

THE *BREATH OF LIFE* OR: THE RIDDLE OF THE

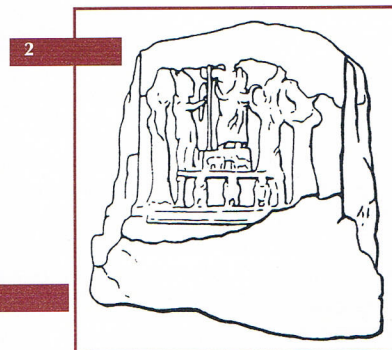
Eric Gubel RAM-HEADED SCEPTRE

35

INTRODUCTION

The opinionated view that Phoenician craftsmen merely adopted Egyptian symbols on behalf of their decorative value is increasingly challenged by the analysis of the iconographical context in which the former were bound to lead a second life abroad. True enough, several artefacts reflecting popular beliefs such as votive amulets do not infrequently feature a few (pseudo-) hieroglyphs (*3nh*, *nfr*, *nb* etc.) to enhance the magic power bestowed upon them. Nonetheless, this practice was already foreshadowed in the minor arts of the Third Intermediate Period in Egypt itself, and soon thereafter became standard practice when or wherever such exotica were tolerated (e.g. in the production of "Naucratic trinkets"), for as long as they enhanced the apotropaic value of objects thus decorated. In the realm of personal devotion, the fact that an Egyptian statuette representing Isis suckling an infant was subsequently inscribed with a secondary Phoenician inscription identifying her as "Astarte", by no means rules out that its owner was perfectly aware of the syncretism between both goddesses¹. The Phoenician inscription identifying another divinity as represented by a bronze from Gibraltar as *Hr.p3-hrd* (i.e., a straightfor-

ward transcription of the name of Harpocrates this statuette both represents *and* names in the accompanying Egyptian legend), warns us indeed not to overestimate the Phoenician alleged attempts to harmonise the formal appearance of Egyptian, with the religious profile of local divinities². It is obvious that at least in this particular case, the image of the Egyptian solar deity was not used because of his specific characteristics collating with that of a local god. As a last case example, R. Barnett's ingenious explanation to justify the Phoenicians' use of the *Zm3-t3.wj* motif, may be reminded of at this point. In Egypt, the motif in question (representing the binding of the heraldic plants of Lower and Upper Egypt, resp. papyrus and lily plants) enjoyed widespread popularity as the iconographical vehicle *par excellence* of Pharaonic propaganda. But are we really to accept the idea that this icon would have been adopted in the Levant because of the alleged connotation with the festival of Tammuz, a ritual not attested to date in contemporary Phoenician nor Aramean sources³? The fact that the Phoenician adoption of this motif was but a short-lived phenomenon, restricted to the peak period of the bicephalic kingdom of Tyre and Sidon in the 9th c. B.C., rather seems to suggest that it was adopted along with its intrinsic meaning as a visual device



1 C. Bonnet, *Astarte. Dossier documentaire et perspectives historiques*, Roma 1996, 64 n. 8, 158 E.8.

2 E. Lipiński, *Dieux et déesses de l'univers phénicien et punique*, Leuven 1995, 326 with bibliography n. 44.

3 R. D. Barnett, A

Catalogue of the Nimrud Ivories with other examples

of Ancient Near Eastern Ivories in the British Museum, London 1975, 139-140.

expressing the coalition of two predominant political powers⁴. The original concept of the unification of Lower and Upper Egypt was obviously recuperated in the Levant via the substitution of the former areas by Sidon and Tyre in the context

of an artistic motif which, significantly enough, was bound not to outlive the historical reality of this ephemeral coalition in its second homeland...

Documents illustrating the Phoenician City-States' religious ideology and made of precious materials reflecting the upper classes' monopoly such as gold, silver, ivory and fine stones do indeed seem to observe an iconographical grammar, in spite of a vast array of local "accents" to be expected in a region where polycentrism boasts a longstanding tradition. The loanwords of this grammar, in other words, the elements borrowed from Egyptian art, often align to complete the meaning of the general composition. In a few instances finally, relatively complex Egyptian compositions involving two or more protagonists as well as occasional secondary motifs were adopted. Although occasionally adapted subsequently to the local taste of some Phoenician City-State, the intrinsic meaning of the subject-matter in its original Egyptian setting often appears not to have undergone any significant alterations on the iconographical nor on the metaphorical level. This holds e.g. for the representation of the "sun-god in the lotus", flanked by two winged figures or for the theme of the "cow

suckling her calf"⁵.

THE "KHNUM-SCEPTRE"

Whilst several symbols commonly used in Phoenician iconography derive from an autochthonous, Oriental background, those adopted or adapted from Pharaonic art fall into two categories. Thus, a first group of Egyptian(ising) symbols had already been absorbed in Levantine art in the course of the 3rd and 2nd millennia⁶, whereas a second one had been (re)imported in early 1st millennium Phoenicia in the wake of a renewed economic and cultural interaction with the Nile delta, the zenith of Egypt's revival geopolitics under the Tanite and Bubastide Libyan dynasties of the earlier Third Intermediate Period⁷. *Prima inter pares* amongst the few exceptions transcending in both categories is the ram-headed sceptre, the visual consistency of which in Phoenician art is thus, that it could even be regarded as its logo *par excellence* in terms of today's "image building" marketing devices.

Recent excavations in the temple of Chîm (in the Iqlîm al-Kharroub north-east of Sidon) (fig. 1), have renewed the interest in this Phoenician liturgical apparatus which had indeed survived into Hellenistic times as hinted to before by sculptural evidence brought to light at Ba'albek (fig. 2) and Oum el Amed (fig. 3)⁸.

