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THE DROOPING LOTUS FLOWER

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This article is dedicated to my teacher Edith Porada, who has solved so many a riddle of Near Eastern iconography and shown that its gestures and attributes seldom lack a specific meaning. The point of departure of the argument I will set out below is an article by Miss Porada herself on the sarcophagus of Ahiram, which she has dated about 1000 B.C.¹ In it she developed an idea first formulated by the Emir Maurice Chehab with respect to the two standing figures that face each other on the lid of the sarcophagus (Ill. 1). Whereas the figure on the left holds a living, upright flower to his nose, the figure on the right holds a drooping lotus flower in his left hand. The latter gesture is certainly a remarkable one, for one expects a person to hold a flower in such a way that he can smell its fragrance and appreciate its beauty, as in Ill. 9 and in Ill. 1 on the left. This is the position in which one normally sees the flower on earlier Syrian and Egyptian monuments.²

As the blue lotus opens and closes daily, flowering from sunrise to midday, it was a constant reminder of regeneration.³ Particularly relevant is the wooden head of Tut-'ankh-Amun on the lotus, found in the entrance of his tomb.⁴ It seems to mean that the dead king is rejuvenated like the rising sun. The infant sun-god's appearance on a lotus at Hermopolis became a favorite theme under Sheshonq I (950-929 B.C.) whose renewed contact with Byblos seems to have caused an influx of new Egyptian motifs in Phoenicia.⁵

A flower shown drooping, and therefore dying or dead, would certainly be understood by the ancient Near Easterner as an ill omen, and therefore its representation would be avoided, unless one meant, on the contrary, to convey the idea of death or dying symbolically. This is exactly what M. Chehab implied.⁶ He proposed that the two standing figures that face each other on the lid of the sarcophagus portray father and son, in accordance with the inscription, which says: "A sarcophagus made by [It]toba'1, the son of Ahiram,

¹ Edith Porada, "Notes on the Sarcophagus of Ahiram," *The Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University* 5 (1973), pp. 355-372, especially p. 359.

² E.g., held by the thunder god on an 18th-century B.C. Syrian seal, Edith Porada, ed., *Corpus of Ancient Near Eastern Seals . . . I: The Collection of the Pierpont Morgan Library* (Washington, 1948), no. 967. On Egyptian Middle and New Kingdom funerary stelae the lotus flower is usually directed horizontally toward the dead man's nose, even though the stem is held vertically, see, e.g., William C. Hayes, *The Scepter of Egypt I* (New York, 1953), fig. 220; II (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), fig. 93.

³ G. A. D. Tait, "The Egyptian Relief Chalice," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 49 (1963), pp. 93-139; H. Schlögl, *Der Sonnengott auf der Blüte (Aegyptiaca Helvetica 5)*, 1977.

⁴ Howard Carter, *The Tomb of Tut-Ankh-Amen III* (London, 1933), pl. 1.

⁵ Tait, op cit. in note 3, pp. 134-136.

⁶ Maurice Chehab, "Observations au sujet du sarcophage d'Ahiram," *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 46 (1970-71), pp. 109-117, especially p. 115.

king of Byblos, for Ahiram, his father, when he laid him down for eternity."⁷ In this interpretation, the dead king, on the right, raises his right hand in a gesture of benediction toward his son, whose right arm is hanging down and possibly holding a libation vessel. One side of the sarcophagus shows the funerary banquet, with mourners bringing food and drink to a table set before the dead king (Ill. 2). This time he sits on a throne carried by sphinxes and holds a bowl in his right hand, like the king on a 12th century B.C. Megiddo ivory illustrating a victory banquet (Ill. 9). But while the victorious Megiddo king holds an upright lotus flower in his left hand, the dead king of Byblos—or rather his ghost—holds a drooping lotus flower in his. With these strong indications as to the significance of the drooping lotus flower in mind we shall now turn to some other occurrences of this motif.

In north Syria and south Anatolia, stelae were regularly carved with banquet scenes in the 9th-8th centuries B.C. Orthmann has shown that these scenes represent the funerary banquet and that the stelae were funerary stelae, serving as the focal point for the cult of the dead, as they had done in Egypt since the old kingdom.⁹ Two sites (the Kazdağ near Islahiye and Maraş) have yielded a stele representing the thunder god along with such banquet stelae. At Tell Halaf (ancient Guzana) a seated statue of husband and wife, each holding a bowl in which offerings could have been placed, was found in the same room as a divine statue and an altar.¹⁰ These material remains illustrate what was meant by certain texts from the same region, e.g.: "May Panamuwa's soul eat with Hadad and may Panamuwa's soul drink with Hadad." The latter text was inscribed by King Panamuwa I of Sam'al on a statue of the thunder god Hadad on a rock outcrop named Gercin northeast of Zincirli (ancient Sam'al).¹¹ Nearby were two more, damaged statues and a relief. The statue of Panamuwa II found at Tahtali Pinar may originally have stood here too.

