being true to the Yahwistic religion while others worship other gods, are not necessarily correct, even keeping in mind that the biblical writers were probably for the most part of Judahite descent. These writers did not condemn Israelite kings to the exclusion of all the Judahite kings. They did not hesitate to condemn most of the Judahite kings. Kings such as Hezekiah and Josiah were the exceptions not the rule.

Unless proven otherwise I have to accept the biblical descriptions of the Israelite and Judahite kings and their reigns. With this in mind and using royalty and high officials as examples which may apply as well to ordinary citizens, I conclude, in view of the relevant seal iconography, that some of the Hebrews during Iron IIB adhered to Egyptian religious concepts while others used Egyptian symbols to depict aspects of

Yahweh. It does not follow that those who practised Egyptian religion did not also follow Yahweh. It is most probable that they had a polytheistic religion.

The view that Egyptian symbols were used to portray aspects of Yahweh and his powers may, in the light of Malachi 4:2 (see the discussions on pp. 40 and 233 above), hold true for the following of the discussed seals: Hezekiah, Elishama^{son} of the king, Azaryaw (son of) *hgbh* (Haggobeh or Haggebah), Elishama['] (son of) Šarmelek, Manasseh son of the king, Zaka, Elamar, Peqah, *mnr* and anepigraphic seal 4 (see the discussions of each individual seal).

I submit that for the rest of the seals, keeping in mind the biblical description of the relevant reigns, it is highly improbable that any aspect of Yahweh was under consideration when the Egyptian symbols were chosen. The symbols on the following seals were probably chosen with the intention to portray Egyptian symbols in the light of Egyptian religious concepts: Jezebel, Ushnâ servant of Ahaz, Abiyau servant of Uzziyau, *Asap*, *hmn*, Ahiš ûr, Ushna, Dalā, Naveyahu (son of) 'Azayahyu', Ḥabli, ŠMRYW and the first three anepigraphic seal (see the discussion of each individual seal).

It is my contention that at least fifty percent of the Hebrew seals discussed in this study indicate adherence to Egyptian religious concepts. This does not necessarily follow that the owners of these seals adhered solely to Egyptian religion in lieu of Yahwism, but it shows that they were polytheistic and their polytheism included Egyptian religious concepts.

My final conclusion is that, despite the relative silence of the Bible in this regard and the lack of monumental evidence in Israel and Judah, Egyptian religion had indeed influenced the religion of Israel and Judah during Iron IIB and C.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

7.1 SUMMARY

7.1.1 Introduction

‘One of the great scandals in the study of early Israelite history, to my mind, is the near absolute barrier between Egyptology and biblical scholarship. There are very few scholars with a strong knowledge of the relevant material in both disciplines and a basic bias against finding any significant cultural links between ancient Egypt and ancient Israel. Israel is sacred and Egypt is profane. The two shall not meet.’ (Greenberg 2007).⁶⁵

Greenberg argues that in his opinion there is a significant cultural link between ancient Israel and ancient Egypt and he argues that this link should be investigated with at least the same ardour that is devoted to the Mesopotamian and Canaanite heritage and its influence on early Israelite history. According to the Bible, the prehistory of the Israelites, contained in chapters 1-11, reflects very little, if any Mesopotamian influence.

Although, according to the Bible Abraham initially hailed from Mesopotamia, he (as a result of a famine in Canaan) very soon went to Egypt and struck a friendly relationship with the Pharaoh

⁶⁵ Gary Greenberg is the president of the Biblical Archaeology Society of New York (BASNY). He has written several books on biblical and ancient Near Eastern history. I do not, however, quote him as a recognised scholar in the field of Biblical Archaeology, but simply because I am in total agreement with his expressed sentiments and could not have phrased it better.

(Gn 12:10-14). Again, according to the Bible, the descendants of Jacob (Israel) became a nation during their stay in Egypt. 'Finally, Egypt had an enormous cultural influence in Canaan throughout most of the biblical period. Occasionally we find first millennium Israelite seals bearing Egyptian iconography. The scholars tend to explain them away as Phoenician influences adapted from Egyptian influences. But if Egypt can so influence more distant Byblos and Tyre, shouldn't we expect it to also influence Canaanite peoples in the cultural transmission' (Greenberg 2007).

In Chapter 1, I emphasised the continuous contact over millennia between Egypt and the Canaanite region, sometimes as friendly commercial partners and sometimes as a result of invasion and warfare. I argued that it is highly improbable that such continuous contact would not result in mutual cultural exchanges, including religious influences.

I then posed the question whether this contact led to the acceptance by the Israelites and Judahites during Iron IIB and C of Egyptian religious concepts and if so to what extent? In order to answer this question, the Bible, supposedly reflecting the religion of Israel and Judah, would not be of much assistance, the main reason being that the Bible was apparently mostly written after this period and tends to reflect an idealised pure Yahwistic religion. Furthermore the Bible tends to concentrate on the religion of

the Canaanites, with whom the Israelites had the closest contact, as posing a threat to the Israelite religion.

I suggested that one way of enhancing our knowledge about external influences, in particular Egyptian, on the religion of Israel and Judah during the relevant period, could lie in an analysis of the iconography of contemporary seals discovered in the areas where those two kingdoms were situated. In museums and private collections all over the world are large quantities of seals with pictures, which contain *inter alia* inscriptions of the names of the owners of the seals in Phoenician, Aramaic or Hebrew (Galling 1941:9). What Galling failed to mention is the fact that thousands of epigraphic and anepigraphic seals were also found which contain Egyptian religious symbols.

In defining the purpose of this current study I contended that the purpose of the iconography could not have been purely decorative and had to have some religious meaning. An analysis of the Egyptian iconography on these seals may contribute to our knowledge of the religion of Israel and Judah during the time of the Divided Monarchy and in particular during Iron IIB and C. The purpose of this study in particular was confined to Egyptian influences (whether directly from Egypt or indirectly via Phoenicia) on the religion of the two kingdoms during that period.

7.1.2 Chapters 2 to 4

An investigation of studies and writings indicate that, with the exception of Keel & Uehlinger (1998), no intensive investigation has been made to establish any relationship between seal iconography, especially Egyptian motifs, and contemporary

religious practises in Israel and Judah. Some scholars wrote a few paragraphs about it, others just touched the subject in passing while investigating other subjects.

The meaning of symbolism was discussed and there seems to be consensus amongst most scholars that symbols have a purpose and meaning. Symbols are used to pictorially express ideas of significance. Dever (1987:210) defined religion as a 'set of symbolic thought forms and acts that relate human beings to the ultimate conditions of existence perceived as the Holy'.

I made the point that, especially in primitive societies, symbolism was perceived in a literal sense and not regarded as merely decorative. Even in modern world religions symbolism plays a major role in conveying ideas pertaining to a particular religion. The Bible abounds with symbolism where *inter alia* various aspects of Yahweh are expressed by means of symbols. If an Israelite or Judahite, therefore, used religious symbols on royal, government or personal seals, albeit it symbols of a foreign religion, it could only mean that he or she intended to attach religious significance to those symbols, especially if at seal was worn as an amulet.

It was necessary to give a brief outline of known contact between Egypt and Syro-Palestine, especially during the Dynastic period and those periods when cultural exchanges most likely occurred. Understanding the meaning and importance of symbolism, especially Egyptian symbolism, necessitated an understanding of Egyptian religious concepts. Hebrew seals with Egyptianised iconography have been referred to by some scholars as 'good luck' charms. In my investigation of the basics of Egyptian religion I, for the most part, concentrated on the importance the various gods during particular periods, magic as an element of Egyptian religion, Egyptian

religious symbolism and concepts such as temples, cult and rituals. The wearing of 'good luck' charms should at the least be regarded as a belief in magic, thus falling within the realm of religion.

In Egypt se symbols were not just used for decorative purposes but they also were inherent to religious and magical rituals. Any effort at understanding Egyptian culture would be half hearted without learning more about these symbols. Any symbol on an Egyptian seal, therefore, has a meaning. I discussed some of these symbols and concentrated on hieroglyphs as a 'holy script.' For the rest I discussed the various symbols in **ANNEXURE B**, whether depictions of the Egyptian gods or objects such as the ankh, eye of Horus, djed pillar, papyrus sceptre, lotus flower etcetera.

In Egyptian religion/magic every piece of jewellery worn had a religious connotation, the most important, both in life and death was the amulet. The seal-amulet took the shape of the scarab beetle, which insect was regarded a holy and representative of Ra. Millions of these seal-amulets were manufactured throughout the history of Egypt. This type of amulet found its way to Syro-Palestine and in Israel and Judah during Iron IIB and C the scaraboid shape was predominantly used. Scarabs, with their Egyptian religious connotation, were, therefore, *per se* a religious 'inheritance' from Egypt. In the time of King Hezekiah and probably also during the reign of King Josiah, the scarab became the official emblem of the king and government. A similar tendency during the relevant period is perceived regarding the Northern Kingdom.

7.1.3 Chapter 5

During the time of the United Kingdom, according to the Bible, there appeared to have been close relations with Phoenicia, especially Tyre. I emphasised that one should not regard Phoenicia as a political entity but as different city states, each with its own pantheon. After the division of the kingdoms, this relationship with Phoenicia was apparently continued, in particular by the Northern Kingdom. Some scholars (*inter alia* Keel, Uehlinger and Cornelius) are of the opinion that as a result of the geography of the area, there were Phoenician influences on the Northern Kingdom of Israel while the Southern Kingdom of Judah was to a large extent influenced by Egypt. I made the point that Phoenicia itself had been influenced by Egypt and that these Egyptian influences were indirectly conveyed to the Northern Kingdom via Phoenicia.

In order to prove the Egyptian influences on Phoenicia, I analysed epigraphic and anepigraphic Phoenician seals. The result of this analysis was that the Phoenicians during Iron IIB and C, to a large extent, made use of Egyptian religious symbolism in their seal iconography. This tendency pertained to royalty, government officials and ordinary citizens. It also seemed that epigraphic seals were confined to royalty, government officials and merchantmen, while ordinary citizens used anepigraphic seals. I speculated that this distinction of usage between epigraphic and anepigraphic seals may also have occurred in Israel and Judah. It seems that the Phoenicians substituted depictions of Egyptian gods for their own gods, but they apparently also imported Egyptian gods to form part of their pantheons. They also made use of various other Egyptian religious symbols to emphasise aspects of their own religion.

7.1.4 Chapter 6

In Palestine, Hebrew seals with Egyptianised iconography, some epigraphic (with inscriptions in Ancient Hebrew) and some anepigraphic, dating from the ninth to the seventh centuries B.C.E., have been discovered. These seals have been found in *loci* from the northern parts of the former Northern Kingdom of Israel to the southern borders of the former Southern Kingdom of Judah. I cautioned that with anepigraphic seals it is very difficult to state with absolute certainty that the owner was indeed Hebrew. For this reason I concentrated on epigraphic seals, but discussed a few anepigraphic seals (all found in cemeteries and probably belonging to ordinary citizens). Although I had no intention to exclude cylinder seals, cylinder seals during the relevant period were very rare in the region and I had to confine myself to stamp seals.

In analysing these seals, it seems that as far as Egyptianizing iconography on seals during Iron IIB was concerned, both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms were involved. During Iron IIC (the period after the fall of Samaria), only Judah remained but continued the practise. It appeared that Egyptianizing already appeared in the Northern Kingdom during the late ninth and early eighth centuries B.C.E. and only commenced in Judah later during the eighth century B.C.E.

Symbols that appear on this selection of seals include Egyptian gods such as Ra, Amun-Ra, Horus, Isis, Min, Wadjet, Harpocrates, Hathor, Ma'at, Osiris and Nephthys. Other symbols include *inter alia* the lotus flower, ankh, winged sphinx, griffin, *uraei* and winged *uraei*, winged sun disks, scarabs and winged scarabs pushing a sun disk,

the double crown of Egypt, *Atef* (Osiris) crowns, cartouche, papyrus plant, papyrus sceptre, sedge plant, sceptre with Ma'at feathers, *nwb* sign, the bee and the vase.

I pointed out that the ratio of Yahwistic names (including El names) to non-Yahwistic names of the epigraphic Hebrew seals discussed in this study roughly corresponds with the ratio mentioned by Avigad & Sass (1997:23). Of the 25 names on these seals, 7 have Yahwistic names and 4 have El-names, in total amounting to 44% of the total seals discussed.

7.2 CONCLUSIONS

After available material⁶⁶ has been studied and analysed the only question that remains is whether this study achieved its purpose to find answers to the stated problem Did the continuous contact and unavoidable cultural exchanges between Egypt and Palestine result in the acceptance by Israel and Judah of Egyptian religious concepts during the period 900-587 B.C.E.(thus Iron IIB and C) and if so, to what extent? (see p. 21 above).

During the course of this study it appeared that during Iron IIB two major transformations regarding Hebrew seals occurred in Israel and Judah. During the eighth century B.C.E., seals inscribed with personal names appeared for the first time in the two kingdoms. During the late ninth and the early eighth centuries B.C.E. Egyptian iconography on seals were introduced in the Northern Kingdom and later during the eighth century also on Judah. In Egypt these symbols had magic/religious connotations.

To state that the Israelites and Judahite merely copied these symbols for decorative purposes, as has been stated in the past, would amount to the absurd. Symbolism in

ancient societies was not used without a purpose and that purpose was to convey a message, idea or belief. If the symbol was a religious one the purpose would also have been religious. An Egyptian religious symbol (or as symbol with religious implications) would not have been used just to adorn jewellery.

We have seen that the seals discovered were for the most part seal-amulets. They

⁶⁶ I do not suggest that all 'available' material has been attended to. New seals are continuously being discovered. Seals tend to disappear into private collections and are not available for study. The intention with this study was not to prepare a catalogue of Hebrew seals with Egyptian iconography, but to use representative examples to endeavour finding an acceptable answer to the stated problem.

were perforated with the intention to be worn around the neck. Amulets were believed to have special beneficial properties and by the principle of sympathetic magic, to be able to attract good forces to assist the wearer or, conversely, to repel a variety of evils and dangers. Magic was not distinguished from religion and by using the symbols on the seal to attract good forces or to repel evil forces, those symbols had to form part of the owner's religious beliefs.

Another factor to be kept in mind is that Egyptian iconography appears on seals of people with Hebrew theophoric names (Yahweh and El) as well as those with secular names.

Finally these symbols appear on seals belonging to various classes of the Hebrew community, including royalty, government officials, priests and ordinary citizens. These symbols are not limited to personal seals but also appear on royal and official seals from periods when Yahwistic reformer kings such as Hezekiah and probably Josiah ruled.

These developments in seal iconography in Israel and Judah could not have been without a purpose. Even if one accepts the theory (as has been suggested by some

scholars) that these symbols were merely used to portray certain aspects of Yahweh's powers, the first conclusion can only be that the Judahites and Israelites did indeed accept certain Egyptian religious concepts, albeit only in the form of 'borrowing images'.

It is also highly probable that Judah, as a result of its close proximity to Egypt and especially during its isolation after the fall of Samaria, was directly influenced by Egypt. On the other hand Israel's close relationship with Phoenician city states such as Tyre and Sidon, could have led to these Egyptian influences being imported indirectly via the Phoenicians, who at that stage mainly used Egyptian symbolism on their seals.

The final question to be answered is to what extent did the Israelites and Judahites accept these Egyptian religious concepts? On page 1 of this study I quoted Jeremiah: 'What have you gained by your alliances with Egypt and Assyria?...or you have as many gods as there are cities and towns in Judah' (Je 2:18-28).

This lament by Jeremiah corroborated by the evidence of seals, leads to the conclusion that the acceptance of Egyptian religious concepts went wider and deeper than have been surmised by Biblical scholars. The latter have (according to scholars such as Keel, Uehlinger and Dever) been so immersed in texts that they cannot see the wood from the trees and I make this statement with all due respect to their learning, knowledge and dedication. Pictorial evidence from ancient societies demands and deserves as much, if not more, consideration than texts and these include the Ugarit tablets. So much study went into the latter to prove Canaanite roots for Israelite religion that other evidence was to a very large extent ignored.

I made the point that the view that Egyptian symbols were used to portray aspects of Yahweh and his powers may, in the light of Malachi 4:2 (see the discussions on pp. 40 and 233 above), hold true for the following of the discussed seals: Hezekiah, Elishama' **son of the king** , Azaryaw (son of) *hgbh* (Haggobeh or Haggebah), Elishama' (son of) Šarmelek, Manasseh son of the king, Zaka, Elamar, Peqah, *mnr* and anepigraphic seal 4 (see the discussions of each individual seal).

I further theorised that for the rest of the seals it is highly improbable that any aspect of Yahweh was under consideration when the Egyptian symbols were chosen. The symbols on the following seals were probably chosen with the intention to portray Egyptian symbols in the light of Egyptian religious concepts: Jezebel, Ushnâ servant of Ahaz, Abiyau servant of 'Uzziyau , Asap, *hmn*, Aḥiṣ ūr , Ushna, Dalā, Naveyahu (son of) 'Azayahyu', Ḥabli, ŠMRYW and the first three anepigraphic seal (see the discussion of each individual seal).

It is my contention that at least fifty percent of the Hebrew seals discussed in this study indicate adherence to Egyptian religious concepts. This does not necessarily follow that the owners of these seals adhered solely to Egyptian religion in lieu of Yahwism, but it shows that they were polytheistic and their polytheism included Egyptian religious concepts.

My final conclusion is that, despite the relative silence of the Bible in this regard and the lack of monumental evidence in Israel and Judah, Egyptian religious concepts had indeed been accepted and/or adhered to in Israel and Judah during Iron IIB and C.

7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The study of the iconography on seals to enhance our knowledge of ancient religions is still in its infancy and the possibilities for further studies are legion. In this particular field (Egypt and Syro-Palestine), it is clear that contact between these two regions goes back to at least Chalcolithic times. Seals go back at least 7000 years which takes us back way beyond the Early Bronze Age. Seals imported into Palestine from Egypt go back to at least 3000 B.C.E. (Lapp 1989:1; Parker 1949:2).

During the Eighteenth Dynasty in Egypt, especially as a result of the expansive policies of Thutmosis III, Egyptian influences played a major role in Syro-Palestine. These influences only began to dwindle during the Amarna-period. A superficial perusal of *corpi* such as Keel (1997) reveals that thousands of seals dating back to the Middle and Late Bronze ages (the majority with Egyptian iconography) were discovered in Syro-Palestine.

Studies of seals discovered in Syro-Palestine dating back to the Bronze Age (even the Early Bronze Age) may reveal that Egypt played a major role in the development of religions of the region and that these religions did not solely originate in Mesopotamia or Anatolia. There may even have been religious exchanges between Egypt and Mesopotamia in prehistorical times. The material in the form of Bronze Age seals abounds; what is required is study and analysis.

I want to conclude this study with the following quotation:

‘The important thing in science is not so much to obtain new facts as to discover new ways of thinking about them.’

Sir William Bragg (1862–1942)

ANNEXURE A

COMPARATIVE CHRONOLOGIES OF ISRAEL/JUDAH AND EGYPT DURING THE IRON AGE IN PALESTINE

Although the current debate about the ‘Low Chronology’ (involving scholars like I Finkelstein, A Mazar, A Ben-Tor, N Coldstream and others) has been noted, it is felt that not enough archaeological evidence is currently available to regard it as proven beyond reasonable doubt. This study, therefore, uses traditional chronologies, established before the current debate which started in approximately 1996. For Palestine use was made of McNutt 1999:14 and for Egypt of James 1983:263-266.

Table 1: Comparative chronologies.

Israel and Judah

Egypt

<p>Iron IA 1200 - 1150 B.C.E.</p> <p>Iron IB 1150 – 1000 B.C.E.</p>	<p>1208 B.C.E.: Pharaoh Merneptah's campaign in Canaan; victory stela contains first extra-biblical mention of Israel</p> <p>c.1200 B.C.E.: invasion of the Sea People; Philistines arrive in Canaan; "Israelite" settlement wave in hill country?</p>	<p>Dynasty 20 c.1196 - 1070 Last Dynasty of New Kingdom</p> <p>Dynasty 21 1070 – 945 First Dynasty of the Third Intermediate Period</p>	<p>Setnakht Rameses III – XI</p> <p>Smendes Neferkara Psunsennes I Amenemope Osorkon the Elder Siamun (Siamun the pharaoh who gave his daughter in marriage to Solomon?) Psunennes II</p>
---	--	---	---

<p>Iron IIA 1000 - 900 B.C.E.</p>	<p>c.1000 B.C.E.: most common suggested date for establishment of Israelite united monarchy</p> <p>853 B.C.E.: Battle of Qarqar between Shalmaneser III of Assyria and a coalition headed by King Ahab of Israel</p>	<p>Dynasty 22 c. 945 – 712 B.C.E.</p>	<p>Shoshenq I ('Shishak' of the Bible.) Osorkon I Shoshenq II Takelot I Osorkon II Takelot II Shoshenq III Pami Shoshenq V Osorkon V</p>
<p>Iron IIB 900 - 700 B.C.E.</p>	<p>720 B.C.E.: Samaria falls, Israel defeated by Shalmaneser V of Assyria; population deported</p> <p>701 B.C.E.: Sennacherib of Assyria invades Judah; fortified city of Lachish destroyed but Jerusalem survives</p> <p>612 B.C.E.: Nineveh, capital of Assyria, sacked by a Persian-Babylonian coalition; Assyrian empire falls</p>	<p>Dynasties 23 – 24 c. 928 – 711</p>	<p>Petubasty I Shoseng IV Osorkon IV Takelot III Rudamun</p> <p>Tenakht Bakenrenef</p>
<p>Iron IIC 700- 587 B.C.E.</p>	<p>587 B.C.E.: Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon captures Jerusalem; First Temple is destroyed and the population exiled</p>	<p>Dynasty 25 c. 712 – 657</p> <p>Dynasty 26 664-525 First dynasty of the Late Period</p>	<p>Alara Kashta Piankhy Shabaka Shebitka Taharqa Tantamani</p> <p>Psamtek I Necho II Psamtek II Apries Amasis Psamtek III</p>

ANNEXURE B

LIST OF EGYPTIAN AND PHOENICIAN GODS, RELIGIOUS CONCEPTS AND TERMS














ABYDOS

A site in Upper Egypt, to the west of the Nile, where numerous tombs dating from the earliest dynasties onwards are to be found. From the Fifth Dynasty onwards it became the cult centre of Osiris whose heart was said to be buried there. It became a famous place for pilgrimages in ancient times (Geddes & Grosset 1997:312).