During the first phase of its adoption in the Levant, the sceptre closely resembled one of the *Wr-ḥkꜣw* instruments, a ram-headed device traditionally

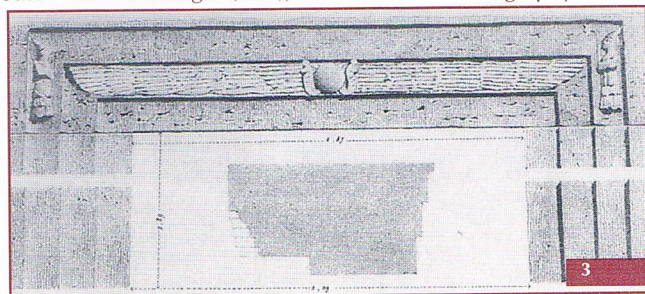
4 Cf. F. Briquel-Chatonnet, *Les relations entre les cités de la côte phénicienne et les royaumes d'Israël et de Juda*, Leuven 1992, 63-66 on the historical background of the bicephalic kingdom and E. Gubel, *Das libyzeitliche Ägypten und die Anfänge der phönizischen Ikonographie*, *apud* M. Görg – G. Hölbl, *Ägypten und der östliche Mittelmeerraum im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.*, Wiesbaden 2000, 68-100 as well as *Idem*, *Multicultural and multimedial aspects of early Phoenician art, c. 1200-675 BCE*, *apud* Chr. Uehlinger, *Images as media*, Fribourg – Göttingen 2000 (= OBO 175), 185-214 for the explanation of several iconographical themes in the light of this coalition.

5 On the former motif, cf. recently, Chr. Uehlinger *apud* B. Sass – Chr. Uehlinger (eds.), *Studies in the Iconography of Northwest Semitic Inscribed Seals*, Fribourg – Göttingen 1993, 272-278, on the latter, O. Keel, *Das Böcklein in der Milch seiner Mutter und Verwandtes*, Fribourg – Göttingen 1980, *passim*.

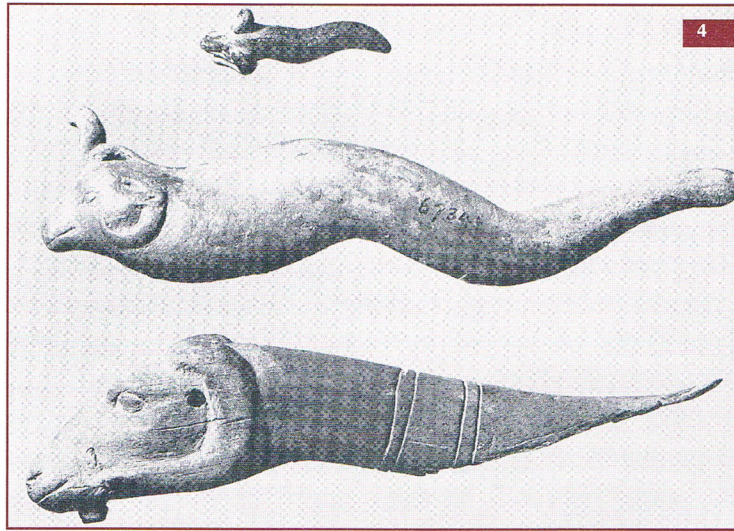
6 B. Teissier, *Egyptian Iconography on Syro-Palestinian Cylinder Seals of the Middle Bronze Age*, Fribourg – Göttingen 1996 and Chr. Eder, *Die ägyptischen Motive in der Glyptik des östlichen Mittelmeerraumes*, Fribourg – Göttingen 1980, *passim*.

7 Besides the check-list by K. A. Kitchen *apud* G. Hermann, *Ivories from room SW 37 Fort Shalmaneser*, London 1986, 37-42 and cf. the publications quoted *supra*, n. 3-4.

8 Nourdigian *Topoi* VII (1997), 945- and, already, P. Naster, "Le suivant du char royal sur les doubles statères de Sidon", *Revue belge de Numismatique* 103 (1957), 13 figs. 9, 11 and *passim*, 5-20. For Baalbek: Y. Hajjar, *La triade d'Héliopolis-Baalbek*, II, Leiden 1977, pl. III:5.



used in the Egyptian "Opening-of-the-mouth"



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ritual, which may also have inspired the sceptre of Ea, the Mesopotamian creator-god and Lord of the water (figs. 4, 5)⁹. Wherever represented, whether in the realm of Syrian glyptic (figs. 6-7)¹⁰ or on a stele from Ugarit (fig. 8)¹¹, the ram-headed sceptre is invariably worn by divine acolytes (male, female, hieracocephalic)

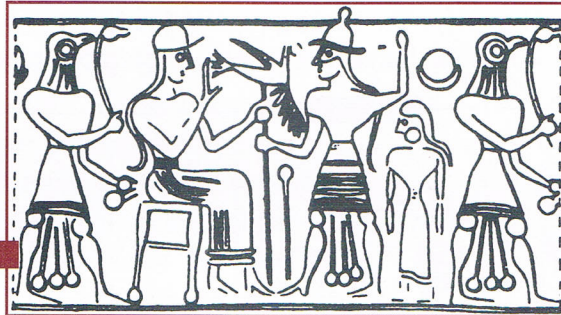
who in addition carry an oinochoe for libations¹². On the basis of these representations, it seems that the ritual referred to included libations, viz. the anointment of both living rulers and cult statues representing divinities or the deified

heads of local dynasties¹³. The oil, supposed to have been extracted from the Sacred Tree (?), was subsequently poured into oinochoai¹⁴, whereas the sceptre with the head of the creator god's zoomorphic manifestation may have been used

according with the Egyptian ritual to bestow



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9 Fig. 4 after K. Myśliwiec, *Studien zum Got Atum*, I, Hildesheim 1978, pl. XLVII and 5 after W. H. Ward, *Seal Cylinders of Western Asia*, Washington 1910, 319, fig. 1015a. On Ea's sceptre, cfr. also U. Seidl, *Die babylonischen Kudurrureliefs*, BM IV (1968), 165-7 with J.-M. Durand, *Le dieu Ea en Syrie*, N.A.B.U. (1989), 83-84.