On the Neo-Hittite funerary stelae mentioned above, the men regularly hold an ear of grain up or a bunch of grapes down. The lotus flower is an insignium of the ruler on 9th-8th century Neo-Hittite reliefs.¹² On three reliefs from Sam'al king Bar-Rakib (ca. 732-722 B.C.) holds an upright flower. On two of them the flower takes the shape of a palmette rather than a lotus; on the third it resembles a bunch of buds.¹³ Probably through western influence, the lotus flower as a royal insignium appears on Neo-Assyrian reliefs and wall paintings from the reign of Tiglathpileser III (745-727 B.C.) onward.¹⁴ Thus the beardless figure on a funerary stele from Sam'al must also represent a dead king or

⁷ Herbert Donner and W. Röllig, *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften I* (Wiesbaden, 1966), no. 1; vol. II (Wiesbaden, 1968), pp. 2-4, translated by Franz Rosenthal in James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts . . .* (3rd ed., Princeton, 1969), p. 661.

⁸ Gordon Loud, *The Megiddo Ivories* (OIP 52, Chicago, 1939), pl. 4, no. 2a-b. Kurt Galling, "Die Achiram-Inschrift im Lichte der Karatepe-Texte," *Die Welt des Orients* 1 (1950), pp. 421 ff., and others after him, have compared the sarcophagus of Ahiram to this ivory. Edith Porada, op. cit. in note 1, showed that the relation between the two is one of subject matter, not of style.

⁹ Winfried Orthmann, *Untersuchungen zur späthethitischen Kunst* (Bonn, 1971), pp. 378-379, 388.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 378; Max von Oppenheim, ed., *Tell Halaf II: Die Bauwerke*, von Rudolf Naumann (Berlin, 1950), pp. 357-360, fig. 173, pl. 71.

¹¹ Felix von Luschan et al., *Ausgrabungen in Sendschirli I* (Berlin, 1893), pp. 44-54, fig. 19, pl. 6; Donner and Röllig, op. cit. in note 7, vol. I, pp. 38-39; vol. II, pp. 214-223.

¹² Orthmann, op. cit. in note 9, p. 292.

¹³ Felix von Luschan et al., *Ausgrabungen in Sendschirli IV* (Berlin, 1911), fig. 255, pl. 60; pl. 67; Herbert Donner, "Ein Orthostaten-fragment des Königs Barrakab von Sam'al," *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung* 3 (1955), pp. 73-98, figs. 1-2. Orthmann, op. cit. in note 9, nos. Zincirli F/1, K/1, K/11.

¹⁴ Barthel Hrouda, *Die Kulturgeschichte des assyrischen Flachbildes* (Bonn, 1965), p. 105.

prince (Ill. 5).¹⁵ He holds a lotus flower in such a way that the flower points forward, not upward. In terms of signifying a living or dead flower this position is equivocal. The stele is dated on stylistic grounds in the later part of Orthmann's *Späthethitisch* IIIb period (ca. 750-710 B.C.).¹⁶ An earlier date, in the later part of Orthmann's *Späthethitisch* IIIa period (ca. 850-750 B.C.) is indicated for another round-topped stele from Sam'al, on which two standing men face right (Ill. 4).¹⁷ Both wear the ceremonial dress of the Assyrian kings, a belted plaid displaying three tiers of fringe.¹⁸ Like the left-hand figure on the lid of Ahiram's sarcophagus (Ill. 1), the smaller, beardless and bare-headed man in Ill. 4 holds a vessel in one hand and an upright, living lotus flower in the other. The larger, bearded and crowned man raises his right hand in a gesture of benediction and lowers the lotus flower in his left hand. It is shown in a horizontal position, as on the funerary stele in Ill. 5. The parallels with the earlier sarcophagus lid from Byblos and the later funerary stele from Sam'al itself leave hardly any doubt that Ill. 4 is a funerary stele as well and represents a dead king of Sam'al blessing his son, who is about to offer him a libation. Although the dead king represented (Panamuwa I or his father?) must have reigned in the first half of the 8th century, one might adduce for comparison the inscription on a statue that Bar-Rakib erected, probably on the hill of Gercin, for his father Panamuwa II (who died before Damascus 733 B.C.):¹⁹ "My father Panamuwa died at the feet of his lord Tiglathpileser, king of Assyria in the battle of. . . Then his lord, the king of Assyria, took . . . his soul and he set up a monument for it along the road and he shipped my father from Damascus to Assyria . . . and I have erected this statue [for] my [father] Panamuwa, son of Bar-Sur . . . and he brought . . . before the grave of my father Panamuwa. . . ."

