

TWO ICONOGRAPHICAL EXAMPLES OF SUN-DISC CONNECTIONS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF JEWISH BELIEFS IN ANGELS

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ABSTRACT

In Palestine ancient Egyptian motifs with solar connections such as uraei and falcons were virtually omnipresent by c. 925 B.C.E. Many seals testify to the fact that during the eighth century the state religion of northern Israel, i.e., “official” Yahwism, was affected by the prevalence of solar symbolism. The celestial-solar character of deities was often emphasized by the addition of solar discs. This article presents two examples of enduring polytheistic iconography relating to the theme of transcendent messenger activity in the Bible. The first example dating to about 900 B.C.E. is of an ostrich with a sun disk at the neck. The second example, a Gnostic gem dated to ca. 200–100 B.C.E., provides evidence of solar motifs from Egyptian religion which facilitated concepts concerning divine mediation from God to mankind. It is proposed that these motifs provided the foundation for the conceptual changes in Jewish angelology that transpired as Christianity.

INTRODUCTION

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’ (Keel & Uehlinger 1998:395).

In biblical Hebrew texts descriptions of angelic presence are often ambiguous (Evans 2007). Barton (1998:17) has spoken of trying to let the text, “too hidebound by tradition ... speak through the stifling wrappings of interpretation with which it had been surrounded”. The realization that the “old schemes and explanatory models no longer work” requires “a willingness to revise conceptual interpretations and explanatory frameworks in the light of new evidence, however theoretically contaminated all such evidence inevitably will be” has been recognised (Nickelsburg

2003:3; Fullbrook 2002:196). The Deuteronomic need to justify certain theological positions (Keel & Uehlinger 1998:12) needs to be explored. Iconography is a useful means of controlling “the quicksand world of language game” (Kemp 1989:4); this article is a response to Dever’s (2002:28) “passionate plea for a renewed commitment to history, not theology, for a return of the basic evolutionary, comparative, and ecumenical approach of *Religiongeschichte* – coupled with the rich supplementary and corrective data that archaeology alone can supply”.

METHODOLOGY

Keel & Uehlinger (1998:395–396) advise that in looking at iconography it is essential to pay “strict attention to a specific area and historical time period”. For example they warn against trying to establish links with Ugarit, because the production of the Ugaritic texts ended about 1200, before any biblical texts were written, and state that the primary context for Palestine is provided by those peoples who lived contemporaneously with, and geographically close to Israel and Judah, i.e., documents of Syrian-Canaanite religion during the first millennium. Yet Keel & Uehlinger (1998:395) recognise that “the visual world is more cross-cultural than the verbal world”. As Wyatt (2001:29) has pointed out, the cultures of the ancient Near East were a “seamless robe”, so that synchronically and diachronically cross-fertilization from a variety of cultural contacts will have contributed to the growth of symbolic ideas and practices.¹ During the late Bronze Age religious exchange was especially common between Egypt and Canaan, and there were strong links between Egypt and the region of Syro-Palestine (Cornelius 1994:2). The ancient visual symbols we know today are likely to have been so much more ubiquitous in ancient times. When any ancient Near Eastern text is considered within its corresponding historical-political context and compared with others, even if the time period differs considerably, it becomes apparent that no text is a discrete entity on its own. The apperceptive mass of the

¹ For instance, although the Ugaritic inhabitants did not regard themselves as Canaanite, their language was a Canaanite dialect (Mazar 1993:238).

author has to be taken into account. The psychological term “apperceptive mass” is defined as “a group of present ideas, influential in determining what new ideas shall gain admission to consciousness and in what way new objects shall be perceived” (Corsini 2002:61). For example, the pervasive effect that the polytheism of surrounding cultural contexts has had on the development of Jewish beliefs about mediation between God and humankind is discernible even in the name Israel (Smith 2001:143).² In Ugaritic mythology El is the aged creator god – father of the gods who engendered the other gods in the pantheon. There are no traces of polemics against El in the Hebrew Bible because the El cult was conceived of as an older form of belief in the true God. El was never a rival of Yahweh, as Baal was.