10 Fig. 6 after W. Culican, *Opera Selecta*, Göteborg 1986, 282 fig. 1:a, contrasted here with fig. 7, a Syrian cylinder c. 1820-1740 B.C. in the Brussels Museums of Art & History (O.1381), one of the many compositions wherein the sceptres are stylized in such a way that they hardly allow a clear-cut identification. Other possible representations of the ram-headed sceptre include E. Porada, *Corpus of Ancient Near Eastern Seals in North American Collections*, I, New York 1948, 374 and 489 quoted by W. Culican, *Op.cit.*, 283 (Impression of a cylinder seal from Tel Fakhariyah). I am hesitant to include B. Teissier, *Op.cit.*, 74 n° 120 from Vounous, Cyprus, only known from a plaster cast.

11 Cf. recently G. Bunnens, "The so-called stele of the god El from Ugarit", *Actes du III^e congrès international des études phéniciennes et puniques*, I, Tunis 1995, 214-221 whom we follow in the identification of the "Opening-of-the-mouth" theme. In the light of the evidence brought forward in the present paper, however, the scene would represent the (king officiating as the town's) highpriest before a statue of El, a creator like Atum and Ea (with whom he is later to be identified with at Karatepe) as implied by his title 'I qn 'rs.

12 This is in line with Egyptian representations of the instruments used in the "Opening-of-the-mouth" ritual, where the ram-headed sceptre is associated a.o. with libation vases (e.g. K. Myśliwiec, *Op.cit.*, 153 fig. 98)

13 The representation of the motif on lintels such as is the case much later at Ghim and Oum el-Amed, suggests that the "Opening-of-the-mouth" ritual was also extended to the consecration of sanctuaries like in Egypt.

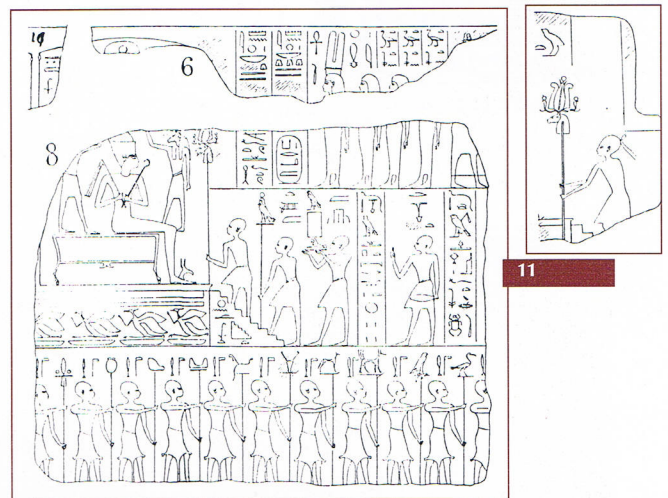
14 AO 20.138 cf. *Syria* 1959, 145 and, for actual vases of this type current in Ugarit: *Syria* 1938, 204, fig.6; 249, fig. 37-8.

the "breath of life" upon those blessed by the anointment of their lips, simulating a divine "kiss of life" as it were.

Similar combinations of elements corroborating this tentative reconstruction persist throughout the history of the

Phoenician City-States, the artists of which multiply the beneficiaries of the rite in function of the main deities of the local pantheon. If during the Iron Age, the ram-headed sceptre can still be represented as a crooked or curved sceptre reminiscent of the Late Bronze Age examples, the more detailed compositions (figs 9-10) now leave but

few doubts to the fact that the shaft in fact reproduces the sinuous profile of a snake characterising their prototypes fig.4¹⁵. As already emphasized by Naster and Myśliwiec, this detail indeed corroborates their identification as the ram-headed sceptre of Atum used in the ritual of the "Opening-of-the-mouth"¹⁶. Accordingly the Middle Kingdom coffin texts studied by the latter scholar, criocephalic snakes were born out of the eye of Atum to serve Re as the nocturnal sun, which explains the combination of the udjat and the ram-headed sceptre on the Phoenician eye-blinkers¹⁷. On other ivories produced before the Assyrian conquest and prefiguring the Sidonian *naiskoi* (fig.19), the acolytes, now preferably represented as a pair of twin



deities, frequently flank a sacred tree under the winged disc; a palmet emerging out of their *oinochoai* reminds us both of the origin of the oil and its healing qualities¹⁸. Roughly contemporary representations from Egypt are found, not sur-

15 Figs. 8-9 (Phoenician ivories from Nimrud), after E. Gubel, *Op.cit.* (*supra*, n. 4 last article mentioned), 201, figs 21: a-b, drawings H. Keel and I. Haselbach.

16 P. Naster, *Op.cit.*, 19-20, K. Myśliwiec, *Studien zum Gott Atum*, I, Hildesheim 1978, pls XLIV-XLVI for more examples. I owe many thanks to Dr. P. Pamminger who, following a lecture held at Mainz university drew my attention on the Atum connection of material earlier compiled by L. Keimer.

17 K. Myśliwiec, *Op.cit.*, 158-159 with fig. 103 where the criocephalic snake is represented above a *khepesh*, another instrument of the "Opening-of-the-mouth" ritual. On the ivories, cf. J. J. Orchard, *Equestrian bridle-harness ornaments*, Aberdeen 1967, pls V-VI.

18 An ivory found at Carthage ascertains that the motif of the palmet arising out of the juglet of the bearer of a ram-headed sceptre is not an artistic liberty deprived of religious connotations: *30 ans au service du patrimoine*, Tunis 1987, 74 n. OII.28.

