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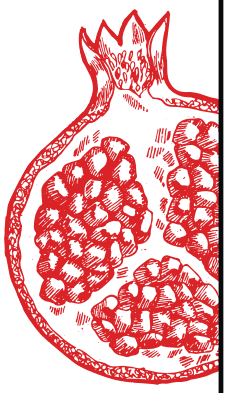

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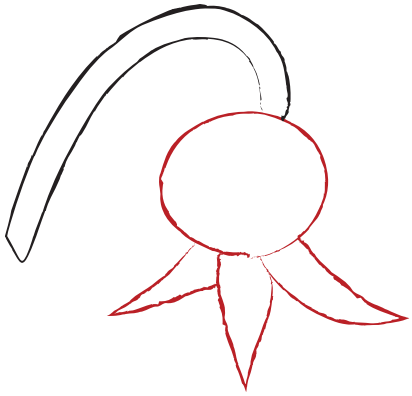

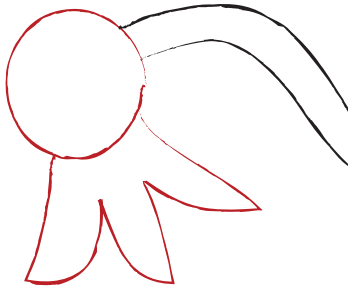

Inaugural Issue: Conceptualizing the Divine in the Levant and Mesopotamia

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WINGS, WEAPONS, AND THE HORNED TIARA: ICONOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION OF THE DEITY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA IN THE BRONZE AGE

Joanna Töyräänvuori

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Keywords: Ugarit, iconography, sea god, cylinder seals, Mediterranean sea, Bronze Age, North West Semitic, Syrian glyptic.

Abstract

This article discusses the iconography of the deified Mediterranean Sea in Syrian glyptic from the Middle and Late Bronze Ages in light of textual evidence from the city of Ugarit (Ras Shamra). Building on the work of Paolo Matthiae in recognizing the visual vocabulary of the representation of the deity, the article argues that the reason for the depiction of the sea god as a winged deity was due to its role as a mediator between the celestial and terrestrial oceans in ancient Semitic conception. The article also provides a heuristic for separating depictions of the winged sea god from the representations of the winged goddess in the presence of water birds and fish in its visual vocabulary.

Dieser Aufsatz bespricht die Ikonographie des vergöttlichten Mittelmeers in der syrischen Glyptik der mittleren und späten Bronzezeit im Lichte der textlichen Zeugnisse aus der Stadt Ugarit (Ras Shamra). Die Arbeit von Paolo Matthiae zur Erkennung des visuellen Vokabulars der Darstellung der Gottheit weiterführend, argumentiert der Aufsatz, dass der Grund für die Darstellung des Meeresgottes als geflügelte Gottheit in der antiken semitischen Vorstellung lag, wo er ein Rolle als Vermittler zwischen dem himmlischen und dem irdischen Ozean hat. Der Artikel liefert auch eine Heuristik für die Unterscheidung von Darstellungen des geflügelten Meeresgottes von den Darstellungen der geflügelten Göttin die zusammen mit Wasservögeln und Fischen abgebildet wird.

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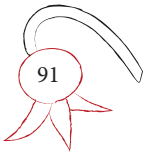


Introduction

This article offers a perspective on conceptualizing the deified Mediterranean Sea through iconographic representations from the Syrian region dating to the Middle and Late Bronze Ages in light of textual evidence. The god of the Mediterranean Sea was known by most of the peoples that inhabited the Levantine coast from the time of the Sargonic Empire (2334–2154 BCE) all the way down to the Hellenistic Era[1] – and

[1] The texts that discuss the North West Semitic Sea god in particular have been collected in Töyräänvuori 2018. Regarding the *longue durée* of conceptions of the sea in the ancient world, see also Rollinger 2012, who does not, however, discuss the divinized sea but the actual Mediterranean. While texts from all over the ancient world seem to refer to the Mediterranean Sea, it bears noting that they use different names for the mythologized concept. In NWS texts, the personified sea is called Yamm, and it is called Tiamat in Mesopotamian texts.

perhaps even later.[2] There are several mythological texts from the coastal cities that either feature or mention the god of the sea, and the most complete text of these is the poetic epic called the Baal Cycle from ancient Ugarit.[3] In this article, it is argued that comparing these textual witnesses with the iconographic representations of the Sea god from the Levantine and Syrian regions benefits the interpretation of both the texts and the images.

This article builds on an important contribution by Paolo Matthiae (1992) on the iconography of the Syrian Sea god,[4] adds new representations to his discussion, and contrasts the information in the iconographic depictions with relevant textual witnesses.[5] This is done in the hope that it will not only help us better understand ancient mythological texts that pertain to the god of the Mediterranean Sea, but that it may also elucidate aspects of Late Bronze Age (1550–1150 BCE) kingship on the Levantine littoral, the sea having been an important facet in the political mythologies of the coastal cities.[6] Some of the concepts discussed in this article were probably also shared by the

[2] Drummond 1826 reported a local, annual commemoration of the battle of the Storm god by the Abraham River (*Nahr Ibrahim*) in Lebanon in his own time. The river was formerly called the Adonis.

[3] The *editiones princie* of most of the tablets in the Baal Cycle were published between 1932–1938 in *CTA* and in issues X and XII the journal *Syria* by C. Virolleaud. For details on the publication of each column and tablet, see Smith 1994; and Smith and Pitard 2009. The text has been translated by Gaster 1933; Ginsberg 1950; Caquot 1974; Del Olmo Lete 1981; Bordreuil and Pardee 1993; Dietrich and Loretz 1997; Smith 1997; Wyatt 2002; Niehr 2015, and others.

[4] Matthiae 1992: "Some Notes on the Old Syrian Iconography of the God Yam." See bibliography for details.

[5] Many of the seals discussed here were examined by Williams-Forte 1983 and 1993, but the context of her discussion was entirely different, and she did ot recognize the figure suggested by Matthiae as the Sea god. Nevertheless, the present study owes Williams-Forte a debt of gratitude.

[6] Cf. Töyräänvuori 2018. Langdon 1989, 193, writes: "The fundamental religious significance of these representations of fishermen in the art of island and coastal societies comes as no surprise, for only in maritime communities is the fish such an important commodity that its eternal renewal is a matter to be taken to the gods."

Southern Levantine kingdoms, and traces of them may still be observed in texts from the Iron Age, chiefly the Hebrew Bible.[7] However, these are not the focus of the present study.

The article begins with background information on how modern scholars have learned about these conceptions, followed by an overview of the mythic texts that are the major source of information on the sea in the Late Bronze Age. The main body of the article presents iconographic representations of the Sea god in the Middle Bronze Age (2200–1500 BCE), followed by a discussion on the political aspects of the sea that emerge from both the textual and the iconographic witnesses, especially in connection with ancient kingship and monarchic succession.