The Ugaritic pantheon was conceived of as a hierarchy of four tiers of gods (Mullen 1980:108). The first level consists of the deity El and his consort Asherah.³ The second level is made up of active deities or patron gods, for example Baal, and the third level, the artisan gods, for example Kothar-wa-Khasis. In Greek mythology the comparable figure was Hermes. In Egypt Thoth was the equivalent figure. Thoth was the messenger and scribe of the gods as well as the god of death and the afterlife, and associated with wisdom. Thoth was known throughout the history of Egyptian religion but particularly prominent in the Ptolemaic period.⁴ Similarities between Hermes, Thoth, and the Hebrew Bible are to be seen in that Kothar performs the same function as Bezeleel and Aholiab (Exod 35:30, 31, 34) who were appointed by Yahweh to

² The etymology is uncertain, but it is thought to mean “to be powerful”, from a root *yl/wl* (Hartman 1972:674–676.) The appellation El corresponds to Akkadian *ilu(m)*, Canaanite *el* or *il*, and Arabic *el*. In Akkadian, *ilu(m)* and plural *ilu* and *ilanu* are used in reference to any individual god as well as to divine beings in general.

³ According to the Ugaritic texts the function of creator of the world and the king of the gods originally belonged specifically to El, but by the beginning of the iron age (1250 B.C.E.) El’s role had become largely nominal (Keel and Uehlinger 1998:410).

⁴ The combination of Hermes with Thoth took place early – in the Greek translation the cultic centre of Thoth in Egypt is called Hermapolis. Mahe (1996:361) suggests a “pre-Hermetic” teaching, believing that at least a mediated relation is likely between the Demotic Book of Thoth and the Greek hermetic writings. Classic Gnostic scripture continued the Hermetic-Jewish tradition. In 100 C.E. Philo of Biblius, in his Greek *Phoenician history*, equates Ptah of Memphis with Kothar-and-Khasis of Ugarit, and in the fourth century C.E., Eusebius, in his *Praeparatio evangelica*, approves the veracity of Philo of Biblius’s text.

construct his tent of meeting and its furnishings (Mullen 1980:134).⁵

Pope (1973:290) notes that parallelism in Job 38:36 contributes to the possibility of a fascinating witness to the equating of Hermes with Thoth. The NRSV translation reads “Who has put wisdom in the clouds or given understanding to the mists”, and the LXX (v. 37) Τίς δὲ ὁ ἀριθμῶν νέφη σοφία, οὐρανὸν δε εἰς γῆν ἐκλίει. But the meaning of the two obscure Hebrew words in MT Job 38:36 is explored by Pope. Pope regards בטחות, in the context of wisdom, as a reference to Thoth:⁶ לשכוי בינה מִי־שת בטחות חכמה או מִי־נתן

The other unknown word שכוי occurs in parallel with Thoth. Pope (1973:302) identifies it with Hermes because of the connection of שכוי to the Coptic name *souchi* for the planet Mercury (equivalent to Hermes). The LXX of Job 38:37b, “and has bowed the heaven to the earth” suggests that the LXX translator may have understood Hermes as the messenger ἄγγελος who connects heaven to earth via his mediation between the two. The lowest level of Ugaritic pantheon consisted of the messenger-gods, who had no independent volition (Handy 1994:176, 177). Handy identifies this level with the “angels” of the Bible. In Israel by the eighth century B.C.E. the first and second tiers described by Handy had already collapsed due to the equating of El with Yahweh, who originally belonged to the second tier (Mark Smith 2002a:18–22). The Yahweh cult was carried into Canaan (Syro-Phoenicia) by the last wave of immigration of Israelites, which took place over centuries. It was through assimilation that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was identified with Yahweh (Kraus 1989:82–85).⁷ Along with the name, Yahweh inherited various traits of El. For

⁵ Albright (1968:200) notes that the temple of Solomon reflects Phoenician culture to a large extent, and Mazar (1993:376–380) sees a direct connection between the cult of Baal-Shamem and the Phoenician Hiram’s association with Solomon in planning, building and equipping the temple in Jerusalem. Like Solomon’s temple, Baal’s temple is built of cedars of Lebanon and richly furnished with precious metals (cf. Isa 6:1–4; 1 Kings 8:27–30; Ps 11:4; 20:3, 7). It is clearly conceived of as a kind of analogue or counterpart of a greater house in heaven (Gibson 1956:14).

⁶ The Hebrew form of the name for Thoth טחות corresponds closely to the form of the name that prevailed in the 18th Dynasty (1550–1307 B.C.E.) when Thoth was a prominent figure, and his name spread to Phoenicia.