ALPHABET

Table 2: Egyptian hieroglyphic alphabet

(Mc Dermott 2002:22-23)

THE BASIC ALPHABET OF 24 SINGLE-CONSONANT LETTERS			
SIGN	TRANSLITERATION	OBJECT SHOWN	PRONUNCIATION
	ʒ	Egyptian vulture	glottal stop
	i	flowering reed	y
 or \\\	y	two reed flowers or two strokes	y
	r	forearm	guttural ah
	w	quail chick	w/u
	b	foot	b
	p	stool	p
	f	horned viper	f
	m	owl	m
	n	water ripple	n
	r	mouth	r
	h	reed shelter in fields	h
	h	twisted flax	emphatic h

⊙	h	placenta (?)	ch in "loch"
☞	h	animal's belly with teats	ch in "ich"
☞ or	s	bolt or folded cloth	s
□	š	pool	sh in "shimmy"
△	k	hillside	q in "queen"
☞	k	basket with handle	k
☞	g	stand for jar	g
☞	t	bread loaf	t
☞	t	tethering rope	t in "tube"
☞	d	hand	d
☞	d	snake	j in "joker"

AMMUT

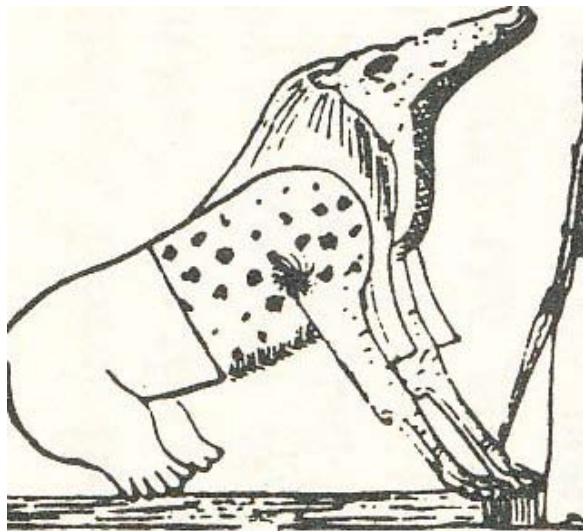


Figure 65: Ammut

(Wallis Budge 1953:23)

A terrifying monster, a hybrid crocodile-leopard-hippopotamus, also regarded as a goddess, who devoured the deceased when he failed the test of the weighing of the heart. Sometimes the leopard is replaced by a lion (Harris 2001:179; Pinch 2004:100; Taylor 2001:36; Ions 1997:40).

AMUN & AMUN-RA

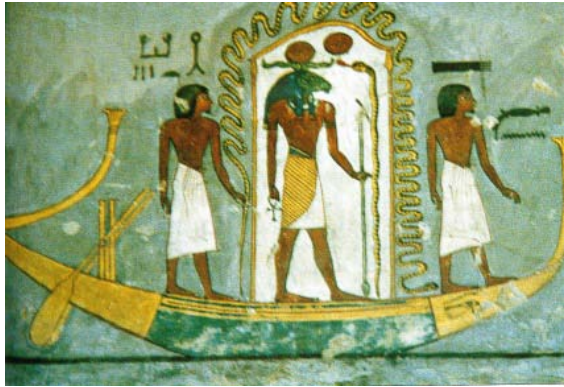


Figure 66: Amun-Ra in his solar boat on his daily journey through the sky
(Oakes & Gahlin 2007:77)



Figure 67: Ram's headed sphinxes of Amun at Karnak
(Photo: H & S Fourie)

During the Old Kingdom, Amun was an obscure god localised at Thebes. In the Hermopolitan cosmology he was the 'hidden god', a member of the OGDOAD of creation. Thebes, however, was a royal city and depending on the balance of power, which during certain periods alternated between the north (Memphis) and the south (Thebes), local gods of the seat of the reigning king, may increase its influence to a national level.

During the First Intermediate Period, between the fall of the Old Kingdom and the rise of the Middle Kingdom, Amun was taken up by the kings of Thebes as a war god who procured victory for them. Henceforth he became a national god associated with Ra as Amun-Ra. This association also served a theological purpose by giving the powerful but remote Ra a human-like persona who could impregnate a queen so that the baby and future pharaoh would be a 'son of Ra'. He was part of a triad with his consort Mut and their son Khonsu. His power rose continuously throughout the Middle and New Kingdoms with only temporary setbacks such as the short-lived Amarna period. Lavish centres of worship were established at Thebes, Karnak and Medinet Habu and even so far afield as Palestine. By the end of the New Kingdom Amun-Ra was the most powerful in the Egyptian pantheon. During the Third Intermediate Period, Upper Egypt became a theocracy ruled by the priesthood of Amun-Ra (Geddes & Grosset 1997:320; Harris 2001:158).

ANKH



Figure 68: Ankh symbol on a wall relief at the Horus temple, Edfu
(Photo: F N Vermeulen)

A cross shaped like the Greek letter tau (T) with a loop on the top. In paintings and other pictorial representations, it represents eternal life and the word often appeared

in personal names e.g. Tutankhamen. The ankh was used as an emblem and appears as one of the most powerful cultural and religious symbols of Pharaonic Egypt.

The loop of the Ankh represented the feminine discipline or the womb, while the elongated section represented the masculine discipline or the penis. These two sacred units then come together and form life. It was supposed to bestow immortality on anyone who had it in his or her possession. The ankh symbolised the union of Isis with Osiris, her brother and husband, by whom she conceived Horus. Gods and Pharaohs were often depicted as carrying ankh signs. It was usually worn as an amulet to extend the life of the living, and placed on the mummy to energize the resurrected soul. Worn as an amulet, it was a powerful talisman that provided the wearer with protection from the evil forces of decay and degeneration.

This symbol appears widely in writing, paintings, ankh-shaped objects such as mirrors or mirror-cases. The ankh was popular throughout Egyptian history and due to its cruciform shape remained so into the Coptic period (Geddes & Grosset 1997:322; Ions 1997:29; Clark 2000:14-15; Pinch 1995:110).

ANATH (see **ASTARTE**)

A goddess of love and war imported during the Eighteenth Dynasty from the Canaanites/Phoenicians where she was associated with Ashur and also called Astarte. Thutmose III erected a shrine to her at Thebes. She is depicted as a goddess of war, holding a spear in one hand and swinging a battle-axe in the other, seated on a throne or armed with shield and club, riding on a horse.

ANUBIS or ANPU



Figure 69: Statue of Anubis, Egyptian Museum, Cairo

(Photo: F N Vermeulen)

Originally a god of Upper Egypt and the god of the dead, portrayed mostly as a man with the head of a jackal or just as a jackal, but was later replaced by Osiris (whose origins was in the Delta) and demoted and worshipped as the god of embalming. The god's titles included 'he who is in bandages' and 'he who is in charge of the god's chamber'. The god's chamber was the place where Anubis performed the rituals of purification and embalming the body of Osiris with whom the deceased was identified. When the embalming was completed, an hourly recital guides the deceased from the state of the 'dead' to the state of the 'living'. The deceased and the participants in the ritual were transported into the world of the gods and, by wearing a mask, the funeral priest became Anubis. After his demotion, Anubis was still regarded with deep respect because the Egyptians regarded the underworld as a very dangerous place and he acted as guide to the deceased through the underworld. He was also a benevolent hearer of pleas and prayers thus ensuring his popularity throughout Egyptian history (Geddes & Grosset 1997:322).

APIS



Figure 70: Apis
(Ions 1997:11)

In Egyptian mythology a bull-headed god, worshipped at its own sanctuary at Memphis. He was believed to be the incarnation of the original main god of Memphis.

The animal's physical force was associated with his sexual potency making him a symbol of fertility and rebirth. For this reason many civilisations (including the Canaanites) connected bulls with agricultural activities and the festival of the New Year that celebrated the cyclical rebirth of the cosmos. When it died, a search was begun for its successor, while the dead Apis was embalmed and interred in a huge granite sarcophagus in the Serapeum at Saqqara. During the Late Period, Apis became a manifestation of Ptah and was considered an intermediary between the divine and human worlds (Geddes & Grosset 1997:323; Ions 1997:122).

ASTARTE (see ANATH)

A Phoenician fertility goddess (also known as Anath in Phoenicia) who was imported into Egyptian mythology in the early Eighteenth Dynasty as a moon goddess and

goddess of love and war. She was the most popular of the imported deities, and her worship became widespread during the later dynasties. She is the goddess of ill repute referred to in the Hebrew Bible as Ashtaroth and Ashtoreth. She was depicted with the head of a lioness and stands in a chariot driving four horses over a fallen enemy (Geddes & Grosset 1997:328). See **ASTARTE** under **PHOENICIAN GODS**.

ATEF

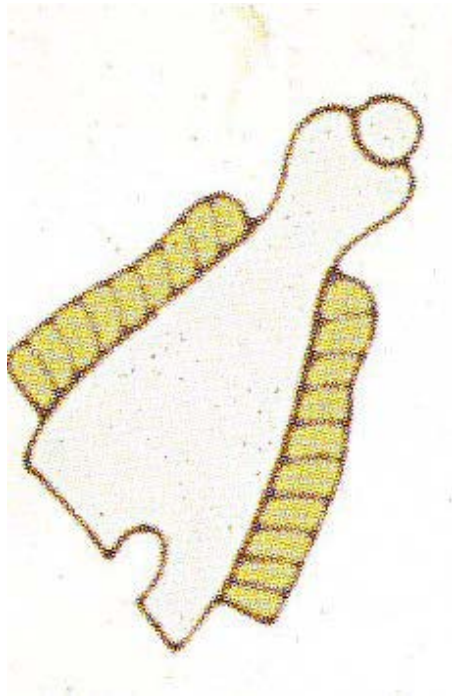


Figure 71: Atef crown
(Oakes & Gahlin 2007:278)

The atef crown was worn by Osiris. It is made up of the white crown of Upper Egypt flanked by red ostrich feathers, representative of Busiris, Osiris's cult center in the Delta. The feathers were also representative of *ma'at* as truth and order (Andrews 1994:81; Hallam 1996:168-169; Churchward 1913:285).

ATEN or ATON or ADON

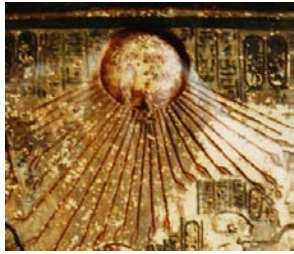


Figure 72: Aten on altar piece from Amarna, Egyptian Museum, Cairo
(Photo: F N Vermeulen)

The disk of the sun, its brilliantly visible aspect, as distinct from its mystical, creative aspects, which are linked with Amun, the ‘hidden god.’ The Aten was there for all to see and it was taken by Amenophis IV (Akhenaten) during the Eighteenth Dynasty as a universal god, to the exclusion of all other gods. The first recorded monotheistic religion, the cult of Aten was linked to solar cults in neighbouring countries. During this time (the Amarna Period), numerous temples to Aten were built, later, probably during the reign of Tutankhamen, to be demolished (Geddes & Grosset 1997:329).

ATUM or TUM



Figure 73: Atum
(Ions 1997:24)

The original local god of Heliopolis, portrayed in human form and originally seen as creator of the world; was known as ‘the Complete One’ (David 1999:103). He absorbed a primitive myth about Khepera, the beetle god. The priests of Heliopolis

then joined his cult with that of Ra, the universal sun-god with the name of Atum-Ra, during the Second Dynasty (Geddes & Grosset 1997:330).

BAAL

A creator god imported from the Canaanites/Phoenicians, where he was the consort of Astarte, during the Eighteenth Dynasty. In Egypt he was worshipped at Tanis and Memphis (Geddes & Grosset 1997:330). The name Baal simply means 'Lord' See also discussion of BAAL under **PHOENICIAN GODS**.

BASTET OR BAST



Figure 74: Bronze statue of Bastet
(Ions 1997:12)

A cat-headed or lion-headed goddess, guardian of the Delta-area. With her centre of cult at Bubastis she was identified with other goddesses such as the lioness Sekhmet, Tefnut, Mehet and Hathor of Dendera. In the New Kingdom Bastet became associated with Mut of Thebes and in general with the concept of goddess-mother. Bastet represents the eye of the sun in its beneficent aspect as opposed to Sekhmet and Tefnut who are the incarnations of the sun's harmful aspect. Amulets in the form of cats or with the iconography of the goddess were believed to ward off misfortune and ensure fertility (Geddes & Grosset 1997:331; Ions 1997:101-102).

BEE

‘The ancient emblem of Lower Egypt associated with the Delta town of But’ (Geddes & Grosset 1997:331).

BEN-BEN

A stone in the form of an obelisk which was placed in the temple of Ra at Heliopolis and other sun temples. It represented the sun (as the creator) and its rays. Its shape led to various symbolic architecture in ancient Egypt including the pyramids and the top of the obelisks (Geddes & Grosset 1997:331; Rossi 2004:182).

BENNU



Figure 75: Benu bird
(Ions 1997:123)

In Egyptian mythology, a great bird deity that was worshipped as sacred at Herakleopolis. It was depicted as having feathers of red and gold. According to the *Book of the Dead* it is the ‘Heart-Soul of Ra, the Guide of the Gods to the Tuat.’ The Benu was pictured as a grey, purple, blue, or white heron with a long beak and a two-feathered crest. Occasionally the Benu was depicted as a yellow wagtail, or as an eagle with feathers of red and gold. Originally of solar associations, the Benu bird came to be connected with three important gods consisting of Atum, Ra and Osiris.

As an aspect of Atum, the Bennu bird was said to have created itself and flown over the waters of Nun before the original creation. According to this tradition, the bird came to rest on a rock from which its cry broke the primeval silence and this determined what was and what was not to be in the unfolding creation. Like the Phoenix it recreates itself and according to tradition it appears every morning in the form of the rising sun (Armour 2001:44-45; Geddes & Grosset 1997:332; Ions 1997:125).

BES



Figure 76: Statue of Bes

(Oakes & Gahlin 2007:171)

Bes was probably an imported Egyptian god, possibly of Nubian origin. Bes is depicted in full frontal view, instead of the profile view of most of the other Egyptian gods. Bes was a protector god who helped in childbirth and promoted fertility. He was a guardian against snakes and misfortune. A grotesque-looking god who came to prominence during the Eighteenth Dynasty. He was depicted as a dwarf with long arms and crooked legs and a broad, flat face with thick lips and a protruding tongue

and wearing a characteristic feather crown. He always wore a hideous mask and was often depicted playing a musical instrument. He was the god of love, marriage, dancing and jollification and acted as guardian who kept snakes from the house, protected the young and weak against dangers in general and assisted women in labour. He attended the circumcision ceremony and defeated the forces of evil by making music, singing and dancing. He was also regarded as a tamer of animals. His consort was Tauert, depicted as a pregnant female hippopotamus (Geddes & Grosset 1997:332; Ions 1997:108).

BOOK OF THE DEAD

A collection of New Kingdom and later funerary texts, on papyrus, found in tombs and often placed within the wrappings or between the legs of mummies. Based on the coffin texts, which goes back to the Sixth Dynasty, these writings are spells intended to ease the transition of the dead person into the after world (see **EGYPTIAN MAGIC SPELLS**). There are some ninety chapters altogether and deals with the deceased undergoing judgement, worshiping the gods and at work in the fields of the underworld (Geddes & Grosset 1997:333; Faulkner et al:1994:13-14).

BUBASTIS

‘A religious site in the Nile Delta, nome capital and seat of the cult of the cat-goddess Bastet’ (Geddes & Grosset 1997:334).

BUSIRIS

A religious site and nome capital in the Delta, a focus of the cult of Osiris. Eventually it was overshadowed by Abydos (Geddes & Grosset 1997:334).

BUTO



Figure 77: Buto, the snake goddess nursing Tutankhamun
(Bosse-Griffiths 1973:Plate XXXV)

The patron snake-goddess of Lower Egypt, to whom the cobra was sacred with her original cult centre at the Delta town of the same name. Wadjet (Wadjyt, Wadjit, Uto, Uatchet, Edjo, Buto) was one of the oldest Egyptian goddesses. Her worship was already established by the Predynastic Period, but did change somewhat as time progressed. Snake goddesses were usually seen as benign, perhaps because of the snake's useful function of eating mice and other vermin. She is often portrayed as a *uraeus*. She began as the local goddess of Per-Wadjet (Buto) but soon became a patron goddess of Lower Egypt. By the end of the Predynastic Period she was considered to be the personification of Lower Egypt rather than a distinct goddess and almost always appeared with her sister Nekhabet (who represented Upper Egypt). The two combined represented the country as a whole and were represented in the pharaoh's 'nebtj' name (also known as 'the two ladies') which indicated that the king ruled over both parts of Egypt. The earliest recovered example of the nebtj name is from the reign of Anedjib of the First Dynasty (Bosse-Griffiths 1973:100-108; Geddes & Grosset 1997:334).

CANOPIC JARS



Figure 78: Canopic jars from the 7th Century B.C.E.
(Harris 2001:174)

Four jars sealed with a mud-paste cap in the Old Kingdom and with a cap carved like a human head during the Middle Kingdom. During the New Kingdom they were sealed with the carved heads of the four sons of Horus (**AMSET**, **HAAPI**, **DUAMUTEF** and **KEBEH-SENUF**). They were used to preserve the entrails of the mummified dead (Geddes & Grosset 1997:336). They are named after the town of Canopus, west of Alexandria in Egypt. Canopus was named after the Mycenaean hero (helmsman of Menelaus) who was later in Hellenistic times associated with Osiris. He was represented by a type of vase-shape. When the first jars with intestines were found, they resembled the symbols for Canopus and were called canopic jars (Aufderheide 2003:257).

CARTOUCHE also known as **SHENU**



Figure 79: Cartouche from a wall relief at the Horus temple, Edfu
(Photo: F N Vermeulen)

The shape represents a loop of rope in which a name is written. It protected that name; it was the 'good luck' charm of the Egyptian civilization. The ancient name for the cartouche was 'shenu'. It was worn only by the Pharaohs, and represented the Pharaohs' insignia.

Both the king's praenomen (throne name), and his nomen (birth name), were written within cartouches. These two names were the most important royal titles, and the two cartouche names always appeared with emblematic use and formal inscriptions. The 'Magical Oval' in which the Pharaoh's first name was written was intended to protect him from evil spirits both while he lived and in the after world. In the New Kingdom, royal sarcophagi were made in the shape of the cartouche. The entire burial chamber of Thutmosis III was in this shape (Geddes & Grosset 1997:337).

COFFIN TEXTS



Figure 80: Coffin texts from the coffin of Gua
(Oakes & Gahlin 2007: 402)

Funerary inscriptions made on sarcophagi, usually formulae forming part of the ritual established to ensure that the spirit of the deceased passed successfully through the after world. They originated during the Sixth Dynasty, thus later than the Pyramid texts and are found in the tombs, not only of royalty, but also of aristocracy (Geddes & Grosset 1997:340).