The Sources for the Ancient North West Semitic Sea God

The sources for ancient conceptions of the Sea god in the Levantine cities are in the form of texts and iconography. Certain aspects of these mythological conceptions can also be deduced through analogy with Mesopotamian (especially Mariote) and even Egyptian texts and material remains,[8] but the most relevant textual sources are from the coastal cities of the Eastern Mediterranean, from the Bronze Age texts from Ugarit to texts of the Greco-Roman period (332 BCE–642 CE).[9] The city of Ugarit was located on the coast of modern-day Syria, and a repository of North West Semitic texts, clay tablets, were found there in archaeological excavations in the 1930s.[10] These texts were written

[7] See the bibliography in Töyräänvuori 2018. Most recently, the connections of the myths to the biblical tradition have been examined by Scoggins Ballentine 2015.
[8] Cf. Durand 1993; Anthonioz 2009 for a comprehensive study of the Mesopotamian evidence, Töyräänvuori 2013 for a brief study on the Egyptian witnesses.
[9] The later Greco-Roman witnesses are discussed, e.g., by Redford 1992.
[10] For a general introduction to Ugarit, see Yon 2006. The discovery of the texts was followed by the decipherment of the cuneiform alphabet and the provisional translations of the principal texts between the years 1929 and 1932. Curtis 1985, 18–33.

in a previously unknown language that is closely related to Aramaic, Phoenician and Biblical Hebrew.[11] The texts from the city include many different types of texts, ranging from economic tablets and epistolary correspondence to mythology.[12] The Baal Cycle, in which the dynastic Storm god of the city battles the sea, is one of the three major poetic epics from the excavations, and these texts have been compared with the texts of the Hebrew Bible ever since their discovery because, in addition to linguistic similarities, it is commonly accepted that the Bronze Age texts give us insight into the intellectual world in which the later biblical texts were conceived.[13]

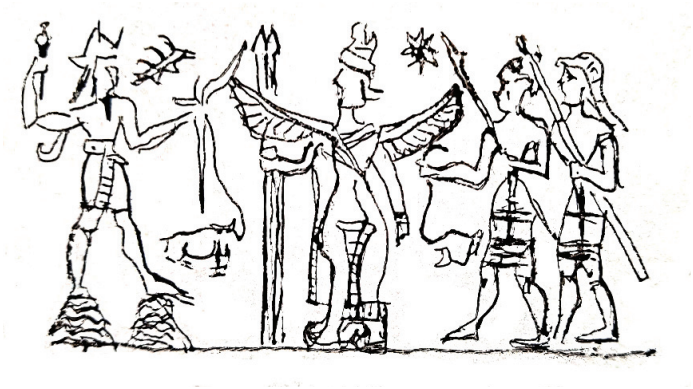


Figure 1. Cylinder seal impression of a steel-grey hematite seal 22.5 x 12.3 mm in size, dated to c. 1700 BCE. Redrawn from Williams-Forte 1993, Fig. 4 (BM 132824). The Storm god (left) stands opposite a winged deity flanked by two servants. The star-esque symbol often accompanies depictions of the god, associating the god with the sky while the fish carried by the god's servant associates him with the sea. A curator of the British Museum has interpreted the figure as the goddess Ištar.

[11] Published in *The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places* (*KTU*: 3rd enlarged ed.), ed. M. Dietrich, O. Loretz, and J. Sanmartín (2013). AOAT 360/1. This is the most recent edition of the texts that have been published in increments since 1929. The volume contains only the texts written in the native Ugaritic language and not texts written in the other languages from the city, including Akkadian and Hurrian.

[12] See Watson and Wyatt 1999 for discussion on the different types of texts found in the city.

[13] Connections between the Ugaritic texts and the Hebrew Bible have been collected in *Ras Shamra Parallels* volumes, edited by Fisher (1972, 1975) and Rummel (1981). Most of the history of Ugaritic studies have been conducted in tandem with Biblical Studies.

From this area, there are also iconographic pieces of evidence that pertain to the god of the sea (Fig. 1). The most interesting of these depictions come from Syrian glyptic of the Middle and Late Bronze Ages discussed presently.[14] Although iconographic representations do not always or necessarily correspond with what is written in the texts, in some cases they can help us interpret otherwise obscure facets of the narratives and myths.[15] A caution must be issued, however, in that the seals in which most of the depictions are found were not used to transmit mythologies in the ancient world but were used, for example, for the sealing closure of containers and the signing of clay tablets.[16] Mythological conceptions were evidently preserved in the iconography of the seals, but that is an unintended consequence of their use.

Matthiae cautions that, while the first-level reading of the Syrian iconography is easy, the second contextual or symbolic level is difficult, and the third iconological level is unattainable. He bases this taxonomy on his reading of the foundation laid by Erwin Panofsky, who separated iconographic and iconological readings of images.[17] What makes Syrian glyptic especially fruitful for investigations into mythological conceptions is their high formal quality and their neat compositional

[14] Note that the dating of seals is largely based on their iconographies as they often do not come from dateable contexts. Teissier 1996, 19.

[15] Cf. De Hulster and LeMon 2014; and De Hulster, Strawn, and Bonfiglio 2015.

[16] Magness-Gardiner 1990, 62–63, points out that seals were not commonly used as signatures in texts until the Amorite Kingdom period (MBA). Change in the use of the cylinder seals may also have occasioned changes in iconography. While it is not strictly relevant for this article, it should also be noted that the specific scenes of motifs found on seals may have been decided either by the artisan or the patron that initially procured the seal. This choice is not in the foreground when the seal is used for administrative purposes, and there is evidence of the re-use of seals, e.g., in the royal seals of the kings of Aleppo at Alalakh. Cf. Teissier 1996, 14.

[17] Panofsky's model for reading images is best expressed in *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* (1972), first laid out in the 1932 article, "Zum Problem der Beschreibung und Inhaltsdeutung von Werken der bildenden Kunst." Iconography is usually used to cover both iconographic and iconological interpretations in recent literature.

structure.[18] While there are no one-to-one correspondences between iconographic motifs and ancient mythological conceptions, iconographic representations allow insight into ancient views of the world when they are supplemented with the textual evidence. Supplementary textual evidence eases the iconographic and possibly even iconological reading of the images. The combination of sources may also help us understand concepts of the ancient cultural context and ideology that are not immediately recognizable to modern audiences.

The Ancient World View and the Sea in Cosmology

The mythological worldview underlying these ancient texts and images held that the world of ancient man was not only surrounded by water on all sides, but that there was a second ocean just as vast as the first that existed above the dome of the sky. This belief seems to have been shared by peoples of the ancient Near East.[19] There were certain correspondences between these "celestial" waters and the "terrestrial" waters.[20] Stellar constellations and rivers, for example, often carried the same names or were referred to in similar terms, which indicates that the constellations may have been conceived of and mapped as heavenly rivers.[21]

[18] Matthiae 1992, 169. According to Teissier 1996, 42, the interpretation of iconography is "one [*sic*] the most elusive yet tantalising aspects of the study of glyptic in general."

[19] Day (1985, 4): writes "the archaic world view shared by the ancient Israelites along with other peoples of the ancient near east that both above the domed firmament of heaven and below the earth there is a cosmic sea. Rain was regarded as having its origins in the cosmic sea above the firmament and coming down through the windows of heaven, while the world's seas and lakes were thought of as connected with the subterranean part of the cosmic sea."

[20] The connection between *šamê*, "heaven," and *ša mê*, "of water," was already made by the Babylonians (e.g. in K 170 + Rm 520: 6', a mystical explanatory text meant for the eyes of scholars only). See Livingstone 1986, 32.

[21] Both rivers and certain constellations carried the names of serpents. For example, *bašmu* referred to the constellation Serpens, and *mušḫuššu* referred to the constellation Hydra (White 2007, 180), while *irhan* referred to the river

A number of Mesopotamian records also seem to count seven seas altogether around the earth, and these seven seas had an analogue in the seven moving or non-fixed stars, which were also called the "seven heavens," referring to the planets.[22] In the modern times, in fact, there is still a portion of the night sky that is called the "the Sea," which features constellations bearing the names of sea monsters.[23] This conception of the world is relevant to the iconography of the Syrian Sea god discussed in this article.