⁷ Eissfeldt (1956:33) observed that El, or the various hypostases of the *one* El, apparently did not have any significance for the Patriarchs until after their entry into Syro-Phoenicia.

instance Kraus (1989:83,156) notes that the ancient Israelite tradition that Yahweh judges Israel was derived from a universal picture of judgment which is part of the cultic tradition of the “highest God”. In Ugarit El was the judge, and his will was in effect the judgment of the divine council (Smith 2001:49).

SOLAR WORSHIP

The Divine Council is a well-recognised indication of Jewish belief in angels. A second source of communication between the divine and humankind is not so obvious: sun worship. Light, in the form of the sun or fire, is one of the most constantly appearing motifs associated with angels in the Hebrew Bible and in Jewish extra-biblical literature (Evans 2007:23–28). Much iconography testifies to the fact that the state religion of northern Israel, i.e. “official” Yahwism, was affected by the prevalence of solar symbolism during the eighth century B.C.E. In Egyptian religion the sun, as the god Aten, was the most important element, so the celestial-solar character of deities was often emphasized by the addition of solar discs (Keel & Uehlinger 1998:173, 401). This is clearly to be seen in seal amulets – “one of the most important artefacts for Canaanite-Israelite religious history” (Sass & Uehlinger 1993:278). For instance see Figure 1. Figures **a** to **c** are typical Judean seals dating to the end of the 8th C B.C.E., which depict the typical Egyptian image of a 4-winged *uraeus*. In **d**, a seal from the N kingdom of Israel, the falcon-headed lion bears the double crown of Egypt and the ankh. The solar balls held by the four-winged scarab in **e** are interpreted by Keel and Uehlinger (1998:256) as the rising sun. In **f**, the jar handle found at Lachish and dating to Hezekiah’s reign is depicted. It portrays a four-winged scarab holding a sun-disc, and bearing the inscription “for the king”. Keel & Uehlinger (1998:277) go so far as to state that by the eighth century B.C.E. Yahweh had taken on the solar characteristics of a “Most High God” to such an extent that he was conceived of as the actual sun god.

This paper presents two examples of sun disc iconography that demonstrate how far-reaching in time and concept the connection of the solar motif was to transcendent

messenger activity. The “Lord of the Ostriches” dates to about 900 B.C.E., and the Gnostic gem dates to the Ptolemaic period.

THE LORD OF THE OSTRICHES

At the time of transition from the tenth to the ninth century a new type of image portraying an ostrich appeared on scaraboids scattered throughout the inland regions of Israel and Judah, and survived into the last third of the eighth century: the “Lord of the Ostriches”. It is indigenous to the Israelite and Judahite religions (Keel & Uehlinger 1998:73, 140). See Fig. 2, from Keel & Uehlinger (1998:139). The figure labelled 162b was found at Gezer in Samaria; 162c is from Beth-Shemesh. In 162d, which was found at Tell en-Nasbeh, the connection to solar worship is betrayed by a little sun disk at the neck of the ostrich on the left. Keel and Uehlinger (1998:140) note that it is not clear whether the disk denotes a particular solar deity or some general numinous presence.

Keel & Uehlinger (1998:182) suggest that the connection with ostriches points to the fact that the inhabitants thought of the Lord of the Ostriches as at home in the steppe region of Palestine – just like the god Yahweh, who originally came from Southeast Palestine (northwest Arabia), the region that served as home for the Shazu, and therefore they suggest that the ostrich represents not only a deserted, dangerous and sinister world, but also a numinous power that commands respect and honour because it can survive mysteriously at the edge of habitable land. In ancient texts such as Jdg 5:4f., Deut 33:2, Hab 3:3,7 and Isa 63:1 Yahweh is connected with Seir, Paran, Edom, Teman, Midian and the Sinai. They (1998:385) consider the possibility that “Yahweh of Teman” and the Lord of the Ostriches both have their roots in one and the same figure.