COSMOLOGY

See **CREATION MYTHS** in **ANNEXURE C**

CULT CENTRES

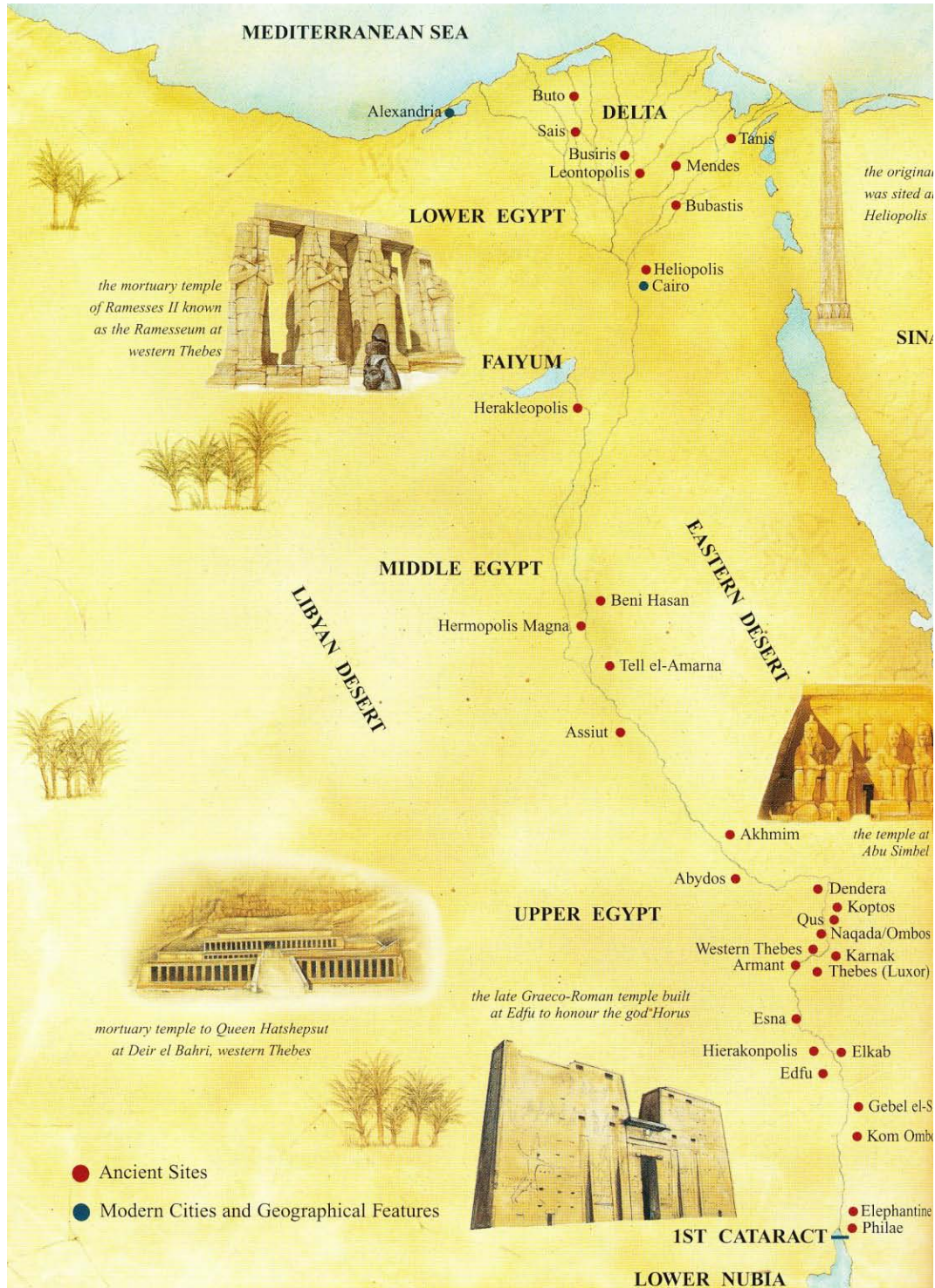


Figure 81: Locations of major cult centres of ancient Egypt
(Oakes & Gahlin 2001:264)

DENDERA

The site in Upper Egypt, close to Edfu, of a major temple of the goddess Hathor. An annual festival linked the two sites, bringing the image of Hathor to Edfu to re-enact the conception of the young Horus (Geddes & Grosset 1997:351; West 1995:393).

DESHRED

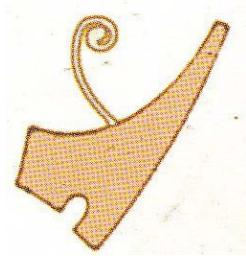


Figure 82: Deshred.

(Oakes & Gahlin 2007:278)

The Red Crown. This was the crown that represented Lower Egypt (northern) (Oakes & Gahlin 2007: 278).

DJED



Figure 83: Djed Pillars

(Andrews 1994:83)

This amulet represents the tree trunk in which Isis concealed the dead body of her husband Osiris; the tree trunk came to represent the spine of Osiris. The four cross-bars refer to the four internal organs kept in canopic jars during mummification, the

intestines, liver, stomach and lungs. The Four Sons of Horus, who, from the New Kingdom onwards, were associated with the four canopic jars that contained the organs of the dead, were often shown with depictions of Djed pillars adorning the exterior of the chest that held the jars.

This symbol became an important symbol of stability, symbolizing the backbone and body of Osiris. The Djed amulet was used to cure and protect the wearer against injury of the spine. The Djed funerary amulet was laid upon the neck of the deceased, to whom it gave the power to reconstitute the body and to become a perfect Ka and reborn with a strong spine in the underworld (Geddes & Grosset 1997:351; Andrews 1994:83).

DUAT

A name for the underworld (Geddes & Grosset 1997:353).

EDFU



Figure 84: Temple of Horus at Edfu

(Photo: H & S Fourie)

An ancient site in Upper Egypt, south of Thebes, on the western bank of the Nile.

In dynastic times it was famed as a centre of the cult of Horus, its temple the home of the triad of Horus, Hathor and their child Horus-Harakhte, the rising sun (Geddes & Grosset 1997:355).

EYE OF HORUS also known as **UDJAT**

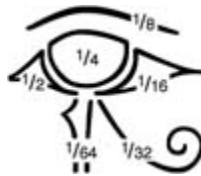


Figure 85: Eye of Horus
(Ions 1997:26)

Originally the Eye of Atum, which god used it to rule the world. Later with the incorporation of various deities into the Heliopolitan cosmology, it became the eye of Ra and still later as the Eye of Amun-Ra. This 'eye' also became part of the Horus-mythology, the eye being lost during the epic struggle with Seth (Ions 1997:24-26). It is a powerful symbol used to protect from evil; the ancient name for the Eye of Horus was '*udjat*'. The right eye was the sun and the left the moon. Horus lost his left eye in his war with Seth, who tore the eye into pieces. The left eye, being the moon was discovered by Thoth lying in pieces, but he was able to reassemble them into the full

moon. This healing of the eye became a symbol of renewal of health. Horus gave the reassembled eye to his murdered father Osiris, thereby bringing him back to life.

Egyptians believed that the Eye of Horus was capable of healing sickness and capable of bringing the dead to life, as it did with Osiris. The Egyptians used the eye as a funerary amulet for protection against evil and rebirth in the underworld, and decorated mummies, coffins and tombs with it. The Book of the Dead instructs that funerary eye amulets be made out of lapis lazuli or gold. This was also the eye painted on the brow of Egyptian ships and much used as a protective amulet. It was regarded as being always vigilant to detect evil influences. The Eye consisted of 6 pieces, each piece of the udjat represented a fraction of the descending geometric series $1/2$, $1/4$, $1/8$; put together they make $63/64$ or approximately 1 (one).



The Egyptian fraction system was based on this symbol. The modern 'Rx' symbol which is used by pharmacies and in medicine has its origins in the Eye of Horus (Geddes & Grosset 1997:362).

FAIYUM

A fertile area to the west of the Nile Valley, south of the Delta, which was empty marshland during the Old Kingdom but was drained and developed during the Middle Kingdom (Geddes & Grosset 1997:362).

FEATHER OF MA'AT (see MA'AT)

FLAIL and CROOK



Figure 86: Flail and crook on a sarcophagus of Tutankhamun, Egyptian Museum, Cairo

(Photo: F N Vermeulen)

A symbol of royalty, majesty, authority and dominion carried by the pharaohs

(Wilkinson 2001:188-1900).

GEB or SEB



Figure 87: The earth god Geb

(Oakes & Gahlin 2007:330)

The earth-god in the Heliopolitan cosmology, from whose union with the sky-goddess Nut, came the four children, Osiris, Isis, Seth and Nephthys. It is Geb who presided at the court of the gods that assigned the kingship of Egypt to Horus rather than Seth. Geb and Nut (the sky) were depicted respectively as a man and a woman (Silverman 1991:21; Cf. Geddes & Grosset 1997:371).

HAAPI (1)

One of the four sons of Horus, who was depicted with a dog's head on one of the four canopic jars. The small intestines were placed in the jar (Geddes & Grosset 1997:373). The other three sons were **AMSET**, **DUAMUTEF** and **KEBU-SENUF**.

HAAPI (2)



Figure 88: The god of the Nile, Haapi
(Oakes & Gahlin 2007:278)

In Egyptian mythology, the god of the river Nile. He was believed to live above the first cataract and to be hermaphrodite. He was especially important to the ancient Egyptians because he brought the flood every year. The flood deposited rich silt on the banks of the Nile, allowing the Egyptians to grow crops (Geddes & Grosset 1997:373). He was also capricious and if farmers did not care properly for their land, he would let them suffer serious consequences (White 1970:3).

HARAKHTE

‘A title of Horus, identifying him with Ra as god of the morning sun. The sun and moon were known as “the two eyes of Horus”’ (Geddes & Grosset 1997:374).

HAROERIS (HARURIS, HARORIS)

Haroeris, or Horus the Elder, is represented in different forms: human form or as a human (male or female) with a falcon's head and various country crowns and the solar disk or as squatting beast-hawk or a falcon and a lion with a lion's head.

Haroeris is one of the oldest forms of the god Horus and is already mentioned in the Pyramid Texts. In Egyptian mythology various legends regarding Haroeris, exist. He was introduced as the son of Nut and Re at the same time when the Osiris-worship was introduced. Nut, the wife of Geb and Mother of the (the five original) gods was the sky goddess. In Letopolis, Haroeris was the son of Heket.

According to another myth the name Haroeris (or Harwer) was derived from a combination of the Horus with an indigenous deity Wer, ‘the Great One,’ a god of light whose eyes were the sun and the moon. ‘Though increasing emphasis was placed upon the right eye, the sun, Haroeris was worshipped as Mekhenti-irty, "He on whose brows are the Two Eyes" or, on moonless nights as Mekhenti-en-irty, "He on

whose brow there are no eyes," in which aspect he was the patron of the blind. Mekhenti-irty or Hor-merti was represented holding in his hands the *udjat* or *uraeus* eyes of Horus' (Ions 1997: 69).

Haroeris is sometimes regarded as the son or consort of Hathor; he was also the brother of Osiris and Seth. Various myths or legends surround the fight, or battle, involving Horus and Seth in which Horus lost one eye. One version is that Horus seemed to have recovered with two eyes, one he gave to Osiris as a token of life and the other for himself. Horus then ascended the throne approved by the assembly of gods. This myth allowed Horus of Two Eyes to give way to Hor Nubti, 'Horus Vanquisher of Seth,' or Horus of Ombos (the cult center of Seth) (Ions 1997:67-69).

HARPOCRATES



Figure 89: Harprocrates on lotus flower
(El-Khachab 1971:Plate XXXVI)

The Egyptian sun child is often depicted sitting on a lotus flower. This is actually the young Horus. The young Horus (Egyptian *Har*) was Hellenized by the Greeks as the Hellenistic god known to Greeks as Harpocrates (in Egyptian *Har-pa-khered* or

Heru-pa-khered meaning ‘Har, the Child’). He was received by Isis from Osiris in Duat, the netherworld. He was thus conceived in the darkness of the underworld and born in the light of the sun. Harpocrates, the child Horus, personifies the first strength of the sun after the winter; life in this world of the living, after the world of the dead, thus the ‘sun child’, and also the image of early vegetation, thus fresh growth. Some Egyptian statues represent the child Horus, pictured as a naked boy with his finger on his mouth (to depict youth), a realization of the hieroglyph for ‘child’ (El-Khachab 1971:132-145; Ions 1997:72).

HATHOR

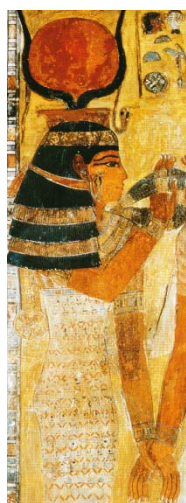


Figure 90: Wall painting of Hathor
(Oakes & Gahlin 2007:169)

In Egypt a major, if not the main, goddess, the Lady of Heaven, Earth and the Underworld, worshipped throughout Egypt and beyond its borders as far as Syria. She is portrayed as a cow or a woman with the horned head of a cow (Silverman 1991:150), or just as a woman with the horns or ears of a cow. She was perceived as a helpful and gentle deity, with women especially under her protection during

pregnancy and childbirth. Most other goddesses in the Egyptian pantheon laid claim to some of her attributes, but she was supreme as her relationship with Horus indicates. She was his wet-nurse and later his wife. Her cult was centred at Dendera in Upper Egypt, although there were temples to her throughout the country. The Seven Hathors were the seven Egyptian Fates who presided at childbirth (Geddes & Grosset 1997:374; Bleeker 1973:20-30).

HATHOR HEADDRESS

This headdress is not to be confused with the normal depiction of Hathor wearing cow horns with a sun disk (Pinch 1982:141).



Figure 91: Hathor headdress
(Pinch 1982:141)

HEDJET

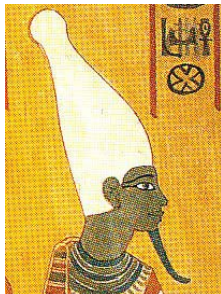


Figure 92: Hedjet being worn by Osiris
(Oakes & Gahlin 2007:109)

The White Crown. This was the crown of Upper Egypt (southern) (Oakes & Gahlin 2007:278).

HELIOPOLIS

Currently a suburb of Cairo, but once a great centre of Egyptian religion, seat of the cult of the sun-god Ra and the centre of the most widely accepted cosmology. The doctrine of Heliopolis spelled out how creation originally occurred, and the Ben-Ben stone fetish in the temple was a symbol of that creation. In the Hebrew Bible Heliopolis is known as On and Joseph married the daughter of an Egyptian priest from this place (Geddes & Grosset 1997:375).

HORUS

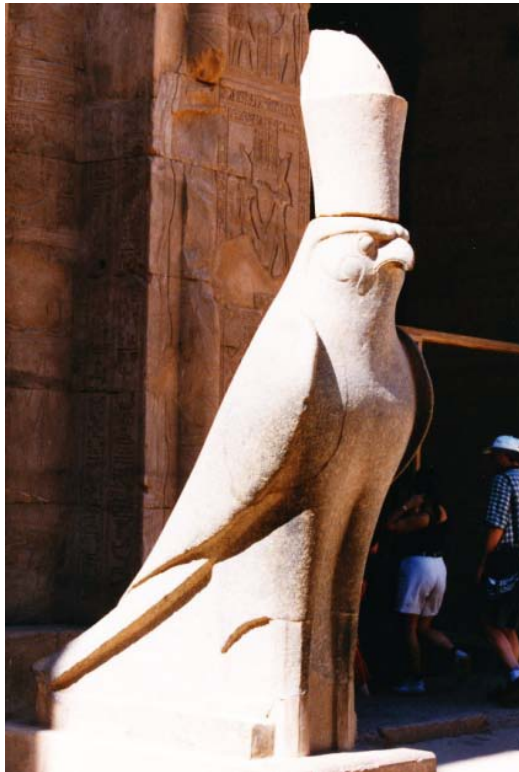


Figure 93: Statue of Horus at Edfu
(Photo: F N Vermeulen)

The hawk-god, perceived as the special protector of kings. Horus was normally incorporated into the king's name, and the hawk motif was widely used as a royal seal. Horus was the son and avenger of Osiris and was also known as the 'son of Ra' (a title also used by kings).

The oldest hieroglyphics to portray the concept of 'god' use a falcon, indicating that the same word stood for both. Many pre-dynastic localities had falcon-gods and the history of Horus is a palimpsest in which these many local origins come together and continue to develop into the complicated entity of the classical Horus. At Letopolis in the Delta, there was an ancient cult of a Horus known as *Hor-khent-irti*, 'Horus of the two eyes' (sun and moon).

The priests of Heliopolis took this as the supreme Horus and named four others as subordinate to him, 'the four young ones who sit in the shadow of the lofty one' (the sons of Horus – Amset, Haapi, Duamutef and Kebeh-Senef). This was Horus the Elder, who was later to be assimilated in another Horus, Horus the Child, who was born to Isis and Osiris and who avenged the death of Osiris and became king of Egypt, ancestor of all the pharaohs.

He was thus a deity of great significance, linked to both the light-giving sky and the life-giving earth. His divine struggles found all sorts of practical significance, as with the Eye of Horus, but his principal identification was with kings (Geddes & Grosset 1997:379; Ions 1997:66-67; Oakes & Gahlin 2007:310-318).

ISIS

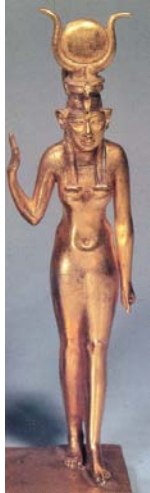


Figure 94: Golden statuette of Isis
(Harris 2001:197)

She was the prime goddess of the Egyptian pantheon, sister and wife of Osiris, mother of Horus and a potent divinity in her own right. She is normally depicted in human form. Her origin was as the protective goddess of Perhebit, north of Busiris in the Delta. Isis was famed for her magic skills, which enabled her to resurrect the re-assembled body of Osiris and make it copulate with her in order to produce Horus. Isis was often depicted as a midwife, and the moments of birth and death are both closely associated with her. Motherhood became part of the Isis cult in the late period and gradually led to her being linked with the Mother Goddess of eastern religion. Her cult was still maintained at Philae long after the advent of Christianity. During the New Kingdom and later she was often depicted with Hathor horns and a solar disk.

Isis had numerous qualities such as her powers over life, death, immortality, marriage, fertility and healing; she was often called 'the many-named'. One of her

roles was that of protector of the harvest and she was also called ‘Lady of Bread’, ‘Lady of Beer’ and ‘Lady of Abundance.’ As the mother breastfeeding her son Horus, she was also the protectress of children especially from disease (Ions 1997:63). After saving both Osiris and Horus she became the ‘ideal’ woman in Egyptian eyes, both as wife and mother, thus replacing Hathor in this role (Harris 2001:165; Cf. Geddes & Grosset 1997:382).

KA



Figure 95: Ka hieroglyph *k3*
(McDermott 2002:170)

A term used for the life force or spirit of an individual which continued to reside inside the tomb, passing through a ‘false door’ into the chapel to receive offerings. One of the five elements constituting the human being, its hieroglyph is two raised arms (Geddes & Grosset 1997:384; Cf. Faulkner et al 2008:152).

KADESH or QUADESH or QUEDESH

A Hittite goddess who was imported into Egypt during the Eighteenth Dynasty as another form of Astarte. She was depicted as a moon goddess, standing naked on the back of a lioness, holding lotus flowers and what appears to be a mirror in one hand and two snakes in the other. She formed a triad with Min and Reshep (Geddes & Grosset 1997:384). In Syro-Palestine she was known as Quedeshet (Cf. Cornelius 2004:94-101).

KHEPERA or KHEPRI

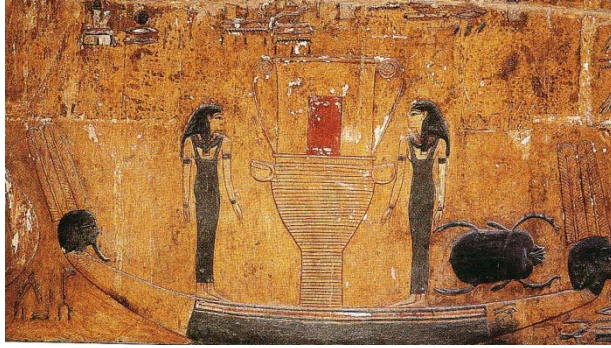


Figure 96: The beetle god Khepera on a boat on the waters of Nun
(Oakes & Gahlin 2007:286)

The beetle god identified with the scarab. At Heliopolis he was the sun-god who was absorbed by Atum. He formed a sun triad with Ra and Atum, with Khepera appearing as the sun at dawn, Ra at high noon and Atum in the evening (Geddes & Grosset 1997:386). He takes the form of an iridescent beetle, a beetle-headed hawk, or a beetle-headed man seated on a throne (Pinch 2002:152).

KHEPRESH



Figure 97: Ramses II and Ptah wearing the blue crown
(Harris 2001:99)

The blue crown was a ceremonial crown often worn in battle by the Pharaoh especially from the Eighteenth Dynasty onwards (Silverman 2003:309).

.KHONSU



Figure 98: Statuette of Khonsu
(Oakes & Gahlin 2007:2880)

Khonsu was a war god, the son of Amun and Mut, worshipped at Thebes, but his main role was associated with the moon. His name means ‘runner’, who soars the sky (Wallis Budge 1972a:172) and this may relate to the nightly travel of the moon across the sky. The name could also mean ‘traveller’ (Pinch 2004:155). Along with Thoth he marked the passage of time. Khonsu was instrumental in the creation of new life in all living creatures. At Thebes he formed part of a family triad with Mut as his mother and Amun his father. At Kom Ombo he was worshipped as son of Sebek and Hathor. Typically he is depicted as a mummy with the symbol of childhood, a side lock of hair, as well as the menat necklace with crook and flail. He has close links to other divine children such as Horus and Shu. He is sometimes shown wearing a falcon's head like Horus, with whom he is associated as a protector and healer, adorned with the sun disk and crescent moon (Geddes & Grosset 1997:387; Pinch 2004:155-156).

KNOT OF ISIS also known as **TYET** or **TET**

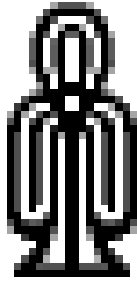


Figure 99: Hieroglyph of Knot of Isis (Tyet)

(Ruiz 2001:142)

The symbol represented the flow of menstrual blood from the womb of the goddess Isis, and its magical properties. Isis was identified as the universal mother, and this symbol was a representation of her female organs. The knot resembled an ancient symbol for menstrual cramps, which involved insertion of a knotted cloth. Almost every woman carried this amulet attached to the neck, in order to be granted with Isis's fertility. Amulets of the sign were fashioned from red stones and red glass. In funerary and ritual objects, this symbol is often found in conjunction with the Djed which represented the spine of Osiris. While the Djed represented the masculine forces, the knot of Isis represented the feminine fertility (Lesko 1999:178-17; Robins 1993:80-81; Ruiz 2001:142).

KNUM or **KHNUM**

A ram-headed god (Silverman 1991:15) whose cult was centred in the city of Elephantine. A potter, he was believed to have shaped the world and men upon his wheel in another version of the creation myth. At Memphis, where Ptah was worshipped in the First and Second Dynasties as the creator of the world, he was assisted by eight earth gnomes called Khnum (Geddes & Grosset 1997:387; Pinch 2004:158).