The sea was not merely a feature of ancient cosmogony or an aspect of creation. The texts from ancient Ugarit have instructed us that the sea was also a deity worshiped in the Levantine cities and to whom

Euphrates. The lexical series Antagal (MSL 17, 233:6) actually explicitly spells out the concept: ÍD ^{d}MUŠ TIN.TIR DÚB *pu-ra-tum*, which equates "'The Snake of Babylon' river" with the Euphrates. This text means that the river, which was "the snake of Babylon," was called the Euphrates in the Akkadian language, which, in turn, means that the Euphrates was known as "the snake of Babylon." Irhan was the proper name of the monster with which the serpent Euphrates was associated and equated with the river in several texts (e.g. RA 28, 134 ii 6: ^{d}SA-*ha-an* = *pu-rat-tú*). Note that the heavenly rivers did not mirror rivers on earth but contained a particular geography (or astrography) of their own.

[22] Cf. Koch 1995. The astronomical systems of ancient Mesopotamia were not uniform and contain a certain amount of variation from era to era. The question of how much of these conceptions found in scholarly texts were shared by the people at large is also valid. The seven heavens in Mesopotamian astronomy were the sun, the moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. Each planet had a corresponding divinity.

[23] Olcott (1911), who lists among the constellations of "the heavenly sea" the constellations Cetus, Pisces, Delphinus, Aquarius, Pisces Australis, Capricorn, Grus, and Eridanus, suggested that this grouping may have been borne out of the sun's journey through this part of the sky during the rainy season in the ancient Near East. This may be accurate at least insofar as the earth's axial procession goes. Olcott (1911, 31–32) also mentions an ancient Egyptian belief that the inundation of the Nile was caused by the Water Bearer (Aquarius) sinking his urn into the foundations of the river. Langdon 1989, 196, suggested that a festival of the re-opening of the seas may have taken place in Levantine societies in March, honouring the gods Asherat and Yamm. This coincides with the sun in Pisces.

regular sacrifices were made.[24] It is important to make a distinction between the sea as a divinity and the sea as a character of a narrative, as the portrayal of the character in narrative texts is at odds with the position of the deity in the Levantine pantheon.

In the Ugaritic Baal Cycle (KTU 1.1–1.6; see Dietrich, Loretz, and Sanmartín 2013), the Sea, whose native name was Yamm (*ym*), is the enemy of Baal, the Storm god of mount Saphon.[25] This myth, which has traditionally been called a *Chaoskampf*, a chaos battle myth, features the combat between the Storm god, who often functioned as the protector of the king, and the Sea god, who is understood as an embodiment of the Mediterranean Sea.[26] Since the sea is the opponent of the dynastic god, who was the protector of the city, it would be easy to interpret Yamm as an evil divinity. Often the god is seen as embodying chaos.[27]

Fig. 2 Detail of a cylinder seal impression of a hematite seal, 27 x 14 mm in size. The theriomorphic winged god accompanied by a dolphin (left) faces two figures with raised weapons: the Storm god and the goddess Anat (right). The Sea god holds a weapon in one hand and a leashed dolphin in the other while a water bird resides at his feet. Redrawn from Williams-Forte 1983, Fig. 9. Originally published by Delaporte 1923, Pl. 96, Fig. 16 (A.918) Louvre inv. AO 1183.

[24] The sea is mentioned in the sacrificial lists KTU 1.39, 1.46, 1.48, 1.162, and 1.118.

[25] For comprehensive studies of the Syrian Storm god, cf. Schwemer 2001 and Green 2003. See also Schwemer 2008a, 2008b for a summary of his findings.

[26] Ayali-Darshan 2016; Töyräänvuori 2018.

[27] Undoubtedly inspired by H. Gunkel's paradigmatic *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit* (1895).

Aside from Tiamat from the Babylonian epic *Enuma Eliš*,[28] "Prince Sea, Judge River" is the most familiar mythological aspect of the sea. The basic outline of the story – the Sea demands the rule of the assembly of the gods, the Storm god and the Sea god duel (see Fig. 2), Baal wins through difficulty and constructs his palace – may not be as straightforward as it is often presented due to the fragmentary nature of the texts. There is no physical description of the Sea god, and the best description is from his battle scene with the Storm god in KTU 1.2 IV 15–18:

yrtqṣ.ṣmd.bdbʿl.	The weapon leaps from Baal's hand,
km.nšr/[bʾu]ṣbʿth.	like a bird of prey from his fingers.
ylm.ktp.zblym.	It strikes the chest of Prince Sea,
bn.ydm.ṯpṭ/[nh]r.	between the hands of Judge River.
ʿz.ym.lymk.	Strong is the Sea, he does not sink,
ltnǵṣn[.]*pnth.*	his joints do not shake,
lydpl/tmnh	his form does not fall.

The description is vaguely anthropomorphic and is enough to establish that the Sea god has a physical form, two hands, and a torso. While the Sea eventually loses the bout to the Storm god, at least for a while they are evenly matched.

There are administrative lists from the city that show another side of the divinity,[29] of a god recipient of sacrifices, particularly those of rams. Therefore, to paint the god as an adversarial force based on his role in the narrative of the Baal Cycle is to misconstrue the function that the god had in the pantheons of the societies occupying the shore, which, in many cases, depended on the god for their livelihoods (see

[28] The tablets of *Enuma Elish* have been dated to 900–200 BCE. The tablets were published by L. W. King in *Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum (Part XIII)* (1901), who also translated the text in *The Seven Tablets of Creation, or the Babylonian and Assyrian Legends concerning the Creation of the World and of Mankind* (1902). R. Labat made a more complete edition of the tablets in *Le Poème babylonien de la Création* (1935). A facsimile of the cuneiform was published by Lambert and Parker in *Enuma Eliš. The Babylonian Epic of Creation* (1966), and again in Lambert 2013 (cf. bibliography).

[29] See n. 24.

Linder 1981). The god of the sea, like the sea itself, seems to have been considered a provider of bounty, especially for fishermen and merchants (Fig. 3). As an enemy of the Storm god, the bringer of ill weather, the Sea would also have been the natural deity to which to turn for safe passage through the seas. But while the sacrificial lists tell us that sacrifices were made to the sea, it is not entirely clear whether the sacrifices were meant to entreat the god of the sea or to appease the Storm god, through whom the sea would have been calmed.[30]

Fig. 3 Cylinder seal impression drawn from a photograph in Matthiae 1992, Fig. 20. Originally published in Opificius, Berger-Haas, and Perry 1968. The photograph is of extremely poor quality. The cylinder seal is not located at a museum but was owned by Münzen und Medaillen AG Basel, n. 44. An enthroned god (right) is holding a goblet from which two streams of water issue. The winged and armed Sea god is in the middle, and a petitioner carrying two fish is featured on the left.

There are arguments that the god was worshiped and revered by the people of Ugarit, as the name of the Sea god is used as a theophoric element in personal names in the city,[31] and this would likely not have been the case with a divinity that was considered purely adversarial,

[30] Waschsmann 2009, 292. At least in the Aegean context, the domain of the Sea god was the saving of ships and the taming of horses. Langdon 1989, 191.