A possible clue to the significance of the Lord of the Ostriches is suggested by Papoutsakis’s (2004:25–36) research concerning the “gross mistranslation” of Hebrew “ostriches” with Greek “sirens” in the targumim. In the following passages the Hebrew for ostrich, **עֲנָה** (*struthio camelus* (Holladay 1988:138)) appears in the

construct form עֲנַהּ בְּנֹת corresponding to Aramaic נְעַמְיָן בְּנֹת: Isa. 13:21; 34:13; 43:20; Job 30:29; Jer 27(50):39 and Mic 1:8 (Papoutsakis 2004:30). Papoutsakis observed that in every instance the Aramaic term for ostrich נְעַמַּא has been translated in the LXX as σειρήνες. He (2004:31) concludes that as it is a homonym for Tubal-Cain's sister Naamah, Naamah is concealed behind all Sirens in all the LXX passages.⁸

I would suggest that the association of ostrich with siren in the LXX, whether dirge or sweet song, may be providing another, or at least additional significance of the Lord of the Ostriches as a deity. In the *Chaldean Oracles* divinatory activity is described as being carried out through the medium of the *Iynges*. The “Iynx” or “wryneck” was a long-necked bird which was attached to a wheel and spun during theurgic rites so that it produced oracular sounds. By spinning this wheel, the transcendent *Iynges* were “called on” to participate in the Chaldean rites (Majercik 1989:215). The long-necked ostrich and long-necked (“wryneck”) *iynx* may have been associated with each other at an earlier stage in a cultural context where the practice of divination was acceptable. Lewy (1978:14 n. 32, 162, 312) noted the similarity between the Jewish and Chaldean hierarchy of angelic activity, and that it is likely that the *Chaldean Oracles* have roots in earlier centuries than the Middle Platonic theology in which they are expressed. For instance, the mediatory figures in the *Chaldean Oracles*, the *Iynges*, are described as “Powers of the Father”. The movement of the *Iynges* according to *Chaldean Oracles* Frg. 76 is their “leap” into the world as fiery entities, and they are also represented as having the nature of lightning. Fragment 87 describes the movement of the *Iynges* as a circular motion away from and back towards the “Father” in a ceaseless, circular motion, ἀχοιμήτω στροφάλιγγι, and it is this that constitutes their “thinking”. In the section describing the messengers called

⁸ Papoutsakis (2004:27) notes that “the exact shade of נְעַמַּא in the Aramaic of these passages has been ignored by all translators except Diez Macho. The Hebrew meaning of קִינָה = “dirge” has been imposed by other translators, whereas the Aramaic term had the neutral or even positive meaning “alluring or sweet songs”. Having established this point, Papoutsakis goes on to suggest that in the context of Naamah's involvement in the seduction of the “sons of God”, the Aramaic versions ascribed consciously to Hellenistic associations of the Greek sirens who lured passing sailors to their death with their sweet song (*Odyssey* XII).

Iynges in the *Chaldean Oracles*, the term “magic wheel” (Majercik 1989:127) is used in connection with whirling wheels.

Interestingly, the tell-tale verse Ezekiel 1:14, which describes the “running and returning” of the four living creatures is missing in the Old Greek. In the context of repeated denial of “turning” in Ezekiel 1 there appears to be a deliberate avoidance of association with such divinatory activities by the translators of the LXX of “turning”. Cf. Ezek 1 and 10 in relation to the “whirling wheels” (Evans 2008:460). The Greek word for ostrich, στρουθός (Pass. To be whirled, to spin round and round; or στρεφάω, Ion. Frequent. of στρέφω), means “to turn constantly, keep whirling or winding” (Liddell & Scott 1944:655). In Frg. 206 of the *Chaldean Oracles* the term στρόφαλον strengthens the possible connection of these noetic powers to the ritual of Hekate’s magical spinning top (Lewy 1978:133–134; Majercik 1989:175). Johnston (1990:90, 103–108) lists στρόφαλος for Hekate’s top (Johnston 1990:90), στροφάλιγγι, στροφάλιγξ circular motion, and ροιζέω (whirring) ἐνθρῶσκον (leap: “leap” into the spheres and then “return” to him).⁹ It conveys a sense of the constant turning or whirling that is associated with the *Iynges*.¹⁰ Ostriches have long necks, and in the light of the Greek word for ostrich, στρουθός, and the possible association of the ostrich with Naamah because of paronomasia, it is possible to conceive of the ostrich as fulfilling the function of a siren in the sense of expressing mediatory messages between the habitable and non-habitable world (the term “habitable land” is used by Keel & Uehlinger 1998:182).