19 K. Myśliwiec, *Op.cit.*, 63 E. Naville, *The Festival-Hall of Osorkon II*, London 1892, pl. II:8, cf. II:1.

20 Scenes like these (if not the very same ones) may also account for the ephemeral reproduction of details such as the Seth animal crouching behind the king's feet and the frieze of *Rekhyt*-birds decorating the platform, not to mention the altars with leonine legs.

prisingly, at Bubastis, where the reliefs of the Festival Hall feature priests presenting standards before Osorkon II (874-850 B.C.) fig.11¹⁹. As evidenced by the accompanying inscriptions, the latter include attributes and manifestations of

Atum: the ram-headed sceptre, the *Bj*-bird and a statuette of a crouching sphinx, both the former and the latter frequently reproduced in Phoenician art²⁰. It must be noted that the

Phoenician artists did not copy the *Atf*-crown atop of the ram's head, reducing their version to the pair of horns with the sun-disc in between, the whole, however, placed on the tripartite wig which represents an early 1st millennium addition to the model current during the preceding centuries. This simplification suggests the intention to highlight Atum's solar aspect

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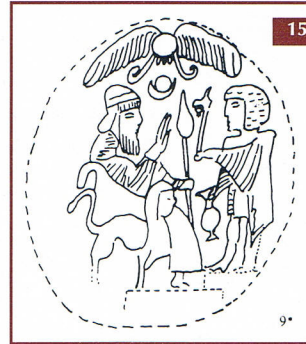
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Atum-Re or his local equivalent. The *Atf* was not completely abandoned, however, several acolytes wearing this particular type of "Osirid" crown

(fig.10), which recurs on a ram-headed sceptre found at Qadesh Barnea illustrated fig.12²¹. The latter example moreover introduces a second innovation with respect to the Late Bronze Age prototypes which the more detailed Phoenician compositions also exemplify, namely the addition of an *aegis* under the ram's head (figs. 13 and 17)²². Reflecting a Ramesside vogue, this detail perfectly ties in with the boom of the *aegis*' popularity during the Third Intermediate Period, the impact of



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which is attested elsewhere in Phoenician art²³.

As stated previously, the evolution of the ram-headed sceptre and the context in which it was used, can be followed throughout a rather impressive series of representations as well as by means of a few presumed actual finds from Byblos, Nimrud and Ashdod²⁴. Acolytes are represented as worshipping the cult statues of a hierocephalic god on the *hwt*-throne (fig. 14)²⁵, of Isis-Astarte nursing the young solar god on the same type of throne²⁶, of the latter seated on a *Dd*-pillar²⁷, of a (bearded) male god on the sphinx throne (figs.15,16)²⁸ or his female counterpart (fig.17)²⁹.

21 Fig. 12 after H. D. Rawnsley, Note, *PEQ* 1881, 124-125. The foundation trench of the sugar factory in which it was found, also yielded a Tyrian silver coin of 46 B.C. 22.

22 Fig. 13 (seal from Tharros, Sardinia, after W. Culican, *Op.cit.*, 226 fig. 5) and 17 (detail of a Memphite naos after P. Naster, *Op.cit.*, p. 11 n° 3).

23 Cf., for instance, E. Gubel, Art in Tyre during the First and Second Iron Age. A Preliminary Survey, *Studia Phoenicia* I-II (1983), 39-42.

24 M. Dothan, "Notes and News", *IEJ* 22 (1972), 244 with pl. 56c, E. Gubel, "Byblos: l'art de la métropole phénicienne", *apud* P. Xella (ed.), *Biblio. Una città e la sua cultura*, Roma 1994 and M.E.L. Mallowan, *Nimrud and Its Remains*, I, Aberdeen 1966, 255 n° 228.

25 fig. 14 (scarab from Vulci, Etruria, after G. Hölbl, *Beziehungen der ägyptischen Kultur zu Altitalien*, II, Leiden 1979, 74-5 n° 350).

26 Fig. 15 after W. Culican, *Op.cit.*, 220, pl. II:B.

27 W. Culican, *Op.cit.*, 228, fig. 6.

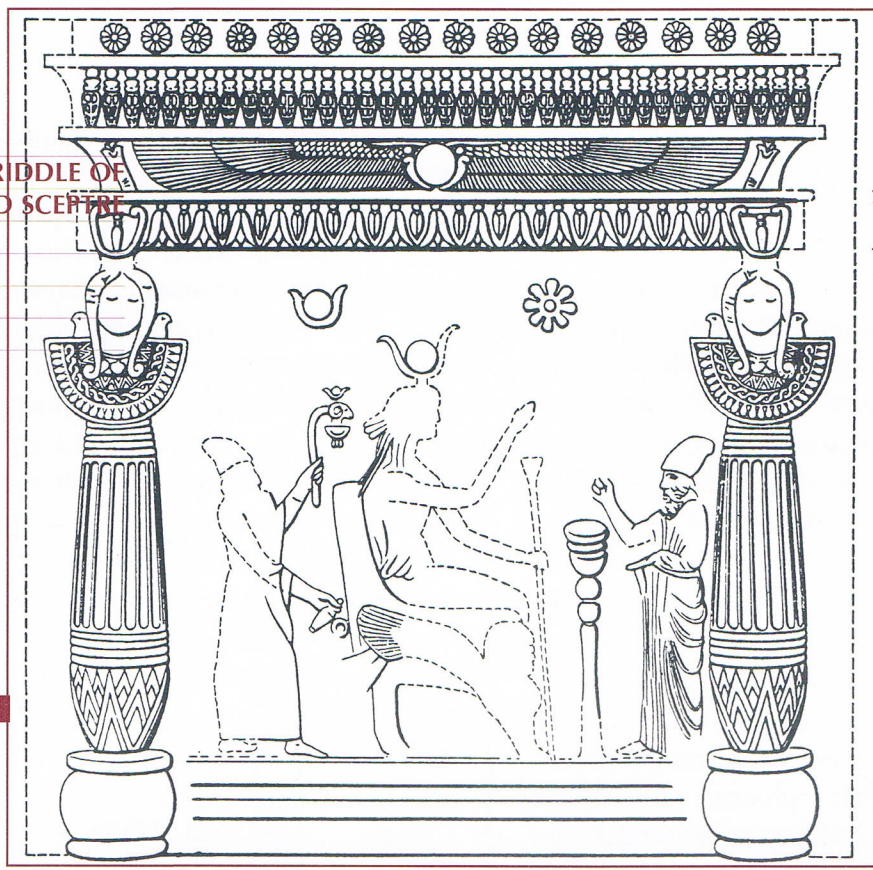
28 Fig. 16 after *Ibidem*, 226 fig. 4 (Cornaline scarab from Tharros), cf. also 220, pl. II: A, C for a bulla from the Phoenician mainland.