[31] There are 13 attestations of the element *ym* in personal names in the Ugaritic texts. These include names such as *ymil* (KTU 4.75 V 14), *ilym* (KTU 4.116:13), *mlkym* (KTU 4.126:19), and *abdym* (KTU 3.3:10; 4.7:7; 4.103:18, 47; 4.341:3). Tugendhaft 2013, 195.

as he is presented in the fragmentary myth. Theophoric names are similar to cylinder seals, which are discussed in the next section, in that they constitute a form of personal identification but at the same time contain mythic elements that can reveal details about the mythological conceptions that are not mentioned in the texts.[32] It is possible that the iconographic motifs might also contain competing mythological narratives that were never written down, so they are not necessarily complementary evidence for what is found in the written sources. It cannot be assumed that all the sources present a unified image of the sea god. Since the seals were used in administrative and archival contexts, they do bridge the gap between textual and archaeological sources of the past (Magness-Gardiner 1990, 61). It should also be pointed out that individual depictions naturally carry less weight than cumulative patterns of evidence (Teissier 1996, 40). Finding patterns of motifs is possible because Syrian seal-cutters had conventions for arranging their subjects (Teissier 1996, 39). What is inarguably shared by the textual witnesses and the iconographic depictions is the ambivalent character of the sea.

The Iconography of the Sea God

The iconography of the Sea god is interesting as it displays aspects of the god that are not explained by the texts (Fig. 4). An important piece of evidence depicts the sea as a winged and armed deity, one of the core deities in Syrian glyptic.[33] The Sea god is usually classified as a terrestrial divinity and not an astral divinity, which often boasted wings in Syrian iconography. It is the suggestion of the author that this depiction is due to the wings making the Sea god capable of traversing the distance between his two realms: the ocean encircling the earth

[32] Teissier 1996, 10: "Seals and sealing had a vital role to play in communication, not only as transmitters of iconography and ideas of status but of geographical and often ethnic identity. They were also transmitters of political and cultural perceptions."

[33] Teissier 1996, 41. Teissier interprets the figure as a goddess, but there is no question that she is not referring to the same figure.

disk and the vast sea above the sky. This double ocean seems to be the reason for this rare occasion of giving wings to a god not associated with a planet in Syrian iconography. This fits in with the adversary of the hero later being portrayed as a winged dragon or the sea-serpent on the Eastern Mediterranean, which symbolically collapses both the heavens and the seas as its domain.[34]

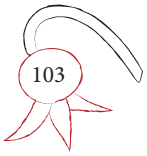
Fig. 4 Cylinder seal impression of a hematite seal, 24 x 12 mm in size dated to c. 1700 BCE. Redrawn from Matthiae 1992, Fig. 6. Originally published in Bleibtreu and Constantinescu 1981, Fig. 78, inv. KHM AS X 71. A winged figure with a horned cap (left) is holding two spears in one hand and a melee weapon in the other hand, standing next to a guilloche of water on one side and the ankh-type symbol on the other. The figure on the right side is wearing the shepherd's hat characteristic of Mesopotamian kings. The identification of the middle figure is uncertain.

Elements such as costumes, headgear, insignia, weapons, symbolic animals, and the positions of the figures, as well as the context in which they appear, can be used to identify individual deities in the glyptic.

In the typology devised by Matthiae (1992), it has been demonstrated that the winged male deity portrayed in the Old Syrian

[34] The dragon-motif also collapses the bird, the fish, and the horse into one chimera, all animals connected to the Syrian Sea god in iconography. Possibly the best-known example of the narrative of the hero conquering the dragon on the Eastern Mediterranean is the Golden Legend of St. George of Lydda, given the afterlife of the St. George and the dragon traditions. Cf. Töyräänvuori 2016.

cylinder seals from the second millennium BCE (MBA II),[35] carrying a spear and a curved scimitar or an Egyptian-style sickle sword (Fig. 3), represents the god Yamm.[36] Although the weapons can be in a lowered or raised position, in Syrian glyptic the god is never found without them.[37] The figure is often misidentified as a goddess since the pictorial representations of Ištar in Assyrian and Babylonian iconography contain similar symbols: wings, a bare front leg, and a curved sword.[38] The winged deity that Matthiae identified as the god Yamm is "well defined in almost all of the above mentioned primary elements." It also appears in "relatively unchangeable compositional patterns," making the identification of the god as Yamm more solid than that of most deities (Matthiae 1992, 169).



[35] Many of the seals come from Alalakh and Ebla. See Matthiae 1992 for bibliography. Syrian cylinder seals derive from three periods: Pre-classical (1920–1830 BCE), Classical (1830–1600 BCE), and Post-Classical (1600–1550 BCE). Teissier 1996, 12. Most of the seals discussed in this article fall under the Classical period.

[36] Matthiae 1992, 175: "If the basic element for the characterization of the mythical role of the winged deity is the duel against Hadad, it seems possible to propose that the image of this god in the formulation of Old Syrian glyptic represents the god Yam of the mythical cycle of Ugarit." On p. 187, he also points out that this is the only winged deity in Old Syrian glyptic that is male.

[37] It may merely be that the god is impossible to recognize without his characteristic weapons. Pittman and Aruz 1987, 68, Fig. 59, display a character facing off against the Storm god that has similar head-wear as the Sea god and is surrounded on both sides by *ankh*-symbols, but he has neither wings nor weapons. Teissier 1996, 23, Fig. 81 and 92 from Alalakh, likewise show horned figures bearing two weapons but without wings. In Fig. 81, the figure's front leg is bare in similar fashion to the seals discussed by Matthiae.

[38] According to Matthiae 1992, 172, the figure is often confused even in the archaeological literature on Syrian glyptic with the armed nude goddess who is sometimes winged (the wings of the goddess derive from the "figure of the great goddess inside the winged shrine"; although Matthiae does not discuss it, this may have led to the later presentation of Ištar with similar iconographic signs), even though the figure of Yamm has a "clear enough autonomy in comparison with other figures of deities that are superficially comparable." The skirts of the armed female deities that are not a derivation of the nude goddess are different from those of Yamm, who bears a "peculiar fringed one."

In addition to its curved scimitar and the two wings rising from its shoulders, the character wears a short but long-fringed skirt (decorated with horizontal stripes and closed with a belt) that covers its back leg, and a headdress with horizontally free-standing horns at the bottom and a high conical or cylindrical cap with a high central point. The wings are the most characteristic element of the deity, as there is no variation in their position, whereas the horned tiara of the god takes many different forms (Matthiae 1992, 169–70). The tiara of Yamm sometimes resembles that of the Storm god Baal and sometimes that of the goddess Anat (Matthiae 1992, 170). The skirt worn by the divinity and the dagger sheathed at its belt also derive from the canonical iconography of the Storm god of Aleppo, which places the god in this constellation of the combat myth.[39] Both of these characteristics link the character to the mythology of the Baal Cycle, and they suggest an Amorite origin of the mythology. Although the curved scimitar is one of the most defining characteristics of the god, he also wields other weapons, such as spears or axes. Often, the figure has a weapon in both hands (Fig. 3), but sometimes he holds his two weapons in one hand (Fig. 1).[40] According to Matthiae, grasping the weapons conveys the "unequivocal" visual message of struggle, even in contexts where the figure is not taking part in the struggle *per se* (Matthiae 1992, 172). It ought to be noted that the Storm god likewise holds on to his weapons even when not engaged in battle.

There are three different kinds of scenes in which the figure appears, and they are categorized by Matthiae as follows: (a) cultural schemes in front of a royal figure or two/three other praying figures, (b) mythical contexts in front of an enthroned god accompanied by other deities, and, most importantly, (c) in front of or facing off against the Storm

[39] Matthiae 1992, 171. Cornelius 1994 has conducted a comprehensive study of the iconography of the storm god Baal.