The following factors strengthen the possibility that there may be a connection between Yahweh, the Lord of the Ostriches, Hekate Soteira and Hermes: In Greek

⁹ Also see Johnston (1990:101, n. 31).

¹⁰ According to Psellus, Hekate’s “magic wheel” was a golden disk embedded with a sapphire and inscribed with magical characters. By spinning this wheel, the transcendent *Iynges* were “called on” to participate in the Chaldean rites (Majercik 1989:215). Johnston (1990:21) submits evidence to show that Hekate’s role as intermediary between the Sensible and Intelligible Realms is an extension of her well known role as goddess associated with the passage through crossroads and liminal spaces. This is reminiscent of the “Lord of the Ostriches” association with the borderline between habitable and non-habitable world, and of Hermes who has a similar association. “Endia” is often used to describe Hekate as well as Hermes (Theocr. *Id.* 25.4), because both are associated with roads, especially where three roads meet.

mythology Hekate was the goddess associated with the passage through crossroads and liminal spaces (Johnston 1990:21). Her role as intermediary between the “sensible” and “intelligible” realms relates to that of the long-necked *Iynxes*, who in turn hark back to the messenger function of the association of the “Lord of the Ostriches” with the borderline between habitable and non-habitable world, and of Hermes (Thoth) who has a similar function. Thus the “Lord of the Ostriches” may have a messenger function akin to that envisaged in Jewish angelology (see Evans 2007:226, 306, and 2008:444–446; Keel 1977:102). All four these figures are associated with boundaries and liminal spaces (Yahweh, the Lord of the Ostriches, Hekate Sotiera and Hermes), and all function to convey otherworldly (possibly divine) concepts and all have a revelatory or divinatory function.

The following Ptolemaic Gnostic Gem witnesses to the fact that the mediatory symbolism of the sun-disc continued at least up to 100 B.C.E. One of the ways in which supernatural heavenly flight was conceived of and practiced in late antiquity was theurgy. Ancient Egyptian imagery still formed the foundation of theurgy. The souls of theurgists were believed to be enabled to ascend to divine realms by means of the rays of the sun. The primary goal of theurgy was ἀναγωγή i.e. the temporary rising of the soul to the intellectual fire of theoretic realm while the body was still alive. Repetition of this ritual purified the soul. The theory of cosmic sympathy forms the foundation of theurgy. The image in Fig. 4 dates to about 1340 B.C.E. Note the hands on the ends of the sun rays for a superb metaphor of mediation between heaven and earth.

A PTOLEMAIC GNOSTIC GEM (Figure 3)

This Ptolemaic Gnostic gem dated to about 200–100 B.C.E. demonstrates how the thread of ancient Egyptian solar worship as mediation between God and humankind was continued at least up to the Ptolemaic period. The following discussion refers to both the inscription and the line engraving on the reverse of the amulet portrayed in Fig. 3. The translation with notes is indebted to Simone Michel (2001:15, 16) and

Spiegelberg (1922:225–226). The inscription on the amulet has been deciphered as follows:

[1] ΕΙΣ ΒΑΙΤ One is Bait

[2] ΕΙΣ ΑΘΩΡ One is Hathor

[3] ΜΙΑ ΤΩΝ ΒΙΑ One is their power

[4] ΕΙΣ ΔΕ ΑΚΩΡΙ One also is Akwri (possibly meaning “snake”).