KOM OMBO



Figure 100: Double temple at Kom Ombo
(Photo: H & S Fourie)

Site on the Nile with temple dedicated to the gods Horus and Sobek (Oakes & Gahlin 2007:295).

KOPTOS or COPTOS

A settlement on the river Nile at the entrance of the Wadi Hammamet. It was particularly a cult centre of the fertility god Min (Geddes & Grosset 1997:388; Shaw & Jameson 2002:341).

LOTUS FLOWER



Figure 101: Lotus flower and bud at Egyptian Museum Cairo
(Photo: H & S Fourie)

Two native species of lotus grew in Egypt, the white and the blue lotus, the sacred blue lotus was the flower most commonly used and the one depicted in the hieroglyphs. The lotus closes at night and sinks underwater. In the morning it re-emerges and blooms again. Thus the flower became a natural symbol of the sun god Ra. The Egyptians saw that the blue water lotus opened up each morning, seeing the intense golden center set against the blue petals, an imitation of the golden sun appearing in the blue sky. In the Hall of Ma'at, the Four Sons of Horus were shown standing on a lotus in front of Osiris, signalling that the deceased organs are ready for resurrection and rebirth from the lotus flower. The blue lotus was also the emblem of the god Nefertem, 'The Lord of Perfume' (Armour 2001:1-2; Pinch 2004:158).

MAADIT BARQUE

'In Egyptian mythology, the boat occupied by Ra in the morning on his journey through the underworld' (Geddes & Grosset 1997:393).

MA'AT



Figure 102: Ma'at
(Oakes & Gahlin 2007:277)

Ma'at was the concept underlying the society of ancient Egypt and was the cornerstone of their religious belief. The word is variously translated as 'truth', 'order', 'justice' or 'balance'. The idea was established that the Egyptian world was governed by universal laws of order and justice (*ma'at*) that had been laid down by the gods at the moment of creation and that everything outside of *ma'at* was chaos, disorder and anarchy (*isfit*). *Ma'at* represents the First Order, the perfect organisation of the cosmos and the creatures at the moment of the creation of the universe. This was an order that was not to be altered or its cycle to be interrupted in any way. *Ma'at* stood for everything that made the cosmos function in a state of perfection and immutability: Justice, Truth and Harmony. Only the pharaoh, applying the principles of *ma'at*, could weaken and destroy the outside forces that constantly threatened Egypt and ensure the stability of the kingdom and the world. The pharaoh was the guarantor of *ma'at* on earth, the only individual with enough power to maintain perfect order for all eternity. This was done by building temples and sacrificing to the gods and therefore placating them. In fact it was said that the Egyptian deities lived of *ma'at*. This would safeguard Egypt against its enemies (consisting of most of the foreigners) and to control nature and in particular wild animals.

It was perceived to be the ideal life in accordance with *ma'at*. Certain crimes, such as treason, anarchy, rebellion, envy, deceit, greed, laziness, injustice and ingratitude were regarded as crimes against *ma'at*.

Ma'at was personified in the goddess Ma'at, the goddess of truth, order and justice in the universe. She presided over the judgement of the dead, which controlled entry to the underworld. She is depicted with a feather, usually described as an ostrich feather,

on her head, used to weigh the heart of the deceased and usually with an *ankh* in one hand and a sceptre in the other. The basic principle was to establish whether the deceased had lived a just life according to the principles of *ma'at*.

‘No one knows for sure the origin of her association with the feather...but somehow the ethereal qualities of the feather seem well suited to a goddess of her characteristics. It has been suggested that the feather became her symbol because it is equally balanced along each side of the quill, suggesting the fine judgement required of a goddess who sat to judge truth in the trial of the dead’ (Armour 2001:133; Pinch 2004:159-160; Cf. Geddes & Grosset 1997:393; Oakes & Gahlin 2007:462-463).

In Egypt in harmony with other developing societies, people were closely bound to nature and natural forces. What they perceived was an orderly and regular system. The sun rises and sets, the moon had phases and with the first annual rise of Sirius in the East, the flooding of the Nile began. Thus the abstract concept of Ma'at (truth and order) was created, but Ma'at was also seen as a goddess (of truth and world order). She is identified by an ostrich feather which served as a counter balance to weigh justice (the feather representing justice) against injustice. She and her feather played a major role in the final judgement of the deceased in the after world. The feather was weighed against the heart of the deceased. If the scales were balanced, the deceased could proceed, if the heart outweighed the feather, it meant that the burden of sin of the deceased was too heavy, he could not proceed and he was devoured by the monster Ammut. Thus Ma'at was an important entity in Egyptian religion where a tremendous lot of emphasis was placed on death and its aftermath where life

continued and the order of the universe could still be disturbed by the elevation of an unworthy person into the realm of the gods.

MEDINET HABU

The site of numerous temples on the west bank of the Nile, facing Thebes. It includes the mortuary temple of Tutankhamun (Eighteenth Dynasty) and the great funerary temple of Rameses III (Geddes & Grosset 1997:398).

MEMPHIS

Ancient Memphis was placed strategically at the apex of the Nile Delta and was the capital of Egypt during the period of the Third to the Sixth Dynasties (2980-2475), the most brilliant period of the Old Kingdom. At its establishment it took over the god Ptah as its major god. During the Twelfth Dynasty it became capital again and again with the Hyksos of the Fifteenth Dynasty. In the Hebrew Bible it is referred to as Noph (Geddes & Grosset 1997:398; Robins 2008:210; Oakes & Gahlin 2007:84-102).

The god of war worshipped at Thebes. He is depicted as a falcon-headed man with a solar disk and two plumes. During the 11th Dynasty he was elevated to become the protector of the royal line that originated at Armant. He was later overshadowed and absorbed by Amun- Ra (Geddes & Grosset 1997:399; Pinch 2002:165).

MIN

In Egyptian mythology he was a fertility god whose cult centre was at Koptos, where he was also worshipped as a god of roads and desert travellers. Popular especially in Middle Egypt, and with many chapels attached to temples of other gods, he was portrayed as a rotund figure with a large penis.



Figure 103: Min in a fragment of a relief from Koptos
(Oakes & Gahlin 2007:319)

In the New Kingdom he also became the god of healing and formed a triad with gods imported from Phoenicia, Reshep and Kadesh. Statues and charms featuring Min were very common. He is depicted standing with a flail in his right hand behind his head (Geddes & Grosset 1997:402).

MUT



Figure 104: Statue of Mut and Amun
(Ions 1997:100)

She was the wife of Amun (later Amun-Ra), the goddess mother, a vulture headed goddess local to Thebes and there with a temple. Although revered at Thebes she was little known and worshipped elsewhere in Egypt. She formed a triad with Amun and their son Khonsu (Geddes & Grosset 1997:404). At Karnak she was said to be the goddess who holds the other gods together (Lesko 1999:132).

NAME

There is a close relationship between the power of names and the magic element in Egyptian religion. The name was regarded as a part of the living person, and it was assigned at birth to the individual in order for him to properly come into existence. Knowing a person's name might result having some sort of power over that person.

The removal of an individual's name from a statue or monument was considered as the destruction of the person's existence and memory. A Name often followed those of the rulers of the time, which often incorporated the name of a god (Geddes & Grosset 1997:405).

NEB HIEROGLYPH



Figure 105: Neb (*nb, nbt, nr*) basket
(Gardiner 1950:525)

A particular basket, looking rather like a flowerpot in shape, was used for measuring grain. It was called the *hekat* and held about 4.7 liters. The *hekat* basket was also used for carrying away sand and rubble from building sites. The hieroglyph for building

works and for work in general, is a man with a *hekat* basket balanced on his head. Archaeologists in Egypt today still use baskets to carry off debris from a dig because they are lighter-weight than metal buckets. *Ushabti* figures found in tombs often carry such baskets on their backs.

The round, bowl shaped basket, like the hollowed-out shell of half an orange, was such a commonplace item in ancient Egyptian homes and workplaces that it too became a hieroglyph, representing words which sounded the same as the name the Egyptians gave to this type of basket.

They called it *neb*, which was the same as the word used for ‘all’ or ‘every’, and ‘lord’ or ‘master’. The word ‘noble’ is derived from *neb*. One will see it in the royal title Lord of the Two Lands, *neb tawy*, which is sometimes used with the king’s official name. It is also the last sign in the cartouche of Tutankhamen’s throne name, Neb-kheperu-ra. In coloured hieroglyphs, the *neb* basket is often painted in a chequered pattern in two tones of green to show that it was woven from plant materials.

With a feminine ending, the *neb* hieroglyph can also mean ‘lady’ or ‘mistress’. One of the most ancient of the king’s titles was the Two Ladies, or *nebty* name, so-called because it was chosen to put the king under the protection of the two patron goddesses of Upper and Lower Egypt. The *nebty* name is marked by the emblems of the vulture goddess Nekhbet of the south, and the cobra goddess Wadjet of the north, each standing on a *neb* basket (Cf. Hornung 2001:11; Grimal 1994:54; Fage, Clark & Oliver 1982:534).

NEITH



Figure 106: Statuette of Neith

(Oakes & Gahlin 2007:277)

A goddess whose origins go back into the Pre-Dynastic Period. She was a huntress and a major goddess of the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty, whose cult was centred at Sais in the western Delta, where she was regarded as the oldest and the creator goddess. According to Johnson (1994:132) she was known as the ‘Oldest One’. Her symbol is the shield with the crossed arrows (Geddes & Grosset 1997:408; Hart 2002:100; Edwards 1970:493; Ellis 1999:115).

NEKHEBAT

‘In Egyptian mythology, she was a goddess of Upper Egypt who was worshipped at El Kab. She is depicted with a vulture’s head or wearing a crown in the shape of a vulture, (Geddes & Grosset 1997:408; Pinch 2004:170).

NEMES



Figure 107: Dead mask of Tutankhamun showing nemes. Egyptian Museum, Cairo (Photo: H & S Fourie).

A striped head cloth worn by Pharaohs (Geddes & Grosset 1997:409).

NEPHTHYS



Figure 108: Isis and Nephthys (Oakes & Gahlin 2007:289)

She was the wife and sister of Seth (thus also the sister of Osiris and Isis). Despite her marriage to Seth, she was devoted to Isis and Osiris and she assisted Isis in finding the scattered body parts of Osiris (Geddes & Grosset 1997:409; Pinch 2004:171).

NO

The name in the Bible for Thebes (Geddes & Grosset 1997:412).

NOPH

The name given in the Bible to Memphis (Geddes & Grosset 1997:413).

NU or NUN

‘A name given to the pre-Creation, a primordial shapeless ocean out of which the sun-god Ra emerged’ (Geddes & Grosset 1997:413; Pinch 2004:172)

NUNET

She was the consort of Nu (Geddes & Grosset 1997:413).

NUT



Figure 109: Nut being raised by her father Shu (Ions 1997:22)

She was the original sky goddess, consort of the earth god Geb in the original Ogdoad. She was later fused with Hathor (Geddes & Grosset 1997:413; Hart 1990:29-30).

OGDOAD

In Egyptian mythology, a group of eight deities. The most famous is the Heropolitan, comprising four pairs of male frogs and female snakes, personifying the primeval forces of creation (Geddes & Grosset 1997:414; Najovits 2004:106).

ON

In the Hebrew Bible, the name used for Heliopolis (Geddes & Grosset 1997:415).

OPET FESTIVAL

The annual journey by boat of Amun-Ra, from Karnak down-river to Luxor and back again (Geddes & Grosset 1997:415; Firestone et al 2008:250).

OSIRIS



Figure 110: Statue of Osiris

(Ions 1997:52)

Although Osiris was one of the greatest gods, his myth is preserved completely only in the writings of Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*. The most popularly worshiped of all

the Egyptian gods, closely identified with the fertile 'black land' of the Nile Valley. He was the first king of Egypt and taught his people many arts and sciences, including agriculture and civilization. He also gave them laws and taught them to respect the gods. His wife (also his sister) was Isis. Thoth was his vizier and brought the art of writing. Anubis and Wepwawet accompanied Osiris on his journeys of conquest all over the world. Osiris was treacherously murdered by his brother Seth who grabbed the throne of Egypt. He later cut the body of Osiris into many pieces which he scattered all over Egypt. Isis, assisted by her sister Nephtys (also the wife of Seth) collected the pieces and with the help of Anubis reassembled the body of Osiris except for the penis which was not found as it was eaten by a fish, an Oxyrinchus. Isis grated an artificial penis and let herself be impregnated by this reassembled body and their son Horus was born. She hid him from Seth amidst the marshes of the Nile Delta, aided by Hathor as wet-nurse.

When he grew up he claimed his inheritance and engaged Seth in battle and defeated him. During the battle Seth plucked out one of Horus's eyes and Horus tore off Seth's genitals. Seth appealed to the gods, claiming Horus to be illegitimate, but Horus's claim was found to be valid by a divine council presided over by Geb, and he became the king of Egypt, thus the king of the living and made his father Osiris lord of the kingdom of the dead.

Thus it was that Osiris and Horus were ancestors of all the pharaohs, endowing them with godlike qualities. In Egyptian theology the myth of Osiris ensures the continuation of existence after death and implicitly supported the concept of monarchy: the king became Horus in the coronation ceremony and Osiris during the rites of

embalming and burial, indispensable to the continual renewal of the state and the universe. Osiris remained the most omnipresent Egyptian deity until Egyptian religion itself was extinguished by Christianity (Geddes & Grosset 1997:416; (Cf Ions 1997:52-54).

PANTHEON

In mythology, all the gods worshipped by a people (Geddes & Grosset 1997:419).

PAPYRUS



Figure 111: Papyrus. Egyptian Museum, Cairo
(Photo: H & S Fourie)
& Gahlin 2007:390)



Figure 112: Papyrus Flowers
(Oakes

Material used to write on in Ancient Egypt made from a reed with the same name. Grew mostly in the marshes of the Delta and became the symbol of Lower (northern) Egypt. It remained the major writing material in Egypt until Greco-Roman times (Parkinson et al 1995:7-12).

PHILAE

This was a site on the Nile just north of Elephantine (or the modern Aswan) and was the centre of the cult of Isis. Hathor was worshipped at a shrine at this temple, just as

Isis was worshipped at Hathor's cult centre at Dendera (Geddes & Grosset 1997:424; Oakes & Gahlin 2007:174-175).



Figure 113: Temple of Isis at Philae
(Photo: F N Vermeulen)

PHOENICIAN GODS AND GODDESSES

As a result of the limited knowledge regarding the gods and goddesses of Phoenicia, the following list is compiled with the Canaanite pantheon as basis. Only the more prominent gods and goddesses are discussed.

ADON: (Greek = Adonis). He was the god of youth, beauty and regeneration. A love affair with the goddess Astarte, led to his death. Another god envious of this love affair, in the form of a wild boar, attacks and kills Adonis. However, while Astarte lamented, she took an oath to resurrect him every spring; subsequently where his blood fell, red poppies grow every year. He is similar to the Greek god Adonis (Cf. Hooge 2003:116; Frazer 2003: 6-7).

ANATH: She was the goddess of love and war, associated with the planet Venus, similar to Greek Aphrodite. She is also known for defending Baal and killing the

enemies of her brother Baal. She is related to the Egyptian goddess Hathor. After the defeat of Mot and Yam, a feast was arranged for Baal. Anath locked everyone inside and proceeded in an effort to kill everyone (as they had all been discourteous toward Baal). Baal interfered and convinced her they should rather have peace. She also has confronted Mot and was responsible for Baal's liberation from the underworld. She is the twin sister of Marah, daughter of Asherah. She is also known as Rahmay, 'The Merciful' and as Astarte. Sometimes it seems that she was also regarded as the sister of Astarte. Astarte is the Canaanite name of Ishtar; just as Ishtar is the Babylonian Name of Inanna. In all cases the name means, simply, 'goddess' or 'lady of the womb' (Cf Harden 1963:83; Markoe 2000:115-116).

ASHERAH: Asherah is the mother of the gods, the goddess of the sea and the wife of El (see El). When the gods decided to entreat Yam to ease his reign of tyranny, it was Asherah who went to him and even offered herself. The gods agreed to let her do this, except for Baal who was enraged at the idea (see Baal). Asherah is said to have given birth to seventy gods. Asherah seems to have played a more important role in the pantheon during the earlier period of the Canaanites. (Hadley 2000:38-43; Patai 1990:36-38; Johnston 2004:418).

ASHTAR: He was possibly a male version of Ishtar (Astarte in Canaan and was associated with the planet Venus. After Baal was killed by Mot, Asherah arranged that Ashtar, her son, be crowned as his successor. Ashtar was too small for the throne and abdicated. He had various names and titles including Malik, Abimilki and Milkilu (Cf. Hastings 1910a:115-118).

ASTARTE (see ANATH): One of Anath's names which means 'goddess' or literally 'lady of the womb'. Astarte appears to be the Canaanite version of the name Ishtar. She had powers which could influence the sea and the moon (Marston 2001: 42; Cf. Harden 1963:87; Markoe 2000:115-116).

ATIK: He was the calf of El. He was an enemy of Baal and was slain by Anath (Day 1985:80).

BAAL: Baal is really a title, meaning 'lord'. Baal's residence is upon Mt. Zaphon. When he stays in the underworld during summer he is known as Rapiu (Shade). He was the ruler god of the Canaanites. He and Yam-Nahar were originally contenders for the kingship of the gods. El had to make a decision and he ruled in favour of Yam. Yam then started a reign of tyranny over the gods, and they felt powerless to defeat him. So, they sent Asherah to entreat him to loosen his grip. Asherah even offered herself to Yam. Baal became furious, and decided to defeat Yam. Yam heard of Baal's plan and sent messengers to El requesting that Baal be delivered to him. El, who was scared of Yam agreed to the request. Baal then scolded the gods for their cowardice and decided to confront Yam. He had two clubs made, Yagrush (chaser) and Aymur (driver). He attacked and hit Yam on the chest with Yagrush with no effect. He again struck Yam, but this time he used Aymur and hit him on the head and Yam fell. After his victory, Baal had a palace built for him. Thereafter Baal had a fight with Mot. Baal is also a storm god like Marduk, and a fertility god like Tammuz. Baal is the Canaanite god-force (the goddess force seems to be split between Anath and Asherah). Baal's proper name is Hadad, relating to his storm-god

aspect (Markoe 2000:117; Cf. Marston 2001:42; Cornelius 1994:293-294; Ribichini 2001:123).

BAALAT GUBLA (GUBAL): She was the patron goddess of Byblos (Gubla), a fertility goddess associated with Hathor and Isis. She is regularly referred to in the Amarna letters. (Cf. Markoe 2000:115, 117-118; Van der Toorn, Becking, & van der Horst, 1999:139).

BAAL-SAPHON: Baal in one of his many forms. One of the gods of Tyre and also at Carthage, also known as the Lord of the North. Originally he was a Syrian storm god and was renamed after having been imported by the Tyrians (Bickerman 1976:276). In Egypt a temple for this god was erected at Memphis during the New Kingdom (Cf. Markoe 2000:116).

BAAL-SHAMEN: This was also Baal in one of his other forms, a god worshipped at Tyre, known as the Lord of the Heaven (Leeming 2004:91; Cf. Markoe 2000:115, 116).

DAGON: A vegetation god (especially wheat and the plough), the father of Baal (Marston 2001:43; Harden 1963:86).

EL: The father of the gods, the creator of the whole creation, He was regarded as the 'Kind One', also as Kodesh. Asherah is his wife. During his youth, El found Asherah, the goddess of the sea and friend Rohmaya, while he was on a visit to the sea. He befriended them, cooked a sea-bird and enquired if they would become his wives or daughters. Asherah and Rohmaya decided to be his wives. From El's unions with

them, two boys (twins), Shachar and Shalim (Dawn and Dusk) were born. They all built a house in the desert where they lived for eight years. This episode may be the closest we have to a creation myth involving El. El wears bull horns upon his helmet (he is sometimes called 'Bull El') and he is portrayed as a grey haired and bearded patriarch. He resides at 'the Source of Two Rivers' upon Mt. Lel (Harden 1963:82, 85).

ESHMUN: The god of health and healing. He is portrayed as a god who died and came back to life. The name seems to derive etymologically from a Semitic word for 'oil'. A chief god of Sidon (Marston 2001:43; Markoe 115-116, 118; Ribichini 2001:129).

HAURON or HORON: A god that is related to Ninurta of Mesopotamia and Horus of Egypt. He is regarded as an evil god (demon) but also as beneficial in that his name can be invoked against demons (Van der Toorn, Becking & van der Horst, 1999:425-426; Johnston 2004:418; Albright 1980:138-139).

HELEL or LUCIFER: Known as the 'Bringer of Light' or the 'Morning Star' and therefore also associated with Venus. He was the son of Shachar. Helel once attempted to usurp his father's throne, but failed (another myth concerning Venus' place as the last star in the sky each morning, as if he is trying to defy the sun). This is the very myth which apparently resulted in the biblical story of the war in heaven (Is 14:12 ; Albani 2004:62-70).

HIRIBI: The god of summer (Hooke 2004:93).

ISHAT: The shrew of the gods. Enemy of Baal slain by Anath (Rahmouni 2008:35).

KOSHAROTH, THE: They were goddesses of childbirth and conception. This led to them being portrayed either in the form swallows or sparrows, which were regarded as representing fertility. They were the daughters of Yarikh the moon god and were also known as the 'Daughters of the Crescent Moon' (Green 2003:241; Van der Toorn, Becking & van der Horst, 1999:491-492).