[40] Matthiae 1992, 171–72. Matthiae writes that the "strong curved weapon" appears more rarely than the spear, which is statistically speaking true of the figures provided by him in his article. But with regard to the weapons of other male divinities in Syrian glyptic, the curved scimitar is much more easily recognizable.

god, who is sometimes accompanied by the goddess Anat.[41] The scene may also take place before an enthroned divinity (Matthiae 1992, 172–73). The author suggests that the scenes might more succinctly be named (a) the intercession scene, (b) the presentation scene, and (c) the combat scene. It is noteworthy that the idea of kingship is present in all three types of scenes, either in the figure of the king himself or in the figure of the enthroned divinity ("god characterized by majestic behaviour").[42]

It is important to note that the winged deity is presented in multiple depictions in a mirror-image of or opposite from the Storm god, which is unusual for combat scenes that generally indicate a power differential in the composition. When facing off, both gods often brandish all of their respective weapons. According to Matthiae, this represents the warlike impulses of both characters.[43] The antagonism between the characters is easily observable in the iconographic witnesses. The representation of the Sea god opposite the Storm god presents an instant, jarring conflict.

Usually, this configuration indicates either the doubling of one character seen symmetrically from both sides at once.[44] This mirroring has also been used to create an association between mortal kings and their patron deities, as in the case of a king and a god presented as opposite one another, a famous example of which is from the temple of the Storm god at the Aleppo citadel in which the king is the double

[41] According to Matthiae 1992, 173, "usually Hadad does not appear facing other gods" with the exception of Anat. Contra Teissier 1996, 39, who points out that the characters in Syrian glyptic are "normally turned inwards, facing each other, rather than following each other in rows."

[42] Matthiae (1992, 173) points out the important relationship between Yamm and the royal figure in the first two types of scenes.

[43] Matthiae 1992, 173. On p. 174 he describes the figure as a protagonist in a duel against the Storm god (with Anat or the enthroned god playing a secondary role), but the scene might just as well be described as the Storm god playing the part of the protagonist and Yamm the part of the antagonist.

[44] This is called mirror symmetry or bilateral symmetry. Cf. Sparavigna 2013. She describes this as a symmetry with respect to reflection in which an image is indistinguishable from its mirror that is used to create static images.

image of the Storm god (Fig. 5).[45] What is interesting about the image is that the Storm god is portrayed with his hands raised as if holding weapons, especially with his right hand raised in the image as if to strike, but the weapons are absent from his hands. This may be due to the fact that the weapons of the Storm god of Aleppo were housed in the temple, which the orthostat relief once decorated and in the remains of which the image still stands today (Töyräänvuori 2018, 375–76).

Fig. 5 A drawing of a basalt frieze wall relief from the Aleppo citadel. Original publication in Gonnella, Khayyata, and Kohlmeyer 2005, Fig. 124. The relief does not have a museum inventory number and is still in situ. The Storm god (left) stands facing a king. The figure on the right is King Taita of Palistin. The relief was erected in the eleventh century BCE to replace an older image. Based on the iconography discussed in this article, it is likely that the position of the hands of the king in older images have largely been replicated in the newer image.

Matthiae attempted to explain the winged nature of Yamm as symbolic of the sea as a primeval element, connecting it with representations of Tiamat as a winged dragon in the Neo-Assyrian art of

[45] Gonnella, Khayyata, and Kohlmeyer 2005. Note that, unlike in other images presented here, the Storm god is not holding his signature weapons in this image. Cf. Töyräänvuori 2012 for the suggestion that this is because the cultic objects that were the divine weapons of the Storm god were likely stored in the cellar of the temple of the Storm god at Aleppo where this relief was discovered. The weapons themselves have not been found.

the ninth century, which would have been influenced by these older depictions (Matthiae 1992, 177). These younger zoomorphic images can hardly be used to explain the wings on an older anthropomorphic figure.[46] His solution is that both derive from "an ancient figurative tradition, according to which the primeval sea was represented as a winged deity," of which no examples have apparently survived.

Fig. 6 Detail of a cylinder seal impression of a hematite seal, 24 x 12 mm in size. El-Safadi (1974), Fig. 63 from Aulock 239. Redrawn from Williams-Forte 1993, Fig. 6. The Storm god (left) with lowered weapons in front of an enthroned figure. For an interpretation of enthroned figures bearing cups as El-type deities, cf. Töyräänvuori 2020.

My solution is different. As discussed earlier, in ancient cosmology the sea was both above the dome of the sky as well as below it.[47] Therefore, as the domain of the sea both surrounds the earth and is

[46] Pritchard 1954, 218, Fig. 670 is an eighth-century BCE relief from Malatya in Turkey that shows a god battling a serpent-dragon with a spear while another armed deity looks on, which at least witnesses to the existence of the iconographic motif of divine combat in this period. See also L. Delaporte: Malatya, Arslantepe I 1940, pl. 22,2; E. Herzfeld: Archaeologische Mitteilung aus Iran II, 1930, pl. 12; Bossert, Anatolien 769; A. Götze: Kleinasien 1933, Fig. 13.

[47] Note also the existence of the homographs (although not necessarily homophones) *ym-ym* and *nhr-nhr*, one of which refers to water and the other to light (which, it must be pointed out, always causes a reflection on the waters), or one to terrestrial waters and the other (by and large) to celestial waters.

above the dome of the sky, portraying the god of the sea as a winged divinity capable of traversing the distance between them makes perfect sense. Figure 2 is especially illuminating in this regard as it not only represents the deity as a hybrid that is part man, part beast, and part bird, but also frames him with both a dolphin and a water-bird. A leaping dolphin, being a mammal, may well have been conceived as a "fish that flies" by ancient people. The dolphin is capable of surviving in water, on land, and in the air.[48] A water-bird, "a bird that dives," also occupies all three realms: air, land, and water. It can hardly be doubted in this instance that the figure in the seal is the Sea god. Because of the double ocean, the god of the sea is the only deity that is necessarily connected with all three domains: water, air, and the earth between them.

The depiction in Matthiae's Fig. 20 (reproduced here as Fig. 3) is likewise interesting. The image contains three figures: an enthroned deity (probably El), Yamm standing in front of the enthroned deity with his back to the throne and his weapons lowered, and a non-divine supplicant (unlike the other two, the supplicant does not wear a horned mitre) opposite Yamm with his hand raised in prayer or supplication.[49] This non-divine figure, whose status is signalled by the lack of horns on his headdress, likely represents the mortal king as the supplicant figure bears no divine characteristics and is seen wearing the "shepherd's hat" of kings (also in Figs. 4 and 6).[50] In this presentation scene, the Sea god

[48] Oxygen-breathing dolphins can survive on land for hours, which would likely have been witnessed by ancient fishermen. Cf. Conigliaro and Del Mar Otero 2012.

[49] Matthiae (1992, 174) has interpreted this as a "praying faithful" adoring the winged deity.