29 Cf., E. Gubel, *Phoenician Furniture*, Leuven 1986, 195 n° 152 with pl. XXXIX for another adoration scene involving a seated goddess. To the foregoing examples, several documents representing single acolytes must be added, including J. Vercoutter, *Les objets égyptiens et égyptisants du mobilier funéraire carthaginois*, Paris 1945, 231 n° 611, G. C. Picard, *Sacra punica*, *Karthago* XIII (1967), pls XXIV: n° 26 and, presumably, XXV: n°s 29 and 30 as well.

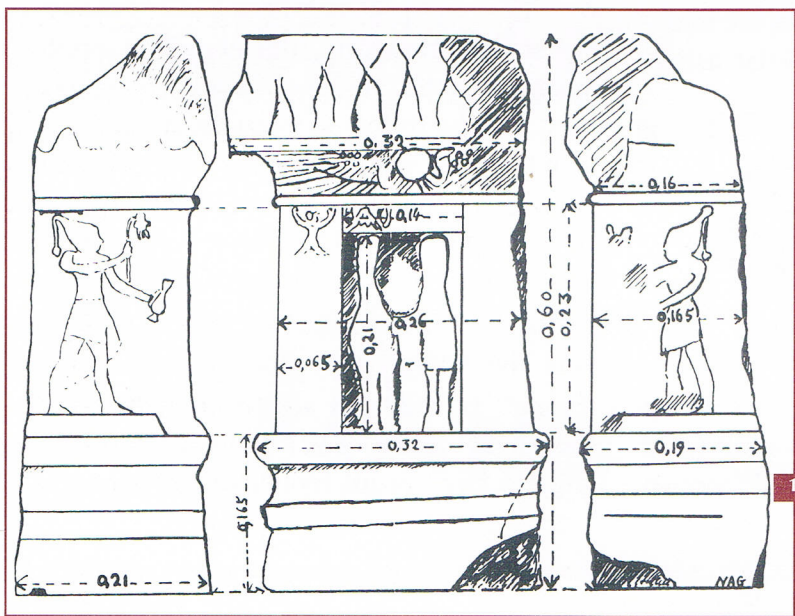
THE RIDDLE OF THE RAM-HEADED SCEPTRE

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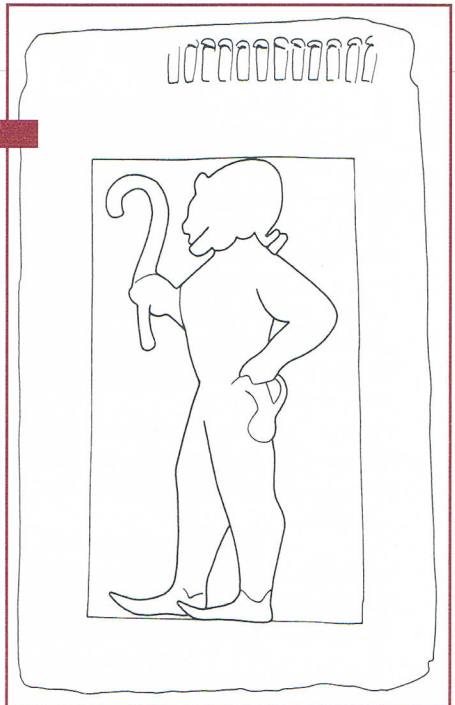
In Sidonian coinage of the achaemenid period, a single figure of a sceptre-bearer follows the royal chariot. This item had earlier been associated with by the aforesaid blinkers (fig.18)³⁰. Finally, the acolytes can face each other at either side of the entrance to a temple as a reminiscence of their appearance on the Sidonian *naiskoi* which pre-date the Persian age (fig.19)³¹. Many a representation referred to above illustrates that the (theme of the acolytes bearing this) sceptre also



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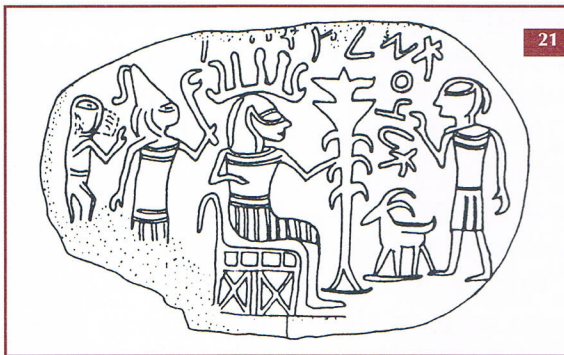
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30 After N. Jidejian, *Lebanon and the Greek World 333 to 64 B.C. illustrated by the Coins in the Michel Eddé Collection*, Araya 1996, 30.
 31 After E. Gubel, *Op.cit.*, pl. III: 4.
 32 G. Hölbl, *Op.cit.*, II, 74-75 n° 350.

device³². A group of cippi from the Fiesole area dated to the 6th c. B.C. evidences that the yet unexplained curved *lituus* seen in the hands of priests in Etruscan art (fig.20), may in fact have been inspired by the Phoenician ram-headed sceptre³³. The lateral sides of two stone cippi, one of which supporting a spherical *baetyl*, represent a male acolyte holding the curved sceptre in his



raised right hand, and an oinochoe in the other one. The fact that these monuments even reproduce the Egyptian cavetto moulding characterizing the Sidonian *cippi* or *naiskoi* on which this motif is prefigured (figs. 9, 19)³⁴, leaves but few doubts as to Phoenician, viz. Sidonian transmittance in this realm.