KOSHAR or KOTHARU: His name means to be 'skilful and clever'. He was an artisan who tended to the gods' needs. Also known as Chousor and Heyan (Ea), he was identified with Ptah of Egypt.. He first built a palace for Yam and later one for Baal. He made the two clubs that Baal used in his fight with Yam (Van der Toorn, Becking & van der Horst; 1999:490-491).

LOTAN: Lotan is a seven headed serpent defeated by Baal with the help of Mot. Anath also claims a role in the defeat of the Serpent. Also known as Tannin or Leviathan (Cross 1973:118-120; Van der Toorn, Becking & van der Horst 1999: 511-515).

MELQART: The patron god of Tyre (introduced by King Hiram). He may have been a dying and rising vegetation god. He was ritually immolated in an annual festival. He was also a god of the sea and was depicted sitting on a hippopotamus. It seems that he became a supreme god throughout Phoenician civilisation (Krejčí & Krejčová 1990:49; Cf. Marston 2001:42; Harden 1963:85-86; Markoe 2000:117; Aubet 2001:152-155).

MOT or MAVET: He was god of death and sterility. His name means 'death'. He was son of El. After Baal defeated Yam, he then sent a message to Mot demanding that he stay in the underworld where he belonged. Mot was furious and threatened Baal, who was scared and endeavoured to appease Mot by means of flattery. He was unsuccessful and had no other choice but to confront Mot. In the ensuing fight he was defeated by Mot who held him captive in the underworld until Anath attacked and defeated Mot and released Baal. Mot was only wounded and he and Baal again had a fight seven years later. Neither was really victorious, but Mot retreated and acknowledged that Baal was the king of the gods (Cf. Harden 1963:83; Baumgarten 1981:111-112).

NIKKAL: She was the wife of Yarikh and the daughter of Hiribi. She was the goddess of the fruits of the earth (Turner & Coulter 2001:345; Hooke 2004:93).

PIDRAY: A goddess of nature. Her name means 'mist'. Also known as the 'Girl of Light.' A daughter or consort of Baal (Turner & Coulter 2001:384).

RAHMAYA: A goddess impregnated, along with Asherah, by El. The goddesses then gave birth to the twin gods Shahr and Shalem, it is not known who gave birth to whom (Cf. Hooke 2004:93).

RADMANU: Or Pradmanu. A minor servant of Baal (Marsman 2003:271).

REPHAIM: They were gods of the underworld, who rode on horses or on asses. Sometimes they made use of chariots. (Cf. Collins 2004:358).

RESHEP: He was a war god, with gazelle horns on his helmet (Cf. Cornelius 1994:15). He destroyed men in mass by means of war and plague. He is the porter of the sun goddess Shepesh (this seems to resemble Khamael of the Hebrews). He is also called Mekal (Annihilator), and could be related to the Hebrew Michael (Mikal) who as an archangel can also be regarded as a war god. He is related to Nergal of Mesopotamia. The oldest known references go back to the third millennium B.C.E. to the Ebla Texts (Cornelius 1994:236). He was imported into Egypt, probably by Amenophis II during the New Kingdom (Traunecker 2001:106-107; Cf Marston 2001:43; Harden 1963:86; Markoe 2000:116; Albright 1980:139).

SHACHAR: He was god of dawn and the brother of Shalem. His father was El and his mother was either Rohmaya or Asherah. In the Bible he is mentioned as being the son of the dawn or the morning star (Is 14:12) (Botterweck & Ringgren 1977:153).

SHALEM: He was the god of the dusk and the brother of Shachar (Van der Toorn, Becking & van der Horst 1999:755-756; Lang 2008:27-28).

SHAPASH: A sun goddess who was regarded as the torch of the gods (Noll 2001:-245).

SHATAQAT: 'Drives away'. Goddess of healing sent by El to drive away Keret's (a Canaanite mythic hero) disease. She was revered as able to drive away illness and to conquer death (Hooke 295:89; Johnston 224:459).

YAM or YAM-NAHAR: Yam, as the god of the seas and the rivers was the archenemy of Baal, who defeated him (see Baal and Asherah). El crowned him as

king and he became a dictator, ruling the gods. In the end Baal confronted him and after a severe struggle managed to conquer him (Marston 2001:43; Hooke 2004:81).

YARIKH: He was moon god and known as 'Lord of the crescent moon'. He was the father of the Kosharoth. He was the patron god of Qart-Abilim and consort of Nikkal (Hooke 2004:93; Barton 2004a:59.)

PSHENT

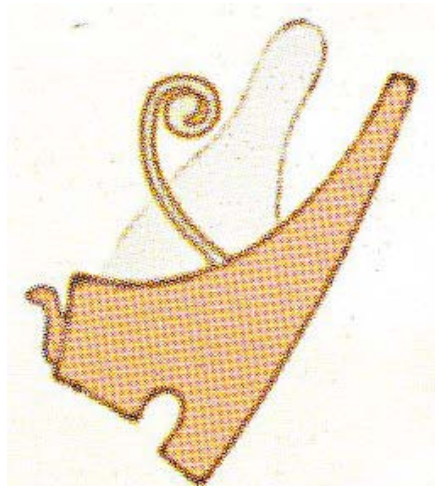


Figure 114: Pshent

(Oakes & Gahlin 2007:278)

The dual nature of ancient Egypt was also symbolized by the Double Crown, pshent, worn by the pharaoh. As sovereign of the Two Lands, the king wore the White Crown (hedjet) of Upper Egypt and the Red Crown (deshred) of Lower Egypt. The Double Crown represents a unified Egypt. Although Egypt was not always a unified nation it was stronger that way. Therefore unification was desirable. Narmer (Menes), the founder of the First Dynasty around 3100 B.C.E., was the first man recorded wearing this crown (James 1983:41; Massey 2007:305).

PTAH



Figure 115: Bronze figure of Ptah

(Ions 1997:29)

Ptah was the local god of Memphis who came to prominence during the First and Second Dynasties when Memphis became the royal capital. The Memphis priesthood, who established a cult of Ptah, claimed that he was the oldest god who had created Re-Atum by pure thought. All other gods and created things were similarly the products of the mind of Ptah. Horus was claimed to be his heart and Thoth his tongue. The concept of Ptah was too complex, abstruse and abstract for him to become a true deity of the people and his worship lacked a mythology that would have appealed to the people. In the course of the Old Kingdom, the worship of Ptah, with revivals whenever Memphis was dominant, gradually declined and Re-Atum became established as the principal god. He was also worshiped as the guardian deity of craftsmen. He was normally depicted with a right smooth cap as headdress, also used by the foreman of the skilled craftsmen shown in representations inside mastabas. Later he acquired certain funerary attributes and was associated with Osiris. His body

is wrapped in a mummy-shaped cloth that only leaves his hands uncovered. The peculiarity of Ptah's beard was its shape which was not curved, as were those of other divinities, but straight like that worn by the pharaohs. It is possible that the pharaoh took this attribute from the god as Ptah was the main god of Memphis, Egypt's most ancient capital. In Memphis Ptah was associated in a triad with the goddess-lion Sekhmet, his consort, and their son Nefertem.

During the Late Period his name was entwined with that of the sacred bull Apis. The sacred bull was supposed to live in the middle of Ptah's temple complex in Memphis (Geddes & Grosset 1997:428; Ions 1997:103-104).

RA or RE

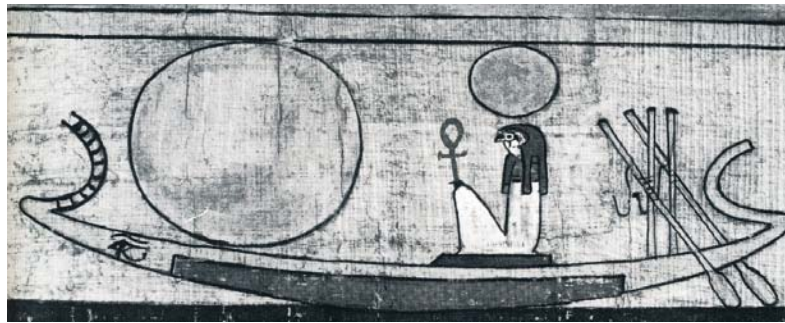


Figure 116: Ra in his sun barque

(Ions 1997:41)

The oldest and one of the greatest of the gods, with a complex history of development. He is also known as Atum or Re-Atum. A sky-god identified with the sun, he arose out of Nun, the primeval water, and through his own creation created the elements to sustain life on earth, with Shu the air-god, Nut the sky-god, Geb the earth-god, Tefnut, the goddess of moisture, Nephthys, Osiris and Isis. The centre of Ra's cult was at Heliopolis in the Nile Delta. He was perceived in different ways, according to whether the sun was blazing at the zenith or setting in the western sky:

this latter was its Atum persona. During the 18th Dynasty he became absorbed in Amun as Amun-Re, the father of the gods and the most important of the Egyptian

RESHEP or RESHPU

A Phoenician creator god imported into Egypt during the Eighteenth Dynasty. In Egypt he was depicted as a bearded man in profile, carrying a club and spear or a spear and ankh, with the head and neck of a gazelle, one of the holy animals associated with Astarte, projecting from his helmet. In Egypt he formed a triad with Min and Kadesh (Geddes & Grosset 1997:435; Hart 2002:137). See also discussion of RESHEP under **PHOENICIAN GODS AND GODESSES**.

SA

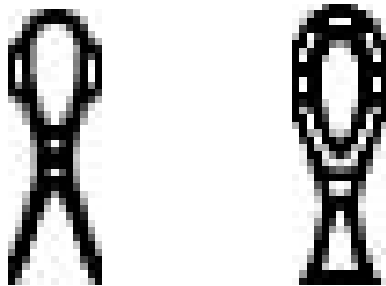


Figure 117: Egyptian symbol Sa (*s3*)
(Gardiner 1950:523)

It is a symbol for protection. It could also mean aid, backing, virtue and faith. It also means ‘touch’ and is apparently a forerunner for ‘ka’. Sa was also the god of amulets. The sa was worn as an amulet for protection (Massey 2008a: 98).

SAQQARA

A major funerary site of the Old Kingdom situated at the southern end of the vast funerary district that extends from Giza in the north southwards. It is in the west bank

of the Nile opposite Memphis (Geddes & Grosset 1997:438; Firestone et al 2008: 200).

SCARAB



Figure 118: Heart scarab
(Oakes & Gahlin 2007:395)

The scarab was a favourite amulet associated with renewal and regeneration. It personified Khepri, the morning manifestation (associated with resurrection) of Ra, the sun god. The dung beetle was chosen for this honour because after it laid its egg in animal dung and rolled it into a ball and pushed it into the sun so that the sun's heat hatched the egg. Thus, the connection of the beetle with the life giving powers of Ra was established

During life, Egyptians carried the scarab amulet to protect their hearts and give them long lives. In the beginning the heart was left in the body, because it was thought to be responsible for thought, memory and intelligence and the mummy needed it to be judged in the next world. A stone scarab amulet was placed on the body over the position of the heart, with a spell inscribed over it to prevent the heart from symbolically incriminating or betraying the owner (Wiedemann 2001:287). In later times, the heart was taken out, embalmed and replaced by a stone scarab amulet as a symbol of renewed life', since the body has need of another heart to act as the source

of life and movement in its new life (Ruiz 2001:94; Wallis Budge 1978a:138). The stone heart scarab gave this new life to the body on which it lies. Heart scarab amulets were weighed against the feather of truth in the Hall of Ma'at, and were often inscribed with a spell from the Book of the Dead which entreated the heart to, 'do not stand as a witness against me.' Actual beetles were found stored in jars buried with the deceased and in graves (Geddes & Grosset 1997:438; Cf. Turner & Coulter 2001:5).

SCEPTRE or STAFF

'The staff and sceptre were symbols of the authority and status of an official' (Robins 2008:52).

SED FESTIVAL or HEB SED

A sort of jubilee supposed to be held after the first thirty years of the pharaoh's rule and thereafter every five years. Some rulers, however, held it regularly and at shorter intervals (Frankfort 1978:97; Fontenrose 1971:12).

SEDGE

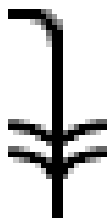


Figure 119: The sedge hieroglyph (*sw*)

(Gardiner 1950:482)

It is the lily emblem of Upper Egypt. The king of the two lands was known as 'He of the sedge and the bee (emblem of Lower Egypt)' (Geddes & Grosset 1997:442; Ruiz 2001:139).

SEKHMET or SAKHMET

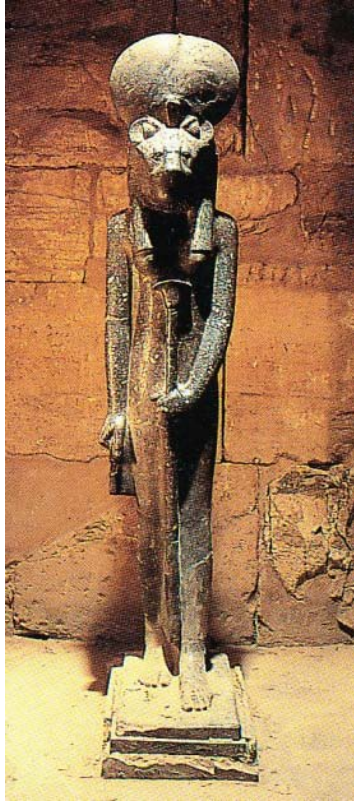


Figure 120: Statue of Sekhmet holding papyrus sceptre
(Harris 2001:157)

‘In Egyptian mythology, the lion-headed goddess of war and sickness originally associated with Memphis and a figure to be placated’ (Geddes & Grosset 1997:443).

Sekhmet was believed to protect the pharaoh in battle, stalking the land, and destroying the pharaoh's enemies with arrows of fire. An early Egyptian sun deity, her body was said to take on the bright glare of the midday sun, gaining her the title *Lady of Flame*. It was said that death and destruction were balm for her warrior's heart and that the hot desert winds were believed to be her breath and was also known as the ‘one who dances on blood.’ Sekhmet was believed to protect the pharaoh in battle, thus a protector of life (Lesko 1999:139-141); Pinch 2004:187-188)

SEKTI BARQUE

‘The boat occupied in the afternoon by Ra on his voyage through the underworld’
(Geddes & Grosset 1997:443).

SEMA or SEMA-TAWY

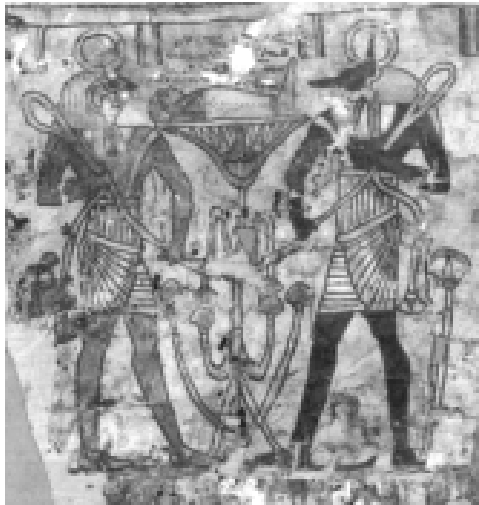


Figure 121: Unique depiction of sema:
depiction
Horus and Seth tie the lotus and Papyrus
plants together in a symbolic unification
of Upper and Lower Egypt
(Riggs & Stadler 2003:70)



Figure 122: More traditional
of sema, where Horus and Seth tie
the lotus and papyrus round the sema
(Ions 1997:64)

This is a symbol of dual kingship. It represents a windpipe flanked by two lungs, which together form the hieroglyph *sema*. It represents the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt. Other symbols are often added to further illustrate unification. In these renderings we see the Sema bound with two plants, the papyrus and the lotus. The papyrus represents Lower Egypt and the lotus represents Upper Egypt. In other representations we find two gods binding the Sema together using papyrus and lotus (Robins 2008:58; Myśliwiec 2000:7; Riggs & Stadler 2003:70-78)

SERAPEUM



Figure 123: Serapeum
(Oakes & Gahlin 2007:103)

The Serapeum consists of underground tombs at Saqqara where the sacred Apis bulls were buried, from the Eighteenth Dynasty onwards. These bulls were the personification of the ka of Ptah. The name comes from the ground-level temple of Serapis, a composite deity who combined aspects of Osiris and Apis during the Hellenistic period. In the dynastic period, the sacred bulls were worshipped during their lifetime and on their deaths buried in huge granite sarcophagi (Geddes & Grosset 1997:443; Myśliwiec 2000:59).

SERAPIS

‘The Greek name for the Apis bull’ (Geddes & Grosset 1997:443; Vassilika 1998:50).

SETH



Figure 124: Horus and Seth

(Ions 1907:64)

Seth was one of the principal gods, killer of his brother Osiris. He was identified with the arid desert areas away from the fertile Nile Valley. He was seen as the opposite of Osiris (evil and good), just as the valley was the opposite of the desert, the north to the south and the dark to the light. The desert had its own values; and Seth was not without virtues. He was regarded as a powerful god and was respected. Thunder, storms, whirlwind and hail were all instruments of Seth. The waning of the moon and the occasional lunar and solar eclipses showed that, although defeated by Horus, he had not lost his powers.

He was a war god. Unlike Horus, his great rival, Seth remained the same unchanging figure in the Egyptian pantheon throughout Egyptian history. He was chiefly identified with Upper Egypt, the land of desert. As the patron deity of nomes in both Upper and Lower Egypt, he was represented in various animal forms, including the falcon, but also the crocodile, dog, Oxyrinchus and especially the hippopotamus. The oldest centre of Seth's cult is Nubt, on the west bank of the Nile in Upper Egypt opposite Koptos (Geddes & Grosset 1997:444).

After Seth had lost the battle and hearing against Horus, he became known as the ‘Evil One’ and was banished (David 1999:103) but still retained his status as a god and was worshipped by certain sections.

SHABTI or USHABTI



Figure 125: Shabti of Tutankhamun in Egyptian Museum, Cairo
(Photo: F N Vermeulen).

In funerary practise a small figure, inscribed with magic formulae in the form of a mummy, made of stone, wood or other materials. They were placed in tombs, and their function was to obey the deceased and work for or on behalf of the deceased in the afterlife, performing all necessary tasks that were required, thus releasing him from doing the tasks himself (Geddes & Grosset 1997:445; Meskell 2004:120).

SHEN



Figure 126: Shen amulet
(Andrews 1994:77)

Originally a loop of papyrus rope that has no beginning and no end, it symbolized eternity. The sun disk is often depicted in the center of it. It shows the circle of the sun in twenty four hours, encircling the universe. The shen also seems to be a symbol of protection. It is often seen being clutched by deities in bird form as the Ba or, the falcon (Horus and the vulture (probably Mut). These birds are hovering over the heads of Pharaohs with their wings outstretched in a gesture of protection. The word shen comes from the word 'shenu' which means 'encircle' and in its elongated form became the cartouche which surrounded the king's name (Andrews 1994:76-77; Clark 2000:14-15; Ruiz 2001:139-140).

SOBEK

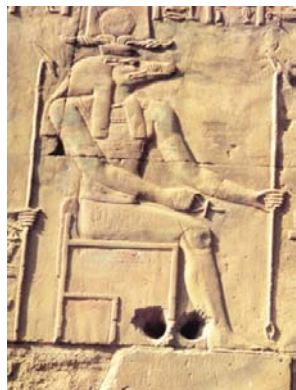


Figure 127: Wall relief of Sobek

(Harris 2001:167)

The male deity Sobek was depicted as a crocodile or as a man with the head of a crocodile. In the Coffin Texts he was sometimes identified with a serpent god, Maka. As told in the *Book of the Dead*, Horus the Elder enlisted the help of Sobek to kill his uncle Seth. Sobek helped Horus on another occasion when he rescued Horus' four sons from the waters of Nun. Sobek was the god of crocodiles. Ancient Egyptians, who lived in cities that depended on water, worshipped him to placate the crocodiles.

For instance, the people of Crocodilopolis (Arsinoe) would husband crocodiles in pools and adorn them with jewels. The importance of crocodiles to ancient Egyptian culture is demonstrated by the numerous mummified crocodiles that have been found in tombs (Ions 1997:91-92; Oakes & Gahlin 2007:235, 295; Armour 2001:188-189).

SYCAMORE

The sycamore was a sacred tree in Ancient Egypt. Thoth at one time must have been considered as a tree spirit as in the Nineteenth Dynasty he is shown recording the name of a pharaoh on a sycamore (Geddes & Grosset 1997:451; Ruiz 2001:143).

TANIS

‘A settlement and nome capital in the eastern Delta region, hometown of the Ramessides of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties’ (Geddes & Grosset 1997:452).

TAUERT or TAWERET or APET or OPET



Figure 128: Amulet of Tauert
(Oakes & Gahlin 2007:448)

A goddess portrayed as a pregnant female hippopotamus (David 1999:105). She was the goddess of fertility and childbirth credited with bringing babies to childless women and thus often portrayed on charms and amulets. She assisted all females (divine, royal or ordinary) in childbirth. She was also known as the consort of Bes (David 1999:105; Cf. Geddes & Grosset 1997:452).

TEFNUT



Figure 129: The goddess Tefnut
(Ions 1997:47)

‘In Egyptian mythology, the goddess of moisture, created by Ra, the sister of Shu. She was also a sun deity and was depicted as a lioness or a lion-headed woman’ (Geddes & Grosset 1997:453; Ions 1997:45-46).

TESHUB

An Asian storm god of the tempest imported by the Hyksos into Egypt (Geddes & Grosset 1997:454).