[50] Kings and gods can be distinguished through their head-wear in ancient iconography. In the Mesopotamian and Syrian regions, gods are usually depicted as wearing horned mitres or crowns. In the Syrian region, gods usually boast only one set of horns on their headdresses, whereas in the Mesopotamian area, the great gods can boast up to four pairs of horns. The kings, on the other hand, wear a non-horned headdress that may ultimately derive from a Sumerian shepherd's hat. This iconographic convention may date back to the Ur III-period king Gudea. Cf. Van Buren 1943 and Suter 2015. The kings in Syrian glyptic actually wear

is between the king of the gods and the mortal king in the role of the mediator of kingship.[51] Susan Langdon describes a "popular cylinder seal theme of the fourteenth–thirteenth centuries" in which the young god of the sea offers homage to a seated deity, offering "a jar on a stand before a deity on a high-backed throne." She connected the Ugaritic vessel (Fig. 8) with this motif (Langdon 1989, 195–96). It is especially in this mediating position that the Sea god's weapons are often lowered, while they are raised when he faces off against the Storm god.

These scenes of mediation are poorly attested in the textual record, but they are found in multiple iconographic sources. This presents a discrepancy between the depiction of the gods in the mythical narrative and how he may have been conceived in the cultic lives of the Levantine cities. The supplicant seems to have two fish behind him, possibly representing a tribute that he is bringing to the enthroned divinity.[52] Yamm clearly functions as a mediator in the image.

There do not appear to be enough defining characteristics of the supplicant figure to insist that he is necessarily a royal figure,[53] but whether or not the mortal represents the king, Yamm is the go-between for the wealthy human and the father of the gods.[54] Matthiae suggested

two distinct headdresses, the shepherd's hat, which Teissier 1996, 40, called "the bonnet", and a high oval headdress. The former is characteristic of north-east Syria, and the latter of north-west Syria.

[51] On the presentation scene, cf. Zajdowski 2013. His study suggests that the presentation scene was a development from an earlier banquet scene. According to Zajdowski 2013, 3, the presentation scene "conveyed the message of legitimisation and individual place in the social hierarchy." The Ugaritic crater may represent an intermediary stage in this development, appearing to contain aspects of both banquet and presentation.

[52] Fish offerings are mentioned in the Ugaritic texts RS 19.15, 24.250+159.

[53] Matthiae (1992, 182), however, raises the possibility that the character is wearing a high oval tiara, which would suggest his royal identity, this being "the canonical figure of the king not only in the Yamhad milieu, but also in the kingdoms of Northern inner Syria." Compare the figure of the king with the "sandal-bearer" figure in the *Baal au foudre* stele.

[54] Matthiae (1992, 174) noted that there are other images in which the king appears before the winged figure in prayer, "as happens with all the major deities of the Old Syrian pantheon."

that the supplicant figure only appears before great deities that are related especially to the protection of kingship (Matthiae 1992, 174). Although Matthiae's association of the images in the cylinder seals with the text of the Ugaritic Baal Cycle is a little too straightforward,[55] the case he presents for interpreting this figure as Yamm in Old Syrian glyptic is nonetheless convincing. He also claims that Yamm is clearly a protector of kingship in the iconographic patterns of the Old Syrian glyptic. Matthiae also pointed out that Yamm's connection to kingship is hardly astounding, based on textual evidence, but he does not elaborate further on this topic (Matthiae 1992, 176).

The Sea and the Goddess

The iconography of the Syrian Sea god resembles the depiction of the Mesopotamian goddess Isthar, especially in her war-like character (Fig. 7). While there are iconographic depictions from the Mesopotamian region that feature the name of the goddess next to the portrayal of her winged, armed form, these witnesses from the Syrian region give reason to question the automatic labelling of such figures with the name of Ištar. There are scholars who have likely been mistaken in their interpretation of the figure on Syrian seals as a warrior goddess in analogue to Ištar, suggesting that the figure represents the goddess Anat. This is a false identification since the winged warrior goddess in Syrian glyptic that occasionally accompanies the Storm god consistently has her wings at the midriff and not at the shoulders like the Sea god figure (Fig. 2). The goddess and the Sea god share certain characteristics, but they are distinct figures. The goddess also does not face off against the Storm god as they are not antagonistic toward one another in the seals.

[55] For example, on p. 176, he interprets scenes in which the winged deity and the enthroned deity are unaccompanied by the Storm god as "certainly pointing to the declaration of the god's hegemony by the father of the gods", witnessing El's "role at the origin of the fight." However, El and Yamm seem to have a complex relationship both symbolically and narratively, so there may have been other occasions for a scene of this type.

Fig. 7 A redrawn detail from a Mariote cylinder seal impression belonging to Mukanišu, servant of king Zimri-Lim. The seal likely depicts Zimri-Lim wielding a weapon in the centre with the goddess Ištar on the left side. A divine symbol associated with the Storm god (according to Williams-Forte 1983) is situated above the weapon, between Zimri-Lim and an unidentifiable deity (right). Originally published in Ornan 2007, Fig. 7.

For example, Pittman and Aruz, in their description of deities and rulers on Syrian seals,[56] categorize this figure under the heading of "the winged and armed goddess." They describe the figure as dressed "in a long, flounced robe open at the front" but also, according to them, later "in a short kilt and a conical or square horned mitre." They also note that "this winged figure wields spears and a scimitar." This matches Matthiae's description of the Sea god. Pittman and Aruz also associate the figure with Ištar: "deriving her appearance in part from an earlier Akkadian deity, this goddess has been associated with the death-causing aspect of the maiden goddess of love and war, Anath, in the Ugaritic texts," citing only Ginsberg's 1969 translation of the Baal Cycle for this association.[57] The symbol that seems to resemble the Egyptian *ankh*-sign has also been used to connect the figure with the goddess, but this seems to be a stylized fish that appears horizontally in older depictions and is raised to a vertical position in Syrian glyptic.[58]

[56] Pittman and Aruz 1987, 39–40. The winged goddess appears in their Fig. 47 (p. 65), an Old Syrian cylinder seal.

[57] H. L. Ginsberg, *Ugaritic Myths, Epics and Legends* (1969).

[58] Contra Teissier 1996, who views it as an Egyptian influence on Syrian glyptic in the Middle Bronze Age. She, however, concludes that Egyptian imagery was

It is not surprising that the sea and the goddess share aspects of iconographic representation. The Sea god and Ištar share a kind of ambivalence: the sea embodied and provided both life and death, it was both terrestrial and celestial, it was both a protective deity and a threatening monster, anthropomorphic and theriomorphic, it was both untamed and conquered, an enemy and a benefactor. Many of these roles of the god probably derive from the nature of the sea itself. Androgyny, having both male and female characteristics, is something that Ištar shared with the Sea god. In fact, in the ancient Semitic cultural sphere, the god of the sea could be both male, like Yamm, or female, like the Babylonian Tiamat.[59] The Ugaritic language likewise has two words for the sea: *ym*, which likely predominately referred to the Mediterranean, and *thmt*, which may have been considered to be some kind of primordial sea. While the similarities between the depictions of the goddess and the winged sea are interesting and should occasion a re-evaluation of a number of depictions of winged deities as representations of the Sea god, Matthiae's case for why the figure ought to be interpreted as the Sea god in Old Syrian glyptic is convincing.

There is also a connection between the Sea god and the horse in iconographic depictions. Langdon examined the "horse-leader" motif in her 1989 *American Journal of Archaeology* article titled "The Return

coherently assimilated into the Syrian glyptic repertoire, so the meaning of the symbol is not necessarily the same in Syrian glyptic as it was in Egypt. Note how the Williams-Forte 1983 Fig. 16 from Ebla contains this *ankh*-type sign next to a clearly bearded figure against whom the Storm god is facing off with a raised club ready to strike. This image is ill-fitting with the interpretation of the figure as a goddess and is in line with finding the symbol next to the Sea god, suggesting that, in Syrian glyptic, it represents a stylized fish. There does appear to be some kind of connection between the *ankh*-type glyph and water in Syrian glyptic. Cf., e.g., Teissier 1996, Fig. 1b, in which liquid is poured over a mortal man by two divinities, Fig. 1c, 4, in which the same scene is repeated with a shower of *ankh*-type glyphs being poured on the mortal man, and Fig. 149, which features similar streams of water around a male figure with fish symbols swimming up the stream.