ATUM IN PHOENICIA

One of the earliest Phoenician seals, 9th c. B.C. to judge by the type of throne, situates the attendant

with the ram-headed sceptre between a seated divinity and a monkey on the lotus-flower (fig. 21)³⁵. The latter detail emphasizes his association with Atum as solar god, who can moreover assume this form in Egypt as the avatar of a Phoibos-Apollo-like deity who slays his enemies with bow and arrows from a long distance³⁶. As already hinted to above, this connotation explains the combination of the revenging eye of (Atum-)Re with the sceptre of Atum on the blinkers of the royal chariots' horses. A renewed interest for Atum in Phoenician midst may derive from direct contacts with Bubastis in the Nile Delta, where Osorkon I had devoted a temple to this god³⁷. Still at Bubastis, the "guest-god" Atum was worshipped as the father of a goddess very popular in early Ist millennium Phoenicia, namely Bastet, "Lady of the chest"³⁸ and "Eye of Horus (-of Re, -of Atum)"³⁹ who is pre-eminent in the Divine Field". In view of the Phoenicians' manifold activities in the Delta in general and Bubastis in particular, activities which are reflected both in the onomastic realm and in the form of *aegyptiaca* not to mention Egyptian concepts brought back home from here, it is likely that not only Bastet-Sekhmet and her son Mahes, but also Atum, the third chief deity of the local cult, was readily adopted.

Deities directly related to Atum in Egypt and Phoenicia

On a series of ivory frontlets likely to have formed a set with the aforesaid blinkers, Atum is represented *en face*, raising his arms in a gesture remi-

33 After F. Magi, *Stele e cippi fiesolani*, *StEtr.* VI (1932), 1-85, pls III-V (drawing F. Rolloux). For other representations of the *lituus* in Etruscan art, cf. e.g. S. Steingraber, *Catalogo ragionato della pittura Etrusca*, Milano 1984, pl. 8, 18 and the bibliography in M. Torelli (ed.), *The Etruscans*, Venice 2000, 592 n° 148.

34 E. Gubel, *Op.cit.*, pls. IV-V and *Idem*, Phoenician and Aramean Bridle-Harness Ornaments: Case examples of innovation and mobility in the Mediterranean, *apud* Chr. Uelinger (forthcoming).

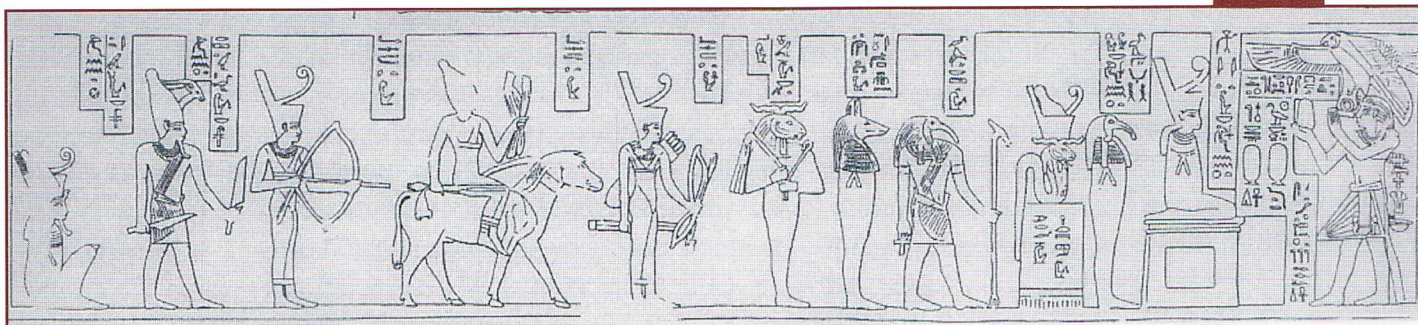
35 Cf., recently, O. Keel, *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel*, I, Freiburg –Göttingen 1997, 536-7 n°19.

36 K. Myśliwiec, *Op.cit.*, 81-91 and E. Brunner –Traut, Atum als Bogenschütze, *MDAIK* 14 (1956), 20-28, *passim*.

37 K. A. Kitchen, *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt (100-650 B.C.)*, Warminster 1986, 318 fig. 3 for the imaginative situation of this temple.

38 This title is to be connected with the glazed figurines studied by F. Bulté, *Talismans égyptiens d'heureuse maternité*, Paris 1991.

39 S. H. Aufrère, Le "champ divin" de Bastet à Bubastis, l'albâtre, les parfums et les curiosités de la Mer Rouge (autour de l'univers minéral XI), *Res Orientalis* XI (1998), 68-71, 73-78 and E. Gubel, *E pluribus unum: Nubian, Libyan and Phoenician "Bastet"-sphinxes*, *apud* W. Clarysse, A. Schoors, H. Willems (eds.), *Egyptian Religion. The Last Thousand Years*, I, Leuven (1998), (= *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 84), 629-645.



niscent of the *k3*-sign as a visual expression of his embracing his children Shu and Tefnut, represented here by the statuettes in his hands⁴⁰. If only the latter one was adopted in his original form in the Phoenician pantheon⁴¹, Phoenician artists did embrace the concept of the twin deities to which the twin acolytes holding the ram-headed sceptre aloft in many a Phoenician composition obviously refer. Finally, on frontlets likely to have been produced in the same workshop, the figure of Atum is substituted by that of **Reshef**, another healing god and "Lord of the arrow"⁴².