THOTH



Figure 130: A limestone tablet with Thoth as an ibis

(Ions 1997:39)
1997:30)



Ibis head

(Ions

He was an early rival to Ra, the sun god, as creator of Egypt (and hence the world). Before the creation of the universe and the sun, when it was still dark, Thoth summoned the gods who produced the egg from which the sun hatched. These were animal gods, four frogs and four snakes, known collectively as the Ogdoad. Thoth, depicted as a man with the head of an ibis or just as an ibis or sometimes as a baboon (Silverman 1991:20), was the scribe of the gods, the inventor of writing, language and magic, thus also the god of medicine.



Figure 132: Egyptian ibis

(Photograph: F N Vermeulen)

Thoth's wife was Seshat, who wrote the details of every human life on the leaves of the Tree of Heaven. There was considerable animosity between the priesthood of Thoth and that of Ra. The centre of Thoth's cult was the cities of Hermopolis, one in the Delta and one in Middle Egypt. He also featured in the mythologies of Ptah (at Memphis), Ra (at Heliopolis) and Osiris. He accompanies Ra in his chariot across the skies and in the Osirian Judgement of the Death he recorded the verdict of the Negative Confession (Cf. Geddes & Grosset 1997:457).

UDJAT see **EYE OF HORUS**

URAEUS



Figure 133: *Uraeus*. Inner sarcophagus of Tutankhamun, Egyptian Museum, Cairo
(Photo: F N Vermeulen)

An ornamental serpent worn on the brow, emblematic of the snake-goddess Wadjet. The Greek word from which '*uraeus*' is derived may have arisen in the Egyptian expression 'she who rears up,' as the *ureaus* represents the rearing cobra (*Naja haje*) with its characteristic dilated hood (Werness 2006:419). From the earliest times the cobra was associated with the sun, Lower Egypt and various deities. It was held to represent the eye of Ra. It was also associated with the underworld and a gilded wooden cobra with the name *netcher-ankh* (living god) was found in the tomb of Tutankhamun. *Uraei* were also associated with specific deities such as Neith, Ma'at

and Ra. The pharaoh Hatshepsut's throne name was *Ma'at ka-re* which was spelled out inter alia with an *uraeus* with a solar disk. The *uraeus* was also called *weret hekau*: 'The Great Enchantress,' who could be represented as a human-headed goddess with the body of a cobra. This deity is mentioned ten times in the inscriptions on the shrine of Tutankhamun and also appears as the pendant of a necklace found in his treasures, which shows her nursing a small figure of the king. The cobra was sometimes replaced by the vulture or used together with the vulture (the double *uraeus*) (Wilkinson 2001:191-192; Robins 1993:23-24; Cf. Geddes & Grosset 1997:471). According to Vassilika (1989:84) the *uraeus* represents the 'divinely begotten power' of the pharaoh. 'The *uraeus* is a symbol of protection', (Cornelius 1994:101).

USHABTI or USHEBTUI See **SHABTI**

WADJET see **BUTO**

WAS SCEPTRE



Figure 134: Sekhmet with the was-sceptre
(Shorter 1932: Plate X)

This is a symbol denoting authority and power. It is a long staff with an idealized animal-head at the one side and two prongs at the other side. The *was* sceptre is carried by deities as a sign of their power. It is also seen being carried by kings and later by people of lesser stature in mortuary scenes. It may be regarded as carrying divine power (Wilkinson 2001:189-190; Clark 2000:14-15).

WING(S)

‘Even at the outset of Egyptian history, wings were disassociated from the bird-figure as a kind of hieroglyph for “protection”. They can represent the feminine-motherly aspect of the sky in its protective function... In the same way wings serve to represent the protection afforded by...goddesses...’ (Keel 1985:192).

WINGED SCARAB



Figure 135: Winged scarab from the tomb of Tutankhamun, Egyptian Museum, Cairo (Oakes & Gahlin 2007:328)

It is a tri-dimensional reproduction of the dung beetle, *scarabaeus sacer*, with its natural habitat in the low desert. Scarabs were one of the most important symbols in ancient Egyptian beliefs. There was a strong resonance between the word *kheperer* meaning scarab and *kheper* meaning ‘to become’ or ‘enter existence’. The god-scarab Khepri represented the sun that rose each morning (re-entering existence), thus ensuring the cycle of the eternal regeneration of the cosmos and all its creatures. The

scarab in consequence came to mean rebirth after death. In particular the winged scarab was placed over the heart of the deceased and known as the 'heart scarab'. The truth about each individual was contained in one's heart and it was the heart that was weighed on the scales during the judgement of the gods after death. The 'heart scarab was endowed with the power of regeneration needed to overcome death and this was invoked by Chapter 30 of the Book of the Dead that contained the formula engraved on the lower surface of the scarab: 'My heart, my mother ...Let not that which is false be uttered against me before the great god...' (Wallis Budge 1953:151).

It was linked to Ra, the sun god, and became the symbol of resurrection. The female rolls a ball of dung and then lays her eggs in it, which she then rolls in front of her. To the Egyptians this was the same process as that of Ra rolling the sun's disk across the sky. Furthermore the scarab's young emerged from this ball, in a manner similar to the god's own creation of life. Thus the scarab was regarded as very sacred (Stavrakopoulou 2004:105; Fox 2000:221; Taylor 1993:46-47).

WINGED SUN DISK

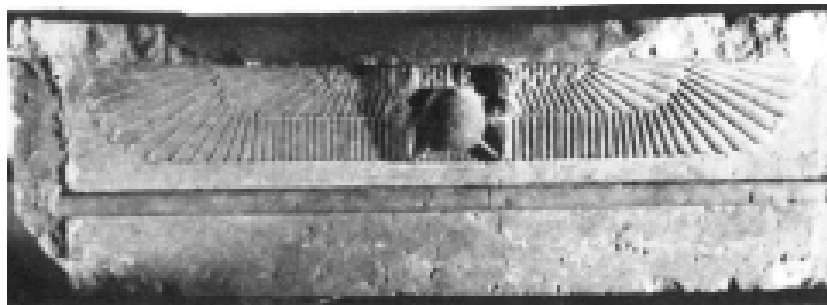


Figure 136: Winged sun disk
(El-Khachab 1971: Plate XXXVII)



Figure137: Winged sun disk with *uraei*
(El-Khachab 1971: Plate XXXVIII).

The basic components of the winged sun disk from the Old Kingdom onwards are relatively standard: a sun disk encircled by a pair of *uraei*, flanked by two outstretched falcon wings. This is a form that the god Horus Behudety (Horus of Edfu) takes in his battles with Seth. The god Thoth used his magic to turn Horus into a sun-disk with splendid outstretched wings. The winged sun disk is over the sanctuaries of all the gods and goddesses of Egypt. He is known as ‘the Great Protector’ (Wiedemann 2001:74-76). The goddesses Nekhbet and Uazet, in the form of *uraeus* snakes, joined him at his side. The winged sun disk represents the close association between Horus, the Sun god Ra and the pharaoh. This symbol apparently originated with the Assyrians but is most identified with the Egyptians. It is a ubiquitous symbol found in numerous forms on temple or tomb walls, papyri, seals etcetera in Egypt.

‘Emblematic of the element of air, this consists of a circle or solar-type disk enclosed by a pair of wings. In ritual magic it is suspended over the alter (sic) in an easterly direction and used when invoking the protection and co-operation of the sylphs’ (Hope 1986:157).

‘... the Sun of Righteousness will rise with healing in His wings...’ (MI 4:2).

‘the Winged-Disk, with the *Uraei* of Egypt, the original of which we find in the text summarized by Naville in the "Myths of Horus," ...; "Horus commanded Thoth that the Winged-Sun-Disk, with *Uraei*, should be brought into every sanctuary wherein he dwelt, and into every sanctuary of all the gods of the lands of the South and the North, and in Amentet, in order that they might drive away evil from therein...." This is what is meant by the Winged-Disks, with the *Uraei*, which are seen over the entrances of the courts of the temples of all the gods and goddesses of Egypt’ (Churchward 1913:344; Taylor 1993:46-47).

ZOAN

‘The name given in the Hebrew Bible to Tanis’ (Geddes & Grosset 1997:478).

ANNEXURE C

EGYPTIAN CREATION MYTHS ⁶⁷

THE HELIOPOLITAN MYTH

In Egyptian the place was called *Iwnw* and the Greeks called it Heliopolis (city of the sun). Here the most lasting and influential of the cosmogonies, centering on Atum and later Ra-Atum arose. Atum was the earlier main god of the region and later the sun god Ra assimilated some of his characteristics. The main source for this cosmogony is the pyramid texts and it had a great influence on many aspects of Egyptian religion.

In this myth two groups of gods are roll players. Firstly we find the Great Ennead (group of nine gods) which consisted of Ra-Arum, Shu, Tefnut, Geb, Nut, Osiris, Isis, Seth and Nephtys. Secondly there is the Lesser Ennead of which Horus, the son of Osiris and Isis, was the leader.

Ra-Atum was the first to emerge, a god who created himself and produced children Shu (air) and Tefnut (moisture). Shu and Tefnut became the parents of Geb (the earth) and Nut (the sky). These gods were all cosmic gods and were essential elements for the creation of the universe. The children of Geb and Nut, Osiris, Isis, Seth and Nephtys, were not cosmic gods.

According to the myth Ra-Atum, in the form of the mythical Bennu bird, alighted on the benben (a pillar or stone, probably in the form of a pyramid or an obelisk, with a pyramid on top, which was associated with the sun god), when he arrived at the

⁶⁷These myths were compiled from the following sources: David 1999:103-104, 116-117; Oakes & Gahlin 2007:300-307.

primeval mound. In Ra's temple at Heliopolis the benben was the god's symbol and it had probably been there from the beginning of the cult. The ancient Egyptians, or at least those subscribing to the Heliopolitan cult, believed it marked the exact place of creation where Re-Atum had first alighted.

THE MEMPHITE MYTH

At Memphis, the god Ptah was worshipped as the supreme god of creation. According to the myth from this center, Ptah was in fact Nun (the state of nonexistence prior to creation) and that he had begotten a daughter, Naunet, by whom he fathered Ra-Atum. He thus preceded Ra-Atum in the creation chronology and genealogy. The theology from Memphis (preserved much later in a text on the Shabaka Stone) claimed that Ptah was the supreme creator of the universe who had brought everything into existence through his thoughts (expressed by the heart) and his will (expressed by his tongue). He created the world, the other gods, their centers, shrines and images as well as the cities, food, drink and all the requirements for life. He also established abstract concepts and principles such as divine utterance and ethics. Ptah's mythology had, however, no widespread appeal and though he received some royal support, he was never adopted as a supreme royal patron like Horus or Amun.

THE HERMOPOLITAN MYTH

At Hermopolis, the cult center of the god of wisdom, Thoth, a third great cosmogony, arose. Although there were several versions of the Hermopolitan myth, they all attempted to establish the supremacy of the center and its primal role in creation. According to one version, the Hermopolitan Ogdoad (group of eight gods) played the major role. The four frog-headed male gods Nun (primeval waters), Huh (eternity),

Kuk (darkness) and Amun (air) together with their snake-headed female consorts, Naunet, Hauhet, Kauket and Amaunet respectively, created the world immediately after the First Occasion (the moment of creation). When these gods died they continued their existence in the underworld from where they made the Nile flow and the sun rise so that life could continue on earth.

In another version a cosmic egg replaced the primeval ocean as the source of life. A bird (either a goose called the 'great Cackler' or the ibis representing Thoth himself) laid this egg on the island (mound) and when it opened, it contained air (essential for life) or, in a variant, the god Ra was inside a bird when he proceeded to create the world. Yet another version relates how the ogdoad create a lotus flower that arose from the 'Sea of Knives' (perhaps the sacred lake at Hermopolis). When the flower opened its petals, it revealed either the child Ra who then created the world or a scarab that changed into a boy whose tears became mankind.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abertawe, W (2007). *The celestial cow emerging from the Theban hillside*.
Available from: <http://www.swan.ac.uk/egypt/infosheet/-W1982cow.htm>.(Accessed 16 June 2009).
- Aharoni, Y 1975. *Investigations at Lachish: The sanctuary and the residency (Lachish V)*. Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University.
- Albani, M 2004. The downfall of Helel, the Son of Dawn: Aspects of royal ideology in Isa 14:12-13, in Auffarth, C & Stuckenbruck, L T (eds). *The fall of the angels*. Leiden: Brill, 62-86.
- Albright, WF 1938. What were the Cherubim? *BA* 1 (1):1-3.
- Albright, WF 1968. *Archaeology and the religion of Israel*. Baltimore: John Hopkins.
- Albright, W 1980. *Yahweh and the gods of Canaan: a historical analysis of two contrasting faiths*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.
- Alford, AF 2004. *The midnight sun: The death and rebirth of God in ancient Egypt*. Walsall: Eridu.
- Andrews, C 1994. *Amulets of ancient Egypt*. London: British Museum.
- Andrews, C & Faulkner, RO 1990. *The ancient Egyptian book of the dead*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Anonymous 2008.

- Armour, RA 2001. *Gods and myths of ancient Egypt*. Cairo: The American University in Cairo.
- Assmann, J 2001. *The Search for God in ancient Egypt*, trans. D. Lorton. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Assmann, J & Jenkins, A 2003. *The mind of Egypt: history and meaning in the time of the Pharaohs*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Aubet, ME 2001. *The Phoenicians and the West: Politics, colonies and trade*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Aufderheide, AC 2003. *The scientific study of mummies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Avigad, N 1964. The seal of Jezebel. *IEJ* 14: 274-276.
- Avigad, N 1966. A Hebrew seal with a family emblem. *IEJ* 16: 50-53.
- Avigad, N 1968. Notes in some inscribed Syro-Phoenician seals. *BASOR* 189: 44-49.
- Avigad, N 1976. *Bullae and seals from a post-exilic Judean archive*. Jerusalem: The Hebrew University.
- Avigad, N 1976. *Archaeological discoveries in the Jewish quarter of Jerusalem: second temple period*. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society.
- Avigad, N 1978. Short notes: Gleanings from unpublished ancient seals. *BASOR* 230: 67-69.

- Avigad, N 1979. A Group of Hebrew seals from the Hecht Collection, in
Hecht, R R 1979. *Festschrift: Rëuben R. Hecht*. Jerusalem:
Korën, 119-126.
- Avigad, N 1986. *Hebrew bullae from the time of Jeremiah: Remnants of a
burnt archive*. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society.
- Avigad, N 1987. The contribution of Hebrew seals to the understanding of
Israelite religion and society, in Miller, Hanson & McBride
(1987: 195-208).
- Avigad, N & Sass, B 1997. *Corpus of West Semitic stamp seals*. Jerusalem:
The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities.
- Azize, J 2005. *The Phoenician solar theology: An investigation into the
Phoenician opinion*. New Jersey: Gorgias.
- Baikie, J 1916. *Ancient Assyria*. London: A & C Black.
- Baines, J 1991. Societies, morality, and religious practise, in Shafer
(1991: 123-200).
- Baldacci, M 1985. Review of Jackson 1983. *Rivista Biblica* 33: 255-257.
- Ball, W 2001. *Rome in the East: the transformation of an empire*. London:
Routledge.
- Barclay, W 2001. *The Gospel of Mark*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- Bard, KA & Shubert, SB 1999. *Encyclopedia of the archaeology of ancient
Egypt*. London: Routledge.

- Barton, J (ed) 2004. *The biblical world, Vol 1*. Abington: Routledge.
- Baumgarten, A 1981. *The Phoenician history of Philo of Byblos: A Commentary*.
Leiden: Brill.
- Becking, B 2006. The return of the deity: iconic or aniconic, in Amit, Y (ed) 2006.
*Essays on ancient Israel in its Near Eastern context: a tribute to
Nadav Na 'aman* . Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 53-88.
- Bennett, JW 2002. *Human ecology as human behavior; essays in environmental and
Development anthropology*. New Brunswick: Transaction.
- Biblicus 1824. On hieroglyphical language. *The Classical journal, Vol 1 (III)* 2nd
ed. London: Valpy, 549-556.
- Bickerman, E 1976. *Studies in Jewish and Christian history, Part 3*. Leiden: Brill.
- Black, M, VanderKam, JC and Neugebauer, O 1985. *The Book of Enoch, or, I
Enoch: a new English edition: with commentary and textual notes*,
trans. M. Black & JC VanderKam. Leiden: Brill.
- Blau, L 1974. *Das altjüdische Zauberwesen*. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins.
- Bleeker, CJ 1973. *Hathor and Thoth: Two key figures of the ancient Egyptian
religion*. Leiden: Brill.
- Bliss, FJ & Macalister, RAS 1902. *Excavations in Palestine (1898-1900)*. London:
Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund.
- Block, DI 1998. *The Book of Ezekiel, Vol 2*. Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans.

- Boardman, J 1991. *The Assyrian and Babylonian empires and other states of the Near East, from the eighth to the sixth centuries B.C.*, Vol 3. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Boardman, J et al (eds.) 1988. *The Cambridge Ancient History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bodenheimer, FS 1972. *Animal and man in Bible lands, Vol 2*. Leiden: Brill.
- Bonanno, A 1986. *Archaeology and fertility cult in ancient Mediterranean papers*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Bondi, SF 2001. The origins in the East, in Moscati (2001: 23-29).
- Booth, C 2005. *The Hyksos period in Egypt*. Princes Risborough: Shire.
- Bonfil, R 1997. Area A: Analysis of the Temple, in Ben-Tor, A & Bonfil, R (eds) *Hazor V: An Account of the Fifth season of Excavation, 1968*, Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society and The Hebrew University, 85-101.
- Bonnefoy, Y & Doniger, W 1992. *Greek and Egyptian mythologies*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Bordreuil, P 1986. A note on the seal of Peqah the armor-bearer, future king of Israel. *BA* 49 (1): 54-55.
- Bordreuil, P & Lemaire, A 1982. Nouveaux sc aux hébreux, araméens et ammonites. *Semitica* 32: 21-34.

- Bosse-Griffiths, K 1973. The great enchantress in the little golden shrine of Tut'ankhamūn. *JEA* 59: 100-108.
- Botterweck, GJ & Ringgren, H (eds) 1977. *Theological dictionary of the Old Testament, Vol 8*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Botterweck, GJ, Ringgren, H & Fabry, H (eds) 1995. *Theological dictionary of the Old Testament, Vol 7*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Boyd, JP 1952. The self pronouncing Bible dictionary, in Barbour's *The practical Bible dictionary & concordance*. Uhrichsville: Barbour, 1-128.
- Bresciani, E 1984. Egypt, Persian satrapy, in Davies & Finkelstein (1984: 357-371).
- Brettler, M 2003. The Copenhagen School: The historiographical issues. *AJS Review* 27.1: 1-22.
- Bromley, GW 1988. *The international standard Bible encyclopedia*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Brown, S 2002. *Ancient Egypt*. Balcatta : R.I.C.
- Bryan, BM 2003. The 18th Dynasty before the Amarna Period, in Shaw, I (ed) 2003. *The Oxford history of ancient Egypt*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 207-265.
- Bunsen, CJ 1846. Aegyptens Stelle in der Weltgeschichte –Egypt's place in the history of the world. *The Quarterly Review* 78: 145-174.
- Byrne, R (2008). *Where is Jezebel?* Available from: <http://www.bib-arch.org/-debates/jezebel-seal-02.asp>. (Accessed 3 October 2008).

- Cartwright, HW 1929. The iconography of certain Egyptian divinities as illustrated by the collections in Haskell Oriental Museum. *AJSL* 45 (3): 179-196.
- Chase, PG 1999. Symbolism as reference and symbolism as culture, in Dunbar, RI M, Knight, C & Power, C (eds) 1999. *The evolution of culture: an interdisciplinary view*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 34-49.
- Chopra, R 2005. *Academic Dictionary Of Mythology*. Delhi: Isha.
- Christie, A 2007. *Magic of the Pharaohs*. Kerswell: D&S Books.
- Churchward, A 1913. *The Signs and Symbols of Primordial Man*. London: George Allen.
- Cirlot, JE & Sage, J 1978. *A dictionary of symbols*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Routledge.
- Clark, R 2000. *The sacred tradition in ancient Egypt: the esoteric wisdom revealed*. St. Paul: Llewellyn.
- Clark, R 2003. *The sacred magic of ancient Egypt: The spiritual practice restored*. St. Paul: Llewellyn.
- Clarysse, W, Schoors, A & Willems, H (eds) 1998. *Egyptian religion: The last thousand years : Studies dedicated to the memory of Jan Quaegebeur, Part I*. Leuven: Peeters.
- Clifford, RJ 1990. Phoenician Religion. *BASOR* 279: 55-64.
- Cline, EH 2002. *The Battles of Armageddon: Megiddo and the Jezreel Valley from the Bronze Age to the Nuclear Age*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan.

- Cline, EH & Goddard, D (eds) 2006. *Thutmose III: a new biography*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Collier, M & Manley, B 1998. *How to read Egyptian hieroglyphs*. London: British Museum.
- Collins, JJ 2004. Death and afterlife, in Barton (2004: 357-377).
- Collins, P 2008. *From Egypt to Babylon: the international age 1550-500 BC*. London: British Museum.
- Collon, D 1987. *First impressions: Cylinder seals in the ancient Near East*. London: British Museum.
- Collon, D 1990a. *Interpreting the past*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Collon, D 1990b. *Near eastern seals*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Collon, D 1995. *Ancient Near Eastern art*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Collon, D (ed) 1997. *7000 years of seals*. London: British Museum.
- Cornelius, I 1988. 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' in Gen 2-3. *JNSL* 14: 41-83.
- Cornelius, I 1994. *The iconography of the Canaanite gods Reshef and Ba^cal: late Bronze and Iron Age I periods (C 1500-1000 B.C.E.)*. Fribourg: University Press.
- Cornelius, I 2004. *The many faces of the goddess*. Fribourg: Academic.