[5] ΧΑΙΠΕ ΠΑΤΕΡ ΚΟΣΜΟΥ Be praised, Father of the World

[6] ΧΑΙΠΕ ΤΡΙΜΟΡΦΕ ΘΕΟΣ Be praised, God in three forms

The first phrase *ONE IS BAIT* is directly relevant to this article. The depiction of the god Bait seated on a throne on the left of the amulet is Horus the falcon (Michel in agreement with Spiegelberg). The name of the falcon-headed figure Bait is a late Greek derivation from *bik*, falcon (Morenz 196:350). Spiegelberg (1922:225) spells it *bjk*, and refers to Horapallo’s use of the word Βαηθ for Horus (also listed by Westendorf 1977:30). Spiegelberg refers to the form Αρβαιθος – Ηρ – *bjk* which he reads as Horus the falcon. From the beginning of recorded Egyptian religion the pharaoh was identified with Horus the falcon (Hornung 1992:1713). The sun was often represented as a disc on the head of a falcon (Wilkinson 1992:129). Even in Palestine *uraei* and falcons were virtually omnipresent by c. 925 B.C.E. (Mullen 1980:84). Here the god Bait is depicted with the typical emblem of male gods, the *Was* sceptre which he holds in his left hand. The winged *uraeus* snake engraved on this heliotrope gem has a sun-disk on its head and an *ankh* hanging from its tail. Protective powers such as a vulture or falcon, or the winged sun-disk flanked by *uraei*, usually hovered above depictions of royalty (Hornung 1992:1727). The *uraeus* which the king wore on his forehead was a combination of falcon and sun-god because as falcon the divine king flew up to the sky in death (Hornung 1992:1725). Michel (2001:15) suggests that the elevated position of the *uraeus* snake is a representation of the *Ba* in flight. The *Ba* was conceived of as able to leave the deceased body at will and to follow the sun-god into the sky (Hornung (1992:1720)).¹¹ The concept of the *Ba*

¹¹ In the Ptolemaic context of this amulet, it could well concern a private individual, but the attached *ankh* is usually meant to symbolize that it is a deity. In the Old Kingdom, only the king possessed this element, but later it was understood to be an element of every

is relevant to the subject of angelology because the *ba* (plural form *bau*) is “a raw, mobile form of energy acting across space, effecting a sort of transfer of energy ... without physical contact” (Traunecker 2001:23).

CONCLUSION

In the struggle for Jewish identity to be seen as monotheistic the ideological restrictions on polytheism explain the characteristic ambiguity of descriptions of angelic mediation.¹² In Mach’s 1992 examination of the development of Jewish belief in angels before the rabbinic era he noted the way the LXX, and other authors of that time, tended to guard against polytheism by translating the plural form of El, *Elohim*, as angels. Fletcher-Louis (1997:4) suggests that this is primarily a mechanism whereby late Second Temple angelology retains the complex nature of “divine action and presence within creation and history ... without selling out to pagan polytheism.” I would suggest that the sun disc with its ancient association of divinity represents the idea of mediation between the spiritual/divine world and humankind on earth. The sun disk aspect of Jewish iconography betrays the ancient Egyptian roots of the angelological motifs which facilitated various historical and cultural stages of mankind’s perpetual efforts to express the religious experience of transcendence and mediation between mankind and God.

individual’s makeup. Writings as ritual or as magical spells were also understood as *bau* which constituted words whose effectiveness crossed the boundary between the physical and spiritual realms (Traunecker 2001:23). Deities do not die, so the only other possibility could be that this representation is concerned with the concept of “deification” which was taken up later by the Coptic Christians.

¹² Jonker (2014:137) asks “what were the *Vorlagen* used by the Chronicler ... What ideological or rhetorical purpose did the Chronicler serve with his use of these sources?” He quotes Ska (2006:226), who says that “Postexilic Israel wanted to safeguard its identity. Persian politics gave it the opportunity to do this.” Jonker claims that this is exactly what the quest of the Chronicler, in the late Persian period, was, using earlier traditions “in order to contribute towards the negotiation of a new identity for the postexilic community”.