Atum is not frequently represented in Egyptian art; consequently, it seems all the more relevant that in one of the more complex compositions, Atum "Lord of Ahnass" (Heracleopolis) is preceded by Reshef as well as by three belligerent deities of Asiatic origin often identified as **Astarte**, **Anat and**, at loss for better alternatives, **Qadesh** (?): fig. 22⁴³. As a matter of fact, the identical accompanying inscriptions on the wall of the Persian-age temple of Hibis, repeat the descriptive formula 'Asitit, presumably deriving from the root 'stj, "to shoot" and hence to be rendered as "the shooters"⁴⁴.

This confusing legend has puzzled many scholars hitherto and the attempt to reconstruct 'Asitit into Asta(rt)e has therefore met with general acceptance, all the more so since similar "misspellings" of the name Astarte as As(i)ti(t) were postulated. The existence of a Syro-Phoenician goddess named *Asiti*, however, is now firmly established by e.g., the reference to her cult as a divine healer at Sidon in the 7th c. B.C. or, long before, as the "Hurrian Astarte" connected with horses in the area south of Ugarit on the Syrian coast⁴⁵. Since the Egyptian documents bearing the so-called scribal errors of the name Astarte imply the very same aspects of the religious profile of the goddess invoked, it becomes obvious that they refer to this *Asiti*, rather than to Astarte. In the light of the foregoing, the inscription *Asitit* of the Hibis temple thus suggests to identify *Asiti* as one of the three goddesses represented there, both the others also handling bow and arrows *to shoot* as a detail compatible with the iconography of Astarte and Anat. As for the former, it should be noted that in Heracleopolis, one of the paramount centres of Phoenician settlers in Egypt, Sekhmet was vene-

40 F. Safer, M. Sa'ïd al-Iraqi, *Ivories from Nimrud*, Bagdad 1987, pls. 74-76. On Atum's association with the *k3* sign, cf. K. Myśliwiec, *Op.cit.*, 17. The twins Shu and Tefnut personified the principle of dualism, not unlike the twins Shahr and Shalim of the Ugaritic tradition (P. Xella, *Il mito di Šhr e Šlm. Saggio sulla mitologia ugaritica*, Roma 1973. Represented both as lions (Shahr-dawn) and (Shalim-twilight) flanking a female deity (Astarte-Venus) and as human beings, the latter prefigure the Phoenician forerunners of Castor and Pollux discussed below.

41 More specifically on an ivory plaque, where the lion-headed child in the lotus is textually identified as Tefnut (see below). Daughter of Atum, sister and wife of her brother Shu, Tefnut is the eye (=moon) of the sun-god in the cosmology of Heliopolis and personified the primeval element of humidity as the etymology of her name would imply (LÄ 296-304). Her manifestation as the female element of the double lion Retu of Leontopolis as well as her identification as a child Isis gave birth to in the papyrus-swamps of Chemnis (Papyrus Ebers 95,8), perfectly explain the composition of several ivory plaques from Nimrud (G. Hermann, *Op.cit.*, pls 252: 968, 263: 1015-1017), one of which nominally refers to *T(f)nwt* (S.-A. Naguib, "Les ivoires égyptiens et égyptisants du Musée National de l'Irak. Essai d'interprétation", *apud* S. Schoske (éd.), *Akten des Vierten internationalen Ägyptologenkongresses München 1985,4*, Hamburg 1985, 300-301 fig. 2. The figures flanking Tefnut on the plaque are presumably both leontocephalic, for was Tefnut not considered to be wrathful like Sekhmet and pacified like Bastet? (LÄ, 299).

42 Good photographs of such a frontlet in *La terra tra i due fiumi*, Torino 1985, n° 167. On Reshef, E. Lipiński, *Dieux et déesses de l'univers phénicien et punique*, Leuven 1995, 179-188.

43 After N. de Garies Davies, *The Temple of Hibis in el-Kargeh Oasis*, III, The Decoration, New York 1953, pl. 3 (III:1-12).

44 In my opinion, this view is corroborated by a passage in the Pap. Bremner-Rhind (25,17) where E. Brunner-Traut, *Op.cit.*, 25-6 remarks: "Das unbestimmte Determinativ zu 'stj lässt die Frage offen, ob das Auge (mit seinen Strahlen) die Feinde mit der Lanze oder dem Pfeil trifft, doch möchten wir in Analogie zum vorhergehenden Text annehmen, das 'stj hier die Bedeutung von "schiessen" hat".

rated with Astarte under the name 'Ayt, -"the-Ferocious-one", as opposed to Bastet-"the-pacified-one"⁴⁶.

In the Near East, ivory horse-frontlets of the same type and style as the ones portraying Atum often represent one to three goddesses of the Qadesh-type (Asiti being her real name) and doubts are thence few that they represent the prototypes of the Egyptian triad⁴⁷. Instead of holding lions or standing on the heads of lions as on the frontlets, contemporary or slightly later Phoenician seals represent these goddesses as winged women with a lion head, which once more prefigures a phase in the evolution of Astarte's image in later Egyptian (and Punic) iconography⁴⁸. Finally, the fact that the three goddesses at Hibis are connected with Atum and Reshef is none the less significant in this context, in view of the aforesaid related ivory frontlets featuring Reshef equipped with bow and arrows as a substitute of Atum.