- Cornelius, I 2008. Religious iconography of Israel and Judah ca. 1200–587 B.C.E. *Religion Compass*, 2 (2): 96-118.
- Coulter, CR & Turner, P 2000. *Encyclopedia of ancient deities*. Jefferson: McFarland.
- Corteggiani, JP 1987. *The Egypt of the Pharaohs*. London: Scala.
- Cross, FM 1994. A Phoenician inscription from Idalion: Some old and new texts relating to child sacrifice, in King et al (1994: 93-107).
- Cross, FM 1973. *Canaanite myth and Hebrew epic: essays in the history of the religion of Israel*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
- Cross, FM 1999. King Hezekiah's Seal Bears Phoenician Imagery. *BAR* 25 (2): 42-45.
- Curl, JS 2005. *The Egyptian revival: ancient Egypt as the inspiration for design motifs in the west*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Curtis, A 1985. *Ugarit (Ras Shamra)*. Cambridge: Lutterworth.
- Dalman, G 1906, 'Ein neu gefundenes Jahvebild'. *Palästina-Jahrbuch*. 2: 44–50.
- Danthine, H 1937. *Le palmier-dattier et les arbres sacrées dans l'ic onographie de l'Asie accidentale ancienne*. Geuthner: Paris.
- David, AR 1996. *The pyramid builders of ancient Egypt: a modern investigation of pharaoh's workforce*. London: Routledge.

- David, AR 1999. *Handbook to life in ancient Egypt*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Davies, PR 1998. *The canonization of the Hebrew Scriptures*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- Davies, WD & Finkelstein, L (eds) 1984. *The Cambridge History of Judaism: Introduction; the Persian period*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Day, J 1985. *God's conflict with the dragon and the sea: echoes of a Canaanite myth in the Old Testament*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press.
- Day, J 2000. *Yahweh and the gods and goddesses of Canaan*. London: Sheffield Academic.
- De Burgh, WG 1953. *The Legacy of the Ancient World, Vol 1*. Melbourne: Penguin.
- De Pressense, E 1888. *The ancient world and Christianity 1900*, trans. by A.H. Holmden. New York: Armstrong.
- Deutsch, R 2002. Lasting impressions. New bullae reveal Egyptian-style emblems on Judah's royal seals. *BAR* 28(4): 42-51, 60-1.
- Deutsch, R 2004. Two Personal Hebrew Seals, in Heltzer & Malul, (2004: 25-28).
- Deutsch, R & Lemaire, A 2000. *Biblical period personal seals in the Shlomo Moussaieff Collection*. Archaeological Center: Tel Aviv.

- Dever, WG 1987. The contribution of archaeology to the study of Canaanite and Early Israelite religion, in Miller, Hanson & McBride (1987: 209-247).
- Dever, WG 2001. *What did the biblical writers know and when did they know it? What archaeology can tell us about the reality of ancient Israel.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans
- Dever, WG 2002. Theology, philology, and archaeology: In the pursuit of ancient Israelite religion in Gittlen (2002: 11-35).
- Dever, WG 2003. *Who were the early Israelites and where did they come from?* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Dever, WG 2005. *Did God have a wife?* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Devera, J. (2002). *How different beliefs use different symbols to differentiate themselves for other religions.* Available from: <http://www.helium.com/items/695683-how-different-beliefs-use-different-symbols-to-differentiate-themselves-for> (Accessed 19 April 2009).
- Doane, TW 1882. *Bible myths and their parallels in other religions.* New York: JW Bouton.
- Dodson, A 2000. *Monarchs of the Nile.* Cairo: American University in Cairo Press.
- Dunand, F, Zivie-Coche, C & Lorton, D 2005. *Gods and men in Egypt: 3000 B.C.E. to 395 CE.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Edwards, IES 1970. *The Cambridge ancient history, Volume 1, & nbsp; Part 1.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Edwards, IES, Gadd, CJ & Lemprière, H 1970. *The Cambridge ancient history: Prolegomena and prehistory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Eiddon, I et al 1970. *Prolegomena and prehistory, Vol 1, Part 1*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Eiddon, I et al (eds) 1973. *The Cambridge ancient history, Volume 2, Part 1*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Eisenberg, RL 2004. *The JPS guide to Jewish traditions*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society.
- Eliade, M 1958. *Patterns in comparative religion*, trans. R. Sheed. New York: Sheed & Ward.
- Eliade, M 1991. *Images and symbols: Studies in religious symbolism*, Reprint, trans. P. Mairet. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- El-Khachab, AM 1971. Some gem-amulets depicting Harpocrates seated on a lotus flower: To the memory of my great friend Dr. Alexandre Piankoff. *JEA* 57: 132-145.
- Ellis, WM 1994. *Ptolemy of Egypt*. Oxford: Routledge.
- Ellis, N 1999. *Feasts of light: celebrations for the seasons of life based on the Egyptian goddess mysteries*. Wheaton: Quest.
- Emery, WB 1961. *Archaic Egypt*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Erman, A 1894. *Life in Ancient Egypt*, trans. H.M. Tirard. London: MacMillan.

- Fage, JD 1976. *The Cambridge history of Africa, Vol 5*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fage, JD, Clark, D & Oliver, RA 1982. *The Cambridge history of Africa: From the earliest times to c. 500 BC, Vol 1*. Reprint. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fant, CE & Reddish, MG 2008. *Lost treasures of the Bible: Understanding the Bible through archaeological artifacts in world museums*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Farnell, LR 2004. *The cults of the Greek states, Vol 1*. Whitefish: Kessinger.
- Faulkner, R et al 2008. *The Egyptian Book of the Dead: The Book of Going Forth by Day*. San Francisco: Chronicle.
- Fazzini, RA 1988. *Egypt Dynasty XXII-XXV*. Leiden: Brill.
- Filer, J 2006. *Pyramids*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Finkelstein, I & Silberman, NA 2002. *The Bible Unearthed*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Firestone, MD et al 2008. *Egypt*. Footscray: Lonely Planet.
- Firth, R 2004. *Elements of social organization*. Reprint. London: Routledge.
- Fontenrose, JE 1971. *The ritual theory of myth*. Berkley: University of California Press.
- Fowler, JD 1988. *Theophoric personal names in ancient Hebrew: a comparative Study*. Sheffield: JSOT.

Fox, NS 2000. *In the service of the king: officialdom in ancient Israel and Judah*.
Jerusalem: Hebrew Union College Press.

Fralin, GK. (2002). *How different beliefs use different symbols to differentiate themselves for other religions*. Available from:
<http://www.helium.com/items/695683-how-different-beliefs-use-different-symbols-to-differentiate-themselves-for> (Accessed 19 April 2009).

Faulkner, RO et al 1994. *The Egyptian Book of the dead: the Book of going forth by day : being the Papyrus of Ani*. San Francisco: Chronicle.

Fox, NS 2000. *In the service of the king: officialdom in ancient Israel and Judah*.
Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press.

Frankfort, H 1978. *Kingship and the gods: a study of ancient Near Eastern religion as the integration of society & nature*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Frankfort, H 2000. *Ancient Egyptian religion: An interpretation*. Ontario: General Publishing.

Frater, UD 2008. *High magic II: Expanded theory and practise*. Woodbury: Llewellyn.

Frazer, JG 2003. *Adonis Attis Osiris: Studies in the history of oriental religion*. 3rd ed. Whitefish: Kessinger.

Fritz, V 1994. *An introduction to Biblical Archaeology*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic.

- Gadalla, M 1999. *Historical deception: the untold story of ancient Egypt*. Greensboro: Tehuti Research Foundation.
- Galling, K 1941. Beschriftete Bildsiegel des ersten Jahrtausend v. Chr. vornehmlich aus Syrien und Palästina. *Zetschrift des Deutschen Palästina Verein* 64: 121-202.
- Gardiner, Sir A 1950. *Egyptian grammar: Being an introduction to the study of hieroglyphics*. 2nd ed. London: Oxford University Press.
- Geddes & Grosset : Ancient Egypt, myth & history*. 1997. New Lanark: Geddes & Grosset.
- Gittlen, BM (ed) 2002. *Sacred time, Sacred place: Archaeology and the religion of Israel*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.
- Giveon, R 1985. *Egyptian scarabs from Western Asia from the collections of the British Museum*. Freiburg: Universitätsverlag.
- Giveon, R 1988. *Scarabs from recent excavations in Israel*. Freiburg: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Goedicke, H 1975. *The Report of Wenamun*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins.
- Golden, JM 2004. *Ancient Canaan and Israel: New Perspectives*. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO.
- Goldwasser, O & Laor, N 1991. The allure of the holy glyfhs (sic): A psycholinguistic perspective on the Egyptian script. *GM* 123: 37-51.

- González-Wippler, M 1988. *The complete book of spells, ceremonies, and magic*. St. Paul: Llewellyn.
- Goodenough, ER 1958. *Jewish symbols in the Greco-Roman Period, 7: Pagan symbols in Judaism*. New York: Bollingen series 37.
- Gordon, CH & Rendsburg, GA 1997. *The Bible and the ancient Near East*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Green, ARW 2003. *The storm-god in the ancient Near East*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.
- Greenberg, G (2007). *Bible and history*. Available from:
<http://bibleandhistory.blogspot.com/2007/02/one-of-great-scandals-in-study-of-early.html> (Accessed 17 August 2008).
- Griffiths, JG 1980. *The origins of Osiris and his cult*. Leiden: Brill.
- Grimal, N 1994. *A history of ancient Egypt, Vol 1992*. Malden: Blackwell.
- Hadley, JM 2000. *The cult of Asherah in ancient Israel and Judah: Evidence for a Hebrew goddess*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hallam, EM 1996. *Gods and goddesses: a treasury of deities and tales from world mythology*. London: Macmillan.
- Hannay, JB 1912. *Symbolism in relation to religion, or Christianity: the sources of its teaching and symbolism*. London: Kegan Paul.
- Hannay, JB 1922. *Sex symbolism in religion. Vol 1*. London: Religious Evolution Research Society.

- Harden, D 1963. *The Phoenicians*. London: Thames & Hudson.
- Harris, E 1998. *Ancient Egyptian Divination and Magic*. York Beach: Red Wheel/Weiser.
- Harris, N 2001. *The History of Ancient Egypt*. London: Chancellor.
- Hart, G 1990. *Egyptian myths*, 4th ed. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Hart, G 2002. *The Routledge dictionary of Egyptian gods and goddesses*. Oxford: Routledge.
- Hastings, J 1910a. *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Part 3* Edinburgh: T & T Clark.
- Hastings, J 1910b. *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Part 12*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark.
- Haviland ,WA 1996. *Cultural Anthropology*. Orlando: Harcourt Brace College.
- Hawkins, JD 2000. *Corpus of hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions, Volume 1; Parts 1-3*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Healey, M & Mc Bride, A 1992. *New Kingdom Egypt*. Oxford: Osprey.
- Heltzer, M 1987. The Gēr in Phoenician society, in Lipinski (1987: 309-314).
- Heltzer, M & Malul, M (eds) 2004. T□ shūrôt LaAvishur: *Studies in the Bible and the ancient Near East, in Hebrew and Semitic Languages. festschrift presented to Prof. Yitzhak Avishur on the occasion of his 65th Birthday*. Tel Aviv: Archaeological Center.

- Hernández, F, Millington, M & Borden, I (eds) 2005. *Transculturation: Cities, spaces and architectures in Latin America*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Herrmann, C 1993. *Ägyptische Amulette aus Palästina. Israel mit einem Ausblick auf ihre Rezeption durch das Alte Testament*. Freiburg: University Press.
- Hitti, PK 2004. *History of Syria: Including Lebanon and Palestine*. New Jersey: Gorgias.
- Hoerth, AJ 1998. *Archaeology and the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker.
- Hoerth, AJ, Mattingly, GI & Yamauchi, EM (eds) 2004. *Peoples of the Old Testament world*. Cambridge: Lutterworth.
- Hooge, JR 2003. *Providential Beginnings*. Camarillo: Xulon.
- Hooke, SH 2004. *Middle Eastern Mythology*. Mineola: Dover.
- Hope, M 1986. *Practical Egyptian magic*. New York: St. Martin's.
- Hornung, E 1996. *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt: The One and the Many*, trans. J. Baines. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Hornung, E 2001. *The secret lore of Egypt: its impact on the West*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Hornung, E & Loxton, D 1999. *The ancient Egyptian books of the afterlife*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Humphreys, A & Jenkins, S 2004. *Lonely Planet Egypt*. Footscray: Lonely Planet.

- Hunter, H. (2002). *How different beliefs use different symbols to differentiate themselves for other religions*. Available from:
<http://www.helium.com/items/695683-how-different-beliefs-use-different-symbols-to-differentiate-themselves-for> (Accessed 19 April 2007).
- Ilan, D 1998. The dawn of internationalism – The Middle Bronze Age, in Levy (1998: 297-317).
- Ikram, S 2003. *Death and burial in ancient Egypt*. Harlow: Longman.
- Ions, V 1997. *Egyptian mythology*. London: Chancellor.
- i Parcerisa, JP 1980. *Egyptian-type documents: from the Mediterranean littoral of the Iberian peninsula before the Roman conquest, Part 3*. Leiden: Brill.
- Jacobs, J & Blau, L. (2002). Sources of Jewish Magic. Available from:
<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=45&letter=M>. (Accessed 12 January 2009).
- James, TGH 1983. *An Introduction to Ancient Egypt*. London: British Museum.
- James, W 1908. *The varieties of religious experience*. London: Longmans Green.
- Johnson, B 1994. *Lady of the Beasts: The Goddess and Her Sacred Animals*. Rochester: Inner Traditions.

- Johnston, SI 2004. *Religions of the ancient world: a guide*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Johnston, SI 2007. *Ancient religions*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Jung, CG & Kerényi, K 2002. *Science of mythology: Essays on the myth of the Divine Child and the mysteries of Eleusis*. London: Routledge.
- Kaiser, WC 1998. *History of Israel*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman.
- Keel, O 1992. *Das Recht der Bilder gesehen zu werden*. Freiburg: Universitätsverlag.
- Keel, O 1995. *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel: Von der Anfängen bis zur Perserzeit. Einleitung*. Freiburg: Universitätsverlag.
- Keel, O 1997. *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel: Von der Anfängen bis zur Perserzeit, Band 1*. Freiburg: Universitätsverlag.
- Keel, O & Uehlinger, C 1998. *Gods, goddesses and images of God in ancient Israel*, trans. T.H. Trapp. Minneapolis: Fortress.
- Keister, D 2004. *Stories in stone: A field guide to cemetery symbolism and iconography*. Layton: Gibbs Smith.
- Kemp, BJ 1991. *Ancient Egypt: anatomy of a civilization*. London: Routledge.
- Kendall, D 2008. *Sociology of our times: The essentials*. Belmont: Wadsworth.

- Kessler, DF 1996. *The Falashas: a short history of the Ethiopian Jews*. Abington: Frank Cass.
- King, PJ et al (eds) 1994. *Scripture and other artifacts: Essays on the Bible and archaeology in honor of Philip J. King*: Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- Kirk, GS 1973. *Myth: its meaning and functions in ancient and other cultures*. London: University of Cambridge Press.
- Kitchen, K 2006. Ancient Near Eastern studies: Egypt. in Rogerson, JW & Lieu, J (eds) 2006. *The Oxford handbook of biblical studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 89-99.
- Kleiner, FS 2008. *Gardner's art through the ages: The Western perspective*. 13nd ed. Stamford: Cengage Learning.
- Korpel, MCA 2006. Seals of Jezebel and other women in authority. *JSEM* 15(2): 349-371.
- Korpel, MCA 2007. Seal of Jezebel. Available from: <http://www.katholiek-nederland.nl/act>. ((Accessed on 3 October 2008).
- Korpel, MCA 2008a. Fit for a Queen: Jezebel, Royal Seal. *BAR* 34 (2): 32-37.
- Korpel, MCA (2008b). *Korpel responds to her critics*. Available from: <http://www.bib-rch.org/debates/-Jezebel-seal-08.asp>.
- Korsten, F 1999. Foucault's rhetorical consciousness and the possibilities of acting upon a regime of truth, in Neubauer, J (ed) 1999. *Cultural history after Foucault*. Piscataway: Transaction, 55-176.

- Krejčí, J & Krejčová, A 1990. *Before the European challenge: the great civilizations of Asia and the Middle East*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Kroeber, AL & Kluckhohn, C 1963. *Culture: A critical review of concepts and definitions*. New York: Vantage.
- Kuhrt, A 1997. *Ancient near East C. 3000-330 BC*. London: Routledge.
- Lang, B 2008. *Hebrew Life and Literature: Selected Essays of Bernhard Lang*. Farnham: Ashgate.
- Lapp, NL 1989. *Cylinder seals and impressions of the third millennium B. C. from the Dead Sea Plain*, in *BASOR* 273: 1-15.
- Laughlin, JCH 2000. *Archaeology and the Bible*. London: Routledge.
- Law, RCC 1988. North Africa in the period of the Phoenician and Greek colonization, c. 800 to 323 BC, in Fage, J D (ed) 1988. *The Cambridge history of Africa, Vol. 2*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 87-147.
- Leeming, DA 2004. *Jealous gods and chosen people: The mythology of the Middle East*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Leeming, DA & Leeming, MA 1995. *A dictionary of creation myths*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lemaire, A 2007. New inscribed Hebrew seals and seal impressions, in Lubetski (2007: 9-22).

- Lemche, NP 1993. The Old Testament—A Hellenistic Book? *SJOT* 7: 163-193.
- Lemche, NP 1998. *The Israelites in History and Tradition*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- Lesko, BS 1999. *The great goddesses of Egypt*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Lesko, LH 1991. Ancient Egyptian cosmogonies and cosmology, in Shafer (1991: 88-122).
- Levy, TE (ed) 1998. *The archaeology of society in the Holy Land*. London: Leicester University.
- Lewis, J 2002. *Cultural studies: the basics*. London: Sage.
- Lipinski, E (ed) 1987. *Studia Phoenicia v Phoenicia and the East Mediterranean in the first millennium B.C.* Leuven: Peeters.
- Lubetski, M 2001. King Hezekiah's seal revisited. *BAR* 27(4): 44-51, 59.
- Lubetski, M 2007a. A man called mnr, in Lubetski (2007b: 48-54).
- Lubetski, M (ed) 2007b. *New seals and inscriptions, Hebrew, Idumean and Cuneiform*. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix.
- MacKenzie, D 1913. *Egyptian myths and legends*. Oxford: Gresham.
- MacKenzie, DA 1931. *Myths of Babylonia and Assyria*. Oxford: Gresham.

- Magli, G 2009. *Mysteries and discoveries of archaeoastronomy: From Giza to Easter Island*. New York: Copernicus.
- Marcus, E 1991. *Tel Nami: A study of a Middle Bronze Age IIA period coastal settlement*. Unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Haifa.
- Marcus, M 1996. *Emblems of identity and prestige: The seals and sealings from Hasanlu, Iran: Commentary and catalog*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum.
- Markoe, GE 2000. *Peoples of the past: Phoenicians*. London: The British Museum.
- Marshall IH et al (eds) 1996. *New Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed. Leicester: Inter-Varsity.
- Marsman, HJ 2003. *Women in Ugarit and Israel: their social and religious position in the context of the ancient Near East*. Leiden: Brill.
- Marston, E 2001. *The Phoenicians*. Marshall Cavendish: Tarrytown.
- Marti, K 2009. *The religion of the Old Testament; Its place Among the religions of the Nearer East*. [sl]: BiblioLife.
- Massey, G 2007. *A Book of the Beginnings, Vol.2*. Reprint. New York: Cosimo.
- Massey, G 2008a. *The light of the world: A work of reclamation and restitution in twelve books*. Reprint. Sioux Falls: NuVision.
- Massey, G 2008b. *Sign language and mythology as primitive modes of representation*. Reprint. New York: Cosimo.

- Mazar, A 1992. *Archaeology of the land of the Bible 10,000-586 B.C.E.*
New York: Doubleday.
- Mazar, A (2008). *Too Late for Jezebel*. Available from:
<http://www-.bib-arch.org/debates/jezebel-seal-07.asp>
(Accessed on 3 October 2008).
- Mazar, A & Panitz-Cohen, N 2008. To What God? *BAR* 30(4): 40-47.
- May, HG 1936. Seal of Elamar. *AJSL* 52 (3): 197-199.
- May, HG 1939. The sacred tree on Palestinian painted pottery. *JAOS* 59: 251-259.
- McCarter, PK Jr 1987. Aspects of the religion of the Israelite monarchy: Biblical and epigraphic data, in Miller, Hanson & McBride (1987: 137-155).
- McClintock, J & Strong J 1881. *Cyclopaedia of biblical, theological, and ecclesiastical literature, Vol 10*. New York: Harper.
- McDermott, B 2002. *Decoding Egyptian hieroglyphs*. London: Duncan Baird.
- McDevitt, A. (2008). *Ancient Egypt: The mythology*. Available from:
<http://www.egyptianmyths.net/mountain.htm> (Accessed
20 October 2008).
- McNutt, PM 1999. *Reconstructing the society of ancient Israel*. Louisville:
Westminster John Knox.
- Meskell, L 2002. *Private life in New Kingdom Egypt*. Princeton: Princeton
University Press.