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Figures

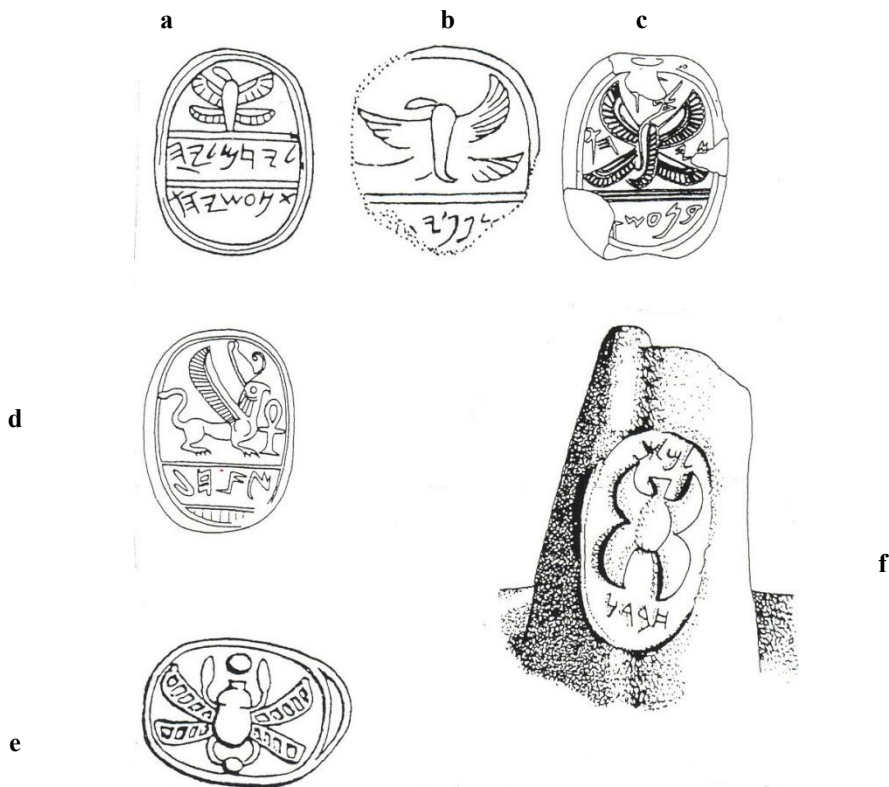


Fig. 1. Seals demonstrating the connection of Egyptian Solar Worship to the Israelite/Judaite Royal Throne (Keel and Uehlinger 1998:255, 275).

a–c) Typical Judean 4-winged *uraei*, dating to the end of the 8th C B.C.E. demonstrate that a clearly Egyptian religious protective symbol is being used (Keel and Uehlinger 1998:273).

d) A falcon-headed lion bearing the double crown of Egypt and the *ankh* from the N. Kingdom of Israel, 8th C. (Keel and Uehlinger 1998:256).

e) The four-winged scarab, holding solar balls with its feet, from the palace area of Samaria, was especially typical of 8th C Samaria, and is interpreted by Keel and Uehlinger (1998:256) as the rising sun.

f) Jar handle found at Lachish, dating to Hezekiah's reign, bearing the inscription "for the king"



Fig. 2. The Lord of the Ostriches
Seals depicting the Lord of the Ostriches, 1000 to 900 B.C.E. (Keel & Uelinger 1998:139).
Note the sun disk at the neck of the ostrich in the seal on the right.



Fig. 3. Ptolemaic Gnostic Gem, 2nd –1st C B.C.E. (Michel 2001:15).

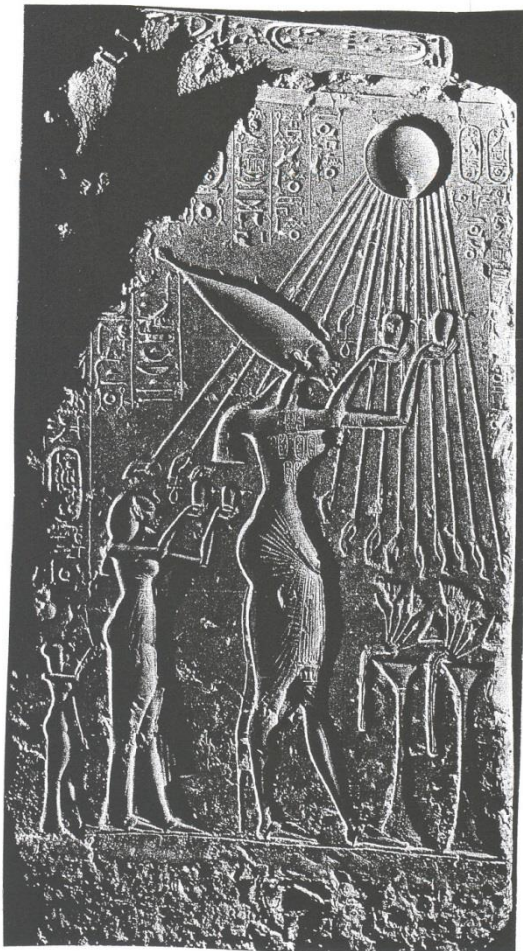


Fig. 4. Akhenaten and his family offering to the Aten.

Note hands on the ends of the sun rays.

(Alabaster mural from the great Palace of Amarna, 105 cm high. Cairo Museum.)