[59] Cf. Töyräänvuori 2016 for discussion on the gendered depiction of both the sea and Ištar.

of the Horse Leader." The horse leader is a figure known from Argive geometric pottery and, according to Langdon, the figure is its most characteristic motif (Langdon 1989, 185).

Fig. 8 Detail from a clay pottery drinking mug with pinkish slip, decorated with brown glaze (RS 24.440). BP1 Damascus Museum inv. 6886. Redrawn from Schaeffer 1966 3 Fig. 1* Pl. I right. Height 21.5 cm. Most often, the seated figure (right) has been interpreted as El and the standing figure (middle) as Baal, but the presence of a fish, a horse, and a bird – which constitute the symbols of Yamm – warrant a reinterpretation of the standing figure as the Sea god. The interpretation of all seated deities as El is likewise uncertain. Cf. Töyräänvuori 2020.

The horse-leader motif of Mycenaean craters features a human figure flanked by horses and most often also with fish.[60] It is the combination of horses and fish that is of interest with regard to Mediterranean Sea deities.[61] Langdon presented several craters from the Eastern Mediterranean that display this motif, even connecting the offering scene on a Ugaritic amphoroid crater (RS 27.319, Fig. 8) with it (Langdon 1989, 188). While beginning her argumentation by denying that the figure

[60] Langdon 1989, 185, describes the Argive motif as containing "plump isolated water birds, lines of sinuous marshbirds, a variety of fish, and panels with characteristically slender horses." According to her, the image of the fish appears underneath the horse far too regularly for it to be considered a mere filler of space. Horses and fish appear on Syrian glyptic outside of the Ugaritic examples also, e.g., in Kishite seals (Langdon's Fig. 12).

[61] Langdon 1989, 191: "The association of fish and horse in a potentially religious context recalls Homeric and Classical attributes of Poseidon, sea-god, helper of fishermen, breaker of horses, and in certain accounts, even father of the horse."

in the craters represents Poseidon, Langdon does come to the conclusion that it probably depicts a sea-god and that the motif was adapted from local Syrian mythology (Langdon 1989, 201). The reason for this connection between the horse and the sea may come from the ancient practice of breaking horses by forcing them into the sea.[62]

The Doubled Image of the King

One of the questions that has driven the author's interest in the Levantine Sea god is why the Sea needed to be defeated by the would-be king of the gods in what has been described as a political myth.[63] Traditionally, the answer has been sought in the creation of an ordered world out of primordial chaos,[64] as though order, rather than subjugation, was brought to chaotic uncivilized savages in the establishment of government (kingship). But, in fact, we often find the chaotic aspects of the adversary attached to the character of the king and to the king of the gods himself – to the mercurial if not outright chaotic character of the Storm god – making the traditional explanation somewhat unsatisfactory.

While they were antagonistic toward one another in the myth of the Baal Cycle, the desires of the sea and the Storm god were basically the same: they both wanted a palace for themselves, and neither desired to be subjugated. The difference between the contestants was that Baal had help in the form of the smith god Kothar-wa-Hasis and the maiden goddess Anat and that Baal ultimately won the contest, taking for himself the throne of the king of the gods. But as narrative actors, the two gods are not so different.[65] The similarity between them may be further elucidated by the iconography.

[62] Langdon 1989, 198. Breaking a horse refers to the practice of getting a horse ready to be mounted by a rider.

[63] Smith 1994; Smith and Pitard 2009; Töyräänvuori 2018.

[64] See essays in *Chaos & Cosmos: A Reassesment of Herman Gunkel's Chaoskampf* (2013), eds. J. Scurlock and R. Beal. The edited volume contains Scurlock's essay on the history of the paradigm (pp. 257–68), "Chaoskampf Lost – Chaoskampf Regained: The Gunkel Hypothesis Revisited."

[65] See the discussion in Töyräänvuori 2018.

Fig. 9 Detail of a cylinder seal impression. Redrawn from Williams-Forte 1983, Fig. 7. Published in Bossert 1951, Fig. 852, originally from Furlani 1939, 368. Size 4 x 2.1 cm. The Storm god (right) holds a mace weapon and a serpent while the winged figure holds a curved weapon and two fish.

Fig. 10 Detail of a cylinder seal impression. The Storm god (right) gives his tree weapon to a figure wearing the shepherd's hat on top of what seems to be an altar. Redrawn from Williams-Forte 1983, Fig. 14. AO 10871.

These images form what Elizabeth Williams-Forte called "an iconic constellation,"[66] where the iconographic motif develops or evolves from one stage to the next, usually from detailed descriptive scenes toward more abstract representations. In the earliest stage, we have a scene from the Combat myth in which the Storm god battles the god of the sea for the kingship of the gods (Fig. 9). This scene is witnessed by multiple texts, the most famous of which is the Ugaritic Baal Cycle.

The second stage presents the Storm god opposite a human king, with the human king as a mirror image of the god (Fig. 10). This scene is alluded to by certain texts like the famous letter from a Yamkhadian prophet to King Zimri-Lim of Mari in which the prophet informs the king that he will receive the weapons with which the Storm god had defeated the sea.[67] The Storm god had defeated his enemy, the Sea, on behalf of the mortal king and is seen presenting the mortal king the symbol of his divine power. This scene may also have been portrayed by the relief from the Storm god of Aleppo (Fig. 5), where the Storm god's weapons had been located in the Bronze Age.

These kinds of divine weapons were housed in temples, and their main function was to witness oaths, treaties, judgments, the sealing of documents, and so forth. They also had a number of symbolic functions for the sake of which they could be paraded out of the temples, either in celebration or before marching armies. The use of divine weapons in the coronation ceremonies of kings has also been suggested. In particular, the mentions of the divine weapons of the Storm god of Aleppo in the two texts from the royal archives of Mari have been connected with the concept of a coronation ceremony, but the extant textual evidence from the period seems overwhelmingly to favour uses other than coronation.[68] One of the most important functions of the divine weapons was to be carried as standards at the spearhead of marching armies, and it was through the physical manifestation of the

[66] Williams-Forte 1993. The iconic constellation she discusses concerns the Storm god and the god of death, Mot. Teissier 1996 uses the term "patterns of association" or "'circle' of associations" instead.

[67] Cf. Töyräänvuori 2012; Dossin 1956; 1970; Schwemer 2001, Nissinen 2003.

[68] See Durand 2002; 2008; Feliu 2003; Töyräänvuori 2012.

weapons that the political mythology was transported to the recipients of the Amorite traditions.[69]

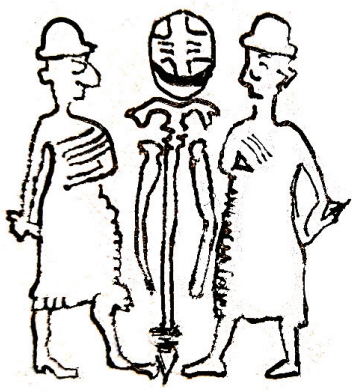


Fig. 11 Detail of a cylinder seal impression from Kültepe. A mirrored figure wearing the shepherd's hat flanking a standard. The figure likely represents a king. Redrawn from Williams-Forte 1983, Fig. 17. Originally published by Özgüç 1968, pl. XXIX, 2. The sphere above a crescent moon is a symbol that often appears in association with the Storm god.