- Meskeil, L 2004. *Object worlds in ancient Egypt: material biographies past and present*. Oxford: Berg.
- Meyers, CL 1976. *The Tabernacle menorah: A synthetic study of a symbol from the Biblical cult*. Missoula: ASOR dissertation series 2.
- Miller, PD, Hanson, PD & McBride, S (eds) 1987. *Ancient Israelite religion: Essays in honor of Frank Moore Cross*. Philadelphia: Fortress.
- Miller, JM & Hayes, JH 1986. *A history of ancient Israel and Judah*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- Millington, M 2005. Transculturation: Taking stock, in Hernández, Millington & Borden (2005: 204-234).
- Mills, ME 1998. *Images of God in the Old Testament*. London: Cassell.
- Moore, GF 1914. *History of religions, Voll*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark.
- Moorey, PRS 2003. *Idols of the people: Miniature images of clay in the ancient Near East*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Morenz, S & Keep, AE 1992. *Egyptian Religion*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Morkot, R 2005. *The Egyptians: an introduction*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Morris, CW 1993. *Symbolism and reality: A study in the nature of mind*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Moscatti, S (ed) 2001. *The Phoenicians*. London: Taurus.

- Mosjow, B 2005. *Osiris: death and afterlife of a god*. Malden: Blackwell.
- Moussaieff, S & Deutsch, R 2003. *Shlomo: Studies in epigraphy, iconography, history and archaeology in honor of Shlomo Moussaieff*. Tel Aviv: Archaeological Center.
- Murray, MA 1931. *Egyptian Temples*. London: S. Low, Marston.
- Myer, I 1994. *Scarabs: The history, manufacture and religious symbolism of the scarabaeus in Ancient Egypt, Phoenicia, Sardinia and Etruria*: Ithaca: Cornell University Library.
- Mykytiuk, L 2004. *Identifying biblical persons in Northwest Semitic inscriptions of 1200-539 B.C.E.* Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.
- Myśliwiec, K 2000. *The twilight of ancient Egypt: first millennium B.C.E.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Na'aman, N 2006 . *Ancient Israel and its neighbors: interaction and counteraction: collected essays*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.
- Najovits, SR 2004. *Egypt, trunk of the tree: a modern survey of an ancient land, Vols 1-2*. New York: Algora.
- Nakhai, BA 2001. *Archaeology and the religions of Canaan and Israel*. Boston: ASOR.
- Neubauer, J 1999. *Cultural history after Foucault*. Hawthorne: Aldine De Gruyter.
- Newberry PE 1929. The shepherd's crook and the so-called "flail" or "scourge" of Osiris. *JEA* 15(1/2): 84-94.

- Noegel, SB 1996. Moses and Magic: Notes on the Book of Exodus. *JANES* 24: 45-59.
- Noll, KL 2001. *Canaan and Israel in antiquity: an introduction*. London: Sheffield Academic.
- Nunn, JF 2002. *Ancient Egyptian medicine*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Oakes, L & Gahlin, L 2007. *Ancient Egypt*. London: Hermes House.
- Odnner, CT 1914. *The correspondences of Egypt*. Bryn Athyn: The Academic Book Room.
- Olson, AM (ed) 1980. *Myth, symbol, and reality*. Nortre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press .
- Ornan, T 2005. A complex system of religious symbols: The case of the winged sun disc in Near Eastern imagery of the First Millennium B.C.E., in Suter & Uehlinger (2005: 207-235).
- Osman, A 2002. *Moses and Akhenaten: The secret history of Egypt at the time of the Exodus*. Vermont: Bear & Company.
- Parker, B 1949. Cylinder seals from Palestine. *BA* 11, 1: 1-43.
- Parkinson, RB et al 1995. *Papyrus*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Parsons, P 2007. *City of the Sharp-nosed Fish*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
- Patai, R 1990. *The Hebrew goddess*. 3rd ed. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

- Paul, S & Dever, WG (eds) 1973. *Biblical Archaeology*. Jerusalem: Keter.
- Peck, WH 1978. Two seated scribes of Dynasty Eighteen. *JEA* 64: 72-75.
- Peckham, B 1987. Phoenicia and the religion of Israel: The epigraphic evidence, in Miller, Hanson & McBride 1987: 79-99.
- Perl, L & Weihs, E 1990. *Mummies, Tombs, and Treasure: Secrets of Ancient Egypt*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Perrot, N 1937. Les Représentations de l'arbre sur les monuments de Mésopotamie et de l'Elam. *Babyloniaca* 17: 5-143.
- Petrie, Sir FWM 1914. *Amulets*. London: Constable.
- Pienaar, DN 2008. Symbolism in the Samaria ivories and architecture. *Acta Theologica* 2008(2): 48-68.
- Pinch, G 1982. Offerings to Hathor. *Folklore* 93 (2): 138-150.
- Pinch, G 1995. *Magic in ancient Egypt*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Pinch, G 2002. *Handbook of Egyptian mythology*. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO.
- Pinch, G 2004. *Egyptian mythology: a guide to the gods, goddesses, and traditions of ancient Egypt*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pirard, B (2007). Bestand: Hiëroglief Isis. Available from:
http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bestand:Hi%C3%ABroglief_Isis.JPG
(Accessed 15 May 2009).

- Pittman, H 1995. 'Cylinder seals and scarabs in the Ancient Near East', in
Sasson J M (ed) 1995. *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*.
Vol III, New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan, 1589-1603.
- Poo, M 2005. *Enemies of civilization: attitudes toward foreigners in ancient
Mesopotamia, Egypt, and China*. Albany: State University
of New York Press.
- Portal, F, Baron de & Simons, JW 1904. *A comparison of Egyptian symbols
with those of the Hebrews*, trans. J.W. Simons. New York:
Macoy.
- Porten, B 1984. The Jews in Egypt, in Davies & Finkelstein (1984: 372-400).
- Pütz, W 1849. *Handbook of ancient geography and history*, trans. R.B.
Paul. London: Francis & John Rivington.
- Rahmouni, A 2008. *Divine epithets in the Ugaritic alphabetic texts*. Leiden: Brill.
- Rapport, N & Overing, J 2000. *Social and cultural anthropology: the key concepts*.
London: Routledge.
- Rawlinson, G 1885. *The religions of the ancient world*. New York: Alden.
- Redford, DB 1993. *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in ancient times*. Princeton:
Princeton University.
- Redford, DB 2006. *From Slave to Pharaoh: The Black Experience of Ancient
Egypt*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Reifenberg, A 1948. *Ancient Hebrew seals*. London: East and West Library.

- Ribichini, S 2001. Beliefs and religious life, in Moscati (2001: 120-152).
- Riggs, C & Stadler, MA 2003. A Roman shroud and its demotic inscriptions in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. *JARCE* 40: 69-87.
- Robins, G 1993. *Women in ancient Egypt*. Cambridge MA : Harvard University Press.
- Robins, G 2008. *The art of ancient Egypt*, 2nd Ed. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Rollston, C. (2008a). *Rollston critique of the Jezebel seal theory*. Available from: <http://www.asor.org/seal.article.html> (Accessed 3 October 2008).
- Rollston, C. (2008b). *Rollston responds to shanks*. Available from: <http://www.bib-arch.org/debates/-jezebel-seal-03.asp> (Accessed 3 October 2008).
- Rossi, C 2004. *Architecture and mathematics in ancient Egypt*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Roulet, A 1972. *The Egyptian and Egyptianizing monuments of imperial Rome*. Leiden: Brill.
- Ruiz, A 2001. *The spirit of ancient Egypt*. New York: Algora.
- Rursus. (2007). *Religious symbols from the top nine organised faiths of the world according to major world religions*. Available from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Religious_syms.svg (Accessed 12 November 2008).

- Ryholt, KSB & Bülow-Jacobsen, A 1997. *The political situation in Egypt during the second intermediate period, c. 1800-1550 B.C.* Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen.
- Ryken, L et al 1998. *Dictionary of biblical imagery.* Downers Grove: Inter Varsity.
- Sansone, N 2004. *Ancient Greek civilization.* Malden: Blackwell.
- Sass, B 1993. The pre-exilic Hebrew seals: iconism vs. aniconism, in Sass & Uehlinger (1993: 194-256).
- Sass, B 1995. Inscribed West Semitic-stamp seals of the ninth-sixth centuries B.C.E.: Can they be dated and distinguished by iconographic means, in Westenholz, J G (ed) 1995. *Seals and Sealing in the Ancient Near East.* Jerusalem: Bible Lands Museum, 143-144.
- Sass, B & Uehlinger, C (eds) 1993. *Studies in the iconography of Northwest Semitic inscribed Seals: Proceedings of a symposium held in Friburg on April 17-20, 1991* Fribourg: University Press.
- Sauneron, S & Lorton, D 2000. *The priests of ancient Egypt.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Schipper, BU 1999. *Israel und Ägypten in der Königszeit.* Freiburg: Universitätsverlag.
- Schmitz, L 1855. *A manual of Ancient History: From the remotest times to the overthrow of the Western Empire, A.D. 476.* 5th ed. Philadelphia: Blanchard and Lea.

- Schlick-Nolte, B 1994. Gedanken zu Skarabäen aus Kition und ihren Typenreihen, in Leclant et al (eds) *Hommages à Jean Leclant, Vol 3*. Cairo: Institut français .d'archéologie orientale, 441-454.
- Schniedewind, WM 2004. *How the Bible became a book: The textualization of ancient Israel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schodde, GH 2009: *The Book of Enoch: Translated from the Ethiopic, with Introduction and Notes*. [sl] BiblioLife.
- Schroer, S 1987. *In Israel gab es Bilder. Nachrichten von darstellenden Kunst in Alten Testament*. Freiburg: Universitätsverlag.
- Schroer, S 2006. *Contributions to the Hermeneutics of Reading Ancient Art*. Freiburg: Universitätsverlag.
- Scott, RBY 1964. The Seal of Šmryw. *Vetus Testamentum* 14 (1): 108-111.
- Scott Littleton, C 2005. *Gods, goddesses, and mythology, Vol 9*. Tarrytown: Marshall Cavendish.
- Shafer, BE (ed) 1991. *Religion in ancient Egypt: Gods, myths, and personal practice*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Shafer, BE 1998a. Temples, priests and rituals: An overview, in Shafer (1998: 1-27).
- Shafer, BE (ed) 1998b. *Temples of Ancient Egypt*. London: I.B.Tauris.
- Shah, DI 1970. *Oriental magic*, 2nd ed. London: Octagon.

- Shaw, I & Jameson, R 2002. *A dictionary of archaeology*. 6th ed. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Shorter, AW 1932. Two Statuettes of the Goddess Sekhmet-Ubastet. *JEA* 3/4: 121-124.
- Shorter, AW 1937. *The Egyptian gods: A handbook*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Sidebotham, SE, Hense, M & Nouwens, HM 2008. *The Red Land: The illustrated archaeology of Egypt's eastern desert*. Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press.
- Silverman, DP 1991. Divinities and deities in ancient Egypt, in Shafer (1991: 7-87).
- Silverman, DP 2003. *Ancient Egypt*. New York: Oxford University Press US.
- Smart, N 1998. *The world's religions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Smith, HP 1907. Theophorous proper names in the Old Testament. *AJSL* 24 (1): 34-61.
- Smith, MS 2002. *The early history of God: Yahweh and the other deities in Ancient Israel*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Smith, WS 1960. *Ancient Egypt, as represented in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*. Boston: Metcalf.
- Southern, R 2010. *How to identify a Egyptian cobra*. Available from: http://www.ehow.com/how_2285254_identify-egyptian-cobra.html (Accessed on 24 January 2010).

- Sparks, KL 2005. *Ancient texts for the study of the Hebrew Bible: a guide to the background*. Peabody: Hendrickson.
- Spence, L 1990. *Ancient Egyptian myths and legends*. Mineola: Dover.
- Spencer, AJ 1978. Two enigmatic hieroglyphs and their relation to the Sed-Festival. *JEA* 64: 52-55.
- Spielvogel, JJ 2008. *Western Civilization: To 1715*. Belmont: Clark Baxter.
- Stabnow, DK 2006. *HCSB super giant print dictionary and concordance*. Nashville: Holman.
- Stager, LE 1991. When Canaanites and Philistines ruled Ashkelon. *BAR* 17/2: 24-43.
- Stanwick, PE 2002. *Portraits of the Ptolemies: Greek kings as Egyptian pharaohs*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Stavropoulou, F 2004. *King Manasseh and child sacrifice: Biblical distortions of historical Realities*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Stern, E 2001. *Archaeology of the land of the Bible: the Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian periods, 732-332 BCE*. New York: Doubleday.
- Suter, CE & Uehlinger, C (eds) 2005. *Crafts and images in contact : studies on Eastern Mediterranean art of the first millennium B.C.E.* Fribourg: Academic.
- Sweeney, EJ 2006. *The Pyramid Age, Vol 2*. New York: Algora.

- Sweeney, EJ 2007. *Empire of Thebes, or, Ages in chaos revisited*. New York: Algora.
- Sweeney, EJ 2008. *The Ramessides, Medes and Persians*. New York: Algora.
- Sykes, PM 2003. *History of Persia*. London: Routledge.
- Sykes, E & Kendall, A 2001. *Who's who in non-classical mythology*. New York: Routledge.
- Taylor, G 1993. *Yahweh and the sun: biblical and archaeological evidence for sun worship in ancient Israel*. Sheffield: JSOT.
- Taylor, JH 2001. *Death and the afterlife in ancient Egypt*. London: British Museum.
- Te Velde, H 1971. *Seth, god of confusion: a study of his role in Egyptian mythology*. Leiden: Brill.
- Thomas, DW (ed) 1967. *Archaeology and Old Testament study*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Thompson, CJS 2003. *Mysteries and Secrets of Magic*. Whitefish: Kessinger.
- Tiele, P 2009. *History of the Egyptian Religion*. [sl]: BiblioLife.
- Tigay, JH 1986. *You shall have no other gods: Israelite religion in the light of Hebrew inscriptions*. Atlanta: Scholars.
- Tigay, JH 1987. Israelite religion: The onomastic and epigraphic evidence, in Miller, Hanson & McBride (1987: 157-194).
- Tillich, P 1958. *The dynamics of faith*. New York: Harper Torchbooks.

- Traunecker, C 2001. *The gods of Egypt*, trans. D. Norton. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Trigger, BG 1983. *Ancient Egypt: a social history*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Troy, L 2006. Religion and cult during the time of Thutmose III, in Cline & Goddard (2006: 123-182).
- Turner, VW 1967. *The forest of symbols: Aspects of Ndembu ritual*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Turner, P & Coulter, CR 2001. *Dictionary of ancient deities*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tushingham, AD 1970. A royal Israelite seal (?) and the royal jar handle stamps (part one). *BASOR* 200: 1-78.
- Tushingham, AD 1971. A royal Israelite seal (?) and the royal jar handle stamps (part two). *BASOR* 201: 3-35.
- Tushingham, AD 1992. New Evidence Bearing on the Two-Winged LMLK Stamp. *BASOR* 287: 61-65.
- Uehlinger, C 1993. Northwest Semitic inscribed seals, iconography and Syro-Palestinian religions of Iron-Age II: Some afterthoughts and conclusions, in Sass & Uehlinger (1993: 57-288).
- Uehlinger, C 2005. Die Elfenbeinschnitzereien von Samaria und die Religionsgeschichte Israels: Vorüberlegungen zu einem Forschungsprojekt, in Suter & Uehlinger (2005: 149-186).

- Uehlinger, C 2007. Neither eyewitnesses, nor windows to the past, but valuable testimony in its own right: Remarks on iconography, source criticism and ancient data-processing, in Williamson (2007: 173-228).
- Ussishkin, D 1994. Gate 1567 at Megiddo and the seal of Shema, servant of Jeroboam, in King, et al (1994: 410-428).
- Vance, DR 1994. Literary sources for the history of Palestine and Syria: The Phœnician inscriptions. *BA* 57 (2): 110-120.
- Van der Horst, PW 1987. *Chaeremon, Egyptian priest and stoic philosopher: the fragments*, 2nd ed. Leiden: Brill.
- VanderKam, JC 2001. *The Book of Jubilees*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic.
- Van der Toorn, K, Becking, B & van der Horst, PW (eds) 1999. *Dictionary of deities and demons in the Bible*. 2nd ed. Leiden: Brill.
- Van Sertima, I 1989. *Egypt revisited, Vol 10*. 2nd ed. Piscataway: Transaction.
- Vassilika, E 1989. *Ptolemaic Philae*. Leuven: Peeters.
- Vassilika, E 1998. *Greek and Roman art*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wallace, HN 1985. *The Eden Narrative*. Atlanta: Scholars.
- Wallis Budge, Sir EA 1904. *The gods of the Egyptians or studies in Egyptian mythology: Vol 1*. London, Methuen.

- Wallis Budge, Sir EA 1925. *Mummy: A Handbook of Egyptian Funerary Archaeology*. 2nd rev ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wallis Budge, Sir EA 1953. *The Book of the Dead*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Wallis Budge, Sir EA 1969. *The gods of the Egyptians, Vol I*. Reprint. New York: Dover.
- Wallis Budge, Sir EA 1970. *Amulets and Talismans*. Reissue. New York: Collier.
- Wallis Budge, Sir EA 1972a. *Egyptian magic*, Reprint. Mineola: Dover.
- Wallis Budge, Sir EA 1972b. *From fetish to God in ancient Egypt*, Reissue. New York: Benjamin Blom.
- Wallis Budge, Sir EA 1973. *Osiris and the Egyptian resurrection, Vol 2*. Reprint. Mineola: Dover.
- Wallis Budge, Sir EA 1978a. *Amulets and superstitions*. Reprint. Toronto: General Publishing.
- Wallis Budge, Sir EA 1978b. *An Egyptian hieroglyphic dictionary, in two volumes Vol 1*. New York: Dover.
- Wallis Budge, Sir EA 1978c. *An Egyptian hieroglyphic dictionary, in two volumes Vol 2*. New York: Dover.
- Wallis Budge, Sir EA 1997. *An introduction to ancient Egyptian literature*. New York: Dover.

- Wallis Budge, Sir EA 2005. *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*. Reprint.
McLean: IndyPublish.
- Ward, WA 1967. Three Phoenician Seals of the Early First Millennium B.C. *JEA*
53: 69-74.
- Ward, WA 2004. Phoenicians, in Hoerth, Mattingly & Yamauchi
(2004: 183-207).
- Watson, R 1832. *A Biblical and theological dictionary: explanatory of the history,
manners and customs of the Jews, and neighbouring nations.
With an account of the most remarkable places and persons
mentioned in ancient scripture; an exposition of the principal
doctrines of Christianity*. New York: Waugh & Mason.
- Weekes, K 1999. *The lost tomb*. London: Phoenix.
- Wendel, FCH 2009. *History of Egypt*. [sl]: BiblioLife.
- Werness, HB 2006. *The Continuum encyclopedia of animal symbolism in art*.
New York: Continuum.
- West, JA 1995. *The traveller's key to ancient Egypt: A guide to the sacred
places of ancient Egypt*. Wheaton: Quest.
- Westenholz, JG 1995. *Seals and sealing in the ancient Near East*. Jerusalem:
Bible Lands Museum.
- White, JEM 1970. *Ancient Egypt; its culture and history*. Mineola: Dover.
- Whitehead, AN 1985. *Symbolism: Its meaning and effect*. New York: Fordham
University.

Wiedemann, A 2001. *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*. Boston: Adamant Media.

Wilkinson, Sir JG 1841. *Manners and customs of the Ancient Egyptians: including their private life, government, laws, art, manufacturers, religion, agriculture, and early history, Vol II*. London: John Murray.

Wilkinson, Sir JG 1847a. *Manners and customs of the Ancient Egyptians: including their private life, government, laws, art, manufacturers, religion, agriculture, and early history. Vol III*. London: John Murray.

Wilkinson, Sir JG 1847b. *Manners and customs of the Ancient Egyptians: including their private life, government, laws, art, manufacturers, religion, agriculture, and early history Vol V*. London: John Murray.

Wilkinson, Sir JG 1854. *A popular account of the ancient Egyptians*. London: John Murray.

Wilkinson, TAH 2001. *Early dynastic Egypt*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Williams-Forte, E 1983. The snake and the tree in the iconography and texts of Syria during the Bronze Age, in Gorelick, L and Williams-Forte, E (eds) 1983. *Ancient seals and the Bible*. Malibu: Undena, 18-43.

Williamson, HGM 2007 (ed). *Understanding the history of Ancient Israel*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Wilson, I 2006. *Lost world of the Kimberley: extraordinary glimpses of Australia's Ice Age ancestors*. Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin.
- Wiredu, N 2004. *A companion to African philosophy, Vol 28*. Malden: Blackwell.
- Witte, M & Diehl, J 2008. *Israeliten und Phönizier: ihre Beziehungen im Spiegel der Archäologie und der Literatur des Alten Testaments und seiner Umwelt*. Fribourg: Academic.
- Woodforde, J 1971. *The strange story of false hair*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Wuthnow, R 1992. *Rediscovering the sacred: perspectives on religion in contemporary society*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Wyatt, N 1981. Interpreting the creation and fall story of Genesis. *ZAW* 93: 10:21.
- Yadin, Y 1958. Ancient Judean weights and the age of the Samaria Ostraca. *Scripta Hierosolymita* 8: 9-17.
- Yadin, Y 1972. *Hazor, the Head of All Those Kingdoms*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Zaki, M & Atiya, F 2008. *The legacy of Tutankhamun: Art and history*. Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press.
- Zelinsky-Wibbelt, C 2003. *Text, Context, concepts, Volume 4 of Text Translation, Computational Processing*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Zevit, Z 2001. *The religions of ancient Israel: A synthesis of parallactic approaches*. London: Continuum.