OTHER MANIFESTATIONS OF ATUM IN EGYPT
AND PHOENICIA

Other aspects of Atum including his association with Re-Harachte as a human- and as a falcon-headed **spinx** respectively, were possibly accepted as well, although an overlapping with the iconography of Horon in Phoenician midst must be reckoned with in the first case⁴⁹. The **criocephalic**

falcon, one of the popular designs of the 22nd dynasty cartonnage mummy-cases which inspired Phoenician art, recurs on a cylinder seal with an Aramaic inscription⁵⁰. The ram-headed creature being closely associated there with the eye of Re, chances are fair that this motif, undoubtedly transmitted via Phoenicia, refers to Atum as in its original Egyptian setting. There, the latter fuses with the solar aspect of Horus the Behdedite, for Atum is also frequently identified with the **winged sun-disc**⁵¹. Related with the ram-headed falcon is Atum-Khepri's manifestation of the **criocephalic winged scarab** representing the rebirth of the morning sun, the Phoenician examples of which may now be traced back to the cosmogony of the Tanite nome⁵². A straightforward reference to Atum finally, is found on a lost seal formerly in Berlin featuring Atum in the same stanza as on the frontlets, albeit here in the form of his cultic image as the *Benben-baetyl* of Heliopolis⁵³. The latter recurs on Phoenician and Punic stelae, jewellery and Sidonian votive gifts as well as in local monetary images of the Hellenistic period where the baetylic stone, drawn forth on a chariot, represents Eshmun, divine husband of the Sidonian (Isis-) Astarte⁵⁴. Significantly enough, the pyramid text 1652 wherein Atum appears under the form of the *Benben-baetyl*, was in due time to be incorporated in the ritual of the "Opening-of-the-mouth". This definitely links both Atum and his ram-headed sceptre with Eshmun whose very name "oil" > "he who (an)ooints" explains the association between the sceptres and the oinochoai evidenced in the

45 C. Bonnet – P. Xella, L'identité d'Astarté-hr, *apud* E. Acquaro (ed.), *Alle soglie della classicità. Il Mediterraneo tra tradizione e innovazione. Studi in onore di Sabatino Moscati*, Pisa-Roma 1996, 32-3, 36.

46 O. Perdu, Une autre trace de la déesse Ayt dans l'onomastique hérakléopolitaine et l'origine du chef de la flotte Pakhrof, *RdE* 40 (1989), 195-7 with thanks to L. Limme for this reference.

47 J. J. Orchard, *Op.cit.*, pls. XXVIII-XXXII.

48 E. Gubel, Notes iconographiques à propos de trois sceaux phéniciens inédits (CGPH.4), *Contributi e Materiali di Archeologia Orientali* III (1990), pp. 178-186, cf. M. C. Marin Ceballos, La diosa leontocéfala de Cartago, *Koilaos* 4 (1995), 827-843.

49 E. Gubel, "The anthroponym 'Hr: New Light on the Iconography of Horon?", *Omaggio a A. Ciasca*, Roma 2000, (forthcoming).

50 E. Gubel, *Op.cit.*, (*supra*, n.4), 89 with n. 125. The association of elements perfectly suits the Egyptian iconography of Atum as the solar god (K. Myśliwiec, *Op.cit.*, 81-91), and outdates the proposed identification as Khnum.

51 K. Myśliwiec, *Studien zum Gott Atum*, II, Hildesheim 1979, 149.

52 E. Gubel, *Op.cit.*; (*supra*, n.4), 91 with Abb. 18.

53 For the most recent publication, cf. N. Avigad, B. Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*, Jerusalem 1997, 271 n° 278.

54 W. Culican, *Op.cit.*, 287-298.

twined **snakes**.

Whilst reserving a more in-depth analysis of the former points to a forthcoming study on the iconography of the Phoenician pantheon, this brief excursus hopefully suffices to introduce a newcomer amidst the ranks of those divinities essential to religious life in Sidon and its orbit of influence. In doing so, the case of the "Khnum sceptre" may have learned how rewarding it is to confront "Egyptian pasticchios" in Phoenician art with the religious connotation of their models in Egyptian art.

APPENDIX: ATUM IN THE ONOMASTIC REALM

Atum has not been recorded as yet as a divine name or theophoric element in either Phoenician or Punic onomastics⁵⁵. Unless merely due to the luck of the spade, the discrepancy between Phoenician written records and iconographical documents may indicate that Atum's assimilation with a local god had already been completed before the dawn of the 1st millennium. In this

event, it is likely indeed that he was no longer worshipped under his own name, very much like the Baalat Gubal was no longer remembered as Hathor except for her icon in the visual arts. Egyptian names containing the theonym Atum are of course of little use in this context, but an exceptionally rare personal name of the late 19th Dynasty unexpectedly offers some help. The fact that the name in question, Atumemtaneb ("Atum-is-in-every-Land") remains unique to the best of my knowledge, supposes that it must have been formed to suit the personality or ethnic background of some individual, whereby the contemporary qualification of Atum as "Creator of Foreign Lands"⁵⁶, may have inspired the form. The bearer of the name Atumemtaneb was a late Ramesside high-ranking individual who served as royal butler with the epithet "clean-of-hands", assuming additional duties which took him to the Syro-Phoenician sphere of Egyptian influence as the "King's messenger to Every Foreign Land". In view of the many orientalizing details as reflected in the decoration of his share of the (proto-Phoenician!) vessels from the Tell Basta treasure (Bubastis)⁵⁷, it is not far-fetched to suspect him to have been one of the many bi- or multilingual Levantine counsellors to the Egyptian court, such as for instance the (Ugarit-born?) "King-maker" Ba'ā.

55 Absent in F. L. Benz, *Personal Names in the Phoenician and Punic Inscriptions*, Rome 1972 and E. Lipiński, *Op.cit.*, Leuven 1995.

56 K. Myśliwiec, *Op.cit.*, 180.

57 Cf. W. Kelly Simpson, "The Vessels with Engraved Designs and the Repoussé Bowl from the Tell Basta Treasure", *AJA* 63 (1959), 29-45 *passim*.

Addendum. New examples of (hierocephalic) acolytes with ram-headed sceptres on Phoenician and Punic bullae are to be found in T. Redessi, "Etude des empreintes de sceaux de Carthage" in *Karthago III*, Mainz 1999, 66 n° 57, pl. 5 83 n° 172, pl. 15.