The third stage in the evolution of the iconographic depiction presents the human king alone (Fig. 11). The king's image is doubled in the manner of earlier depictions, but he stands on his own, flanking the symbolic representation of the Storm god's divine power. This scene is not directly addressed in textual witnesses, but there are texts that could be connected with this stage of the iconographic constellation, for example, in the Hebrew Bible.[70] While Williams-Forte discusses a different iconic constellation (that of the serpent and the tree), she suggested that the development of the motif[71] culminates in the god's (lightning) tree standard, which is finally depicted on its own as a representation of the Storm god's divine might. Most of the seals discussed here ultimately come from palace contexts (Magness-Gardiner 1990, 66), so it is only natural to find chapters of this political narrative engraved in them.

[69] See Töyräänvuori 2012; Charpin 2015.

[70] For example, Ps 89:25: "I will set [the king's] hand over the sea, and his right hand over the rivers." Cf. Töyräänvuori 2012 for a discussion on possible references to divine weapons in the texts of the Hebrew Bible.

[71] She calls this the "four stages of a seemingly narrative cycle" in the iconography.

Conclusion

This study has shown that there is real coherence in the iconographic representations of the sea deity, and it proposes new identifications for the representations of the deity. Distinguishing these representations from those of the goddess Ištar is especially important. The analysis of the glyptic and other documentation also makes it possible to show the place this deity held in Levantine ideology. The reasons why the winged and armed deity in Syrian glyptic can securely be interpreted as the god of the sea, as already suggested by Paolo Matthiae, can be summarized in the following:

a) The figure appears in scenes of conflict with the Storm god (Matthiae's argument).
b) The figure is associated with fish or presented together with fish and later with horses. Horses have been connected to the sea on the Eastern Mediterranean possibly because the sea was used in breaking horses.
c) A plausible explanation for the god's wings relates to the double ocean of ancient cosmology, which also explains the presence of water-birds in the iconography.
d) A reason for why the god shares an iconographic resemblance to the goddess of the morning and evening stars can be provided. The iconography also displays differences between their portrayals, for example, the presence of fish in the iconography of the Sea god.

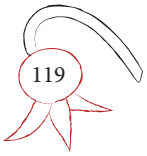
Since the figure may be interpreted as the Sea god, the iconographic depictions of the deity appearing together with both divine and mortal kings in scenes of presentation and intercession require an explanation.

The ancient Levantine king ruled with the authority of the Storm god, with the god's power and prestige, presenting himself as the representative of the divinity to his people.[72] The symbols and symbolic

[72] Rendsburg 2007, 101, describes the ancient king as "God's agent on earth."

investiture of kingship were shared by gods and men.[73] As an icon or a proxy for divine power, the mortal king performed the role of the divinity for his people.[74] But it was through the sea that the king was made. The myth of Baal's defeat of Yamm is inexorably intertwined with the conquest of the Mediterranean Sea by Mesopotamian kings, which frequently took place in the real world.[75]

According to Robert Rollinger, throughout Mesopotamian history, the coastal areas were identified with the borders of the known world, "felicitously underlined by the royal claim to rule the world" from the Upper sea to the Lower sea. The motif is especially visible in the monumental bull inscriptions of Shalmaneser from Calah (A.0.102.8:24–40), in which the description of Shalmaneser as the



[73] See the classic study by Engnell 1967. More recently, divine kingship in the ancient world has been discussed by Brisch 2008 and, in the context of ancient Israel in particular, by Flynn 2014.

[74] On the transcendence of the king's corporeal form (or how the king was thought to inhabit a mortal body, a political body, and a permanent body simultaneously), see Hamilton 2005. For features once shared by other divinities that were transferred to Yahweh after the Exile, see Human 2007, 150. Human also writes: "they survive in a new context, in this instance Yahweh-faith, only as literary symbols or images. In other words, they become mere vestiges serving as poetic vehicles in order to portray the theology about Yahweh." Talon 2005, 100, writing on the Assyrian context, mentions the concept of the king as the "mirror image of Aššur on earth" (e.g. in SAA 10 207 r. 12–13). Kutsko 2000, 60, discusses the king as an image (*ṣalmu*) of the storm-god Enlil in the Middle Assyrian Tukulti-Ninurta Epic. Sasson 2014, 675, also discusses the role of the king in the fragments of the then unpublished Zimri-Lim epic (FM 14), describing the king as the *zikrum* (translated by Sasson as "image," but also containing connotations of the name and the fame) of Enlil – now published in Guichard 2014, in which it is the gods Anu and Dagan for whom Zimri-Lim is described as the *zikrum* (col. i 13, 15; col. iii 31, 33). The concept of the "body politic" and "body natural" of the king in the ancient Near Eastern context has been discussed recently by Kühn 2015 and 2018, who discussed the continuation of the king's political body after death, which is manifest, e.g., in their throne names.

[75] Rollinger 2012 discusses the persistence of the traditions of conquering the Mediterranean from Sargon the Akkadian to the Sassanid king Khusrau (Khosrow). See also Töyräänvuori 2012, who discusses the motivation for this practice.

conqueror of the world bordered by the seas and the rivers follows immediately after the description of his patronage, epithets, and lineage, effectively opening the actual inscription. While the river functions as both a physical and ideological boundary marker,[76] the two major rivers of the Mesopotamian Basin, the Euphrates and the Tigris, could also be seen as forming the core and centre of the Empire. Shalmaneser's inscription claims that the king had conquered the sources of these rivers. This could indicate an ideological shift in royal presentation. With an Empire bordered by coastal regions, the central rivers could also refer to the source and wellspring of the king's power. However, Shalmaneser's inscription also makes particular reference to the world-encircling river, *nâr marratu*, which literally delimits the Empire.

Rollinger suggests that the mention of Shalmaneser washing his weapon and setting up his stele on these different water courses was a function of the king marking the boundaries of his Empire, achieving, according to Rollinger (2012, 730), a

> natural and divinely sanctioned borderline which was soon integrated into a world view which presented the Ancient Near Eastern empires as "world empires" and conceptualized their kings' power reaching as far as the fringes of the world.

As the Storm god's victory over the sea legitimized the rule of the king, so did the character of the sea itself mediate kingship. Yamm, the sea, was as necessary for the dynastic succession of North West Semitic kingship as was its patron, the dynastic Storm god, the two gods functioning not as the opposite sides of a coin, like they are often described, but more as the before and after picture of the king: an ancestral seat of kingship and its vital, living representative.

The author has argued that the function of the combat myth was to establish and legitimize the rule of the monarch by basing it on the claim of the ancient conquest of the (Mediterranean) Sea because it was through conquest that the ancient North West Semitic king was made, not through primogeniture.

[76] Rivers function as natural boundaries even in modern international legislation. Cf., e.g., Dellapenna 1996.

The Sea in the texts from Ugarit actually possesses epithets such as "the beloved" (*mddil ym*) that were epithets of the mortal kings in the Amorite Kingdom period, which was the formative period for this tradition (cf. Töyräänvuori 2015, 2017). The two gods are very much alike, and it may therefore be that, in addition to merely being in conflict, the Sea is presented as the doubled image of Baal in Syrian glyptic. The author suggests that, in presenting the old king with the new, the retiring king with the incumbent, the source and wellspring of kingship with its current manifestation, the story of the combat myth itself may present us the doubled image of the king.

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