The Sam'al stele on Ill. 4, with its Assyrian crown, dress and sandals, is unique among Neo-Hittite sculpture and paralleled only by the royal figure on an inscribed orthostat from the same site (Ill. 3).²⁰ It shows king Kilamuwa (ca. 845-815 B.C.) holding a drooping lotus flower with the stem at his knee. Here our hypothesis does not seem to work, as the accompanying inscription recounts his autobiography in the first person.²¹ It is to be noted, however, that most of the inscription is phrased in the past tense; toward the end, it addresses itself to future generations. Perhaps a curse upon evildoers, like the one with which it ends, was considered more effective if pronounced by the ghost of a dead king. If the relief had been made after Kilamuwa's death, this would explain the considerable difference in style between this work and Orthmann's immediately preceding group *Späthethitisch* II (ca. 950-850 B.C.). It would take us too far to consider the many occurrences of the lotus flower in Phoenician and Syrian art, especially on ivories and metalwork. Irene J. Winter has discussed an important group of ivories, probably made in Sam'al for Tiglathpileser III, and has dwelt upon the regeneration symbolism of lotus bud and flower.²²

¹⁵ Von Luschan et al., op. cit. in note 13, fig. 236, pl. 54; Orthmann, op. cit. in note 9, p. 375, lists other features that point to this figure being male, not female.

¹⁶ Orthmann, op. cit. in note 9, pp. 65, 148, 221.

¹⁷ Von Luschan et al., op. cit. in note 13, pl. 66; Orthmann, op. cit. in note 9, pp. 67-68, 148, 221.

¹⁸ Hrouda, op. cit. in note 14, pp. 37-38, pl. 2, *Schalgewand* Nr. 2.

¹⁹ The torso, recovered at Tahtali Pinar between Gercin and Zincirli, may have come from Gercin, Von Luschan, op. cit. in note 11, p. 48, figs. 16-17; Donner and Röllig, op. cit. in note 7, vol. I, pp. 38-39; vol. II, pp. 223-224.

²⁰ Von Luschan et al., op. cit. in note 13, fig. 273; Orthmann, op. cit. in note 9, pp. 200-202.

²¹ Donner and Röllig, op. cit. in note 7, vol. I, pp. 4-5; vol. II, pp. 30-34, translated by Rosenthal, op. cit. in note 7, pp. 654-655.

²² Irene J. Winter, "Carved Ivory Furniture Panels from Nimrud: a Coherent Subgroup of the North Syrian Style," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 11 (1976), pp. 25-54.

From the area halfway between Phoenicia and Assyria we now move to Assyria itself. No entirely satisfactory explanation has thus far been given for the Neo-Assyrian genii with rosette headbands that carry a drooping lotus or other flower in the left hand while raising the other in a gesture of benediction (Ills. 6, 7).²³ Julian Reade has identified them as anthropomorphic *apkalle* or wise ones.²⁴ These are mentioned besides fish-cloaked *apkalle* and bird-headed *apkalle* in 8th-century B.C. incantation texts.²⁵ It appears, though, as if the term "wise ones" is a generic one, the equivalent of our "genii." We would like to go beyond this identification and establish the specific meaning of the genius with headband. In some instances the genius carries a kid or other sacrificial animal on the left forearm while the drooping flower is held in his lowered right hand. Basically, these figures are characterized by two apparently contradictory features: they wear the headband decorated with rosettes that, Julian Reade has shown, was reserved for royal persons in the direct line of succession.²⁶ On the other hand they wear the kilt over which a shawl is draped in such a way as to afford the forward leg freedom of movement. This garb, which implies both readiness to fight (the kilt) and dignity (the shawl), is reserved for supernatural beings (gods, genii and heroes) in Neo-Assyrian art.²⁷ Wings, usually (but not always) added to this basic appearance emphasize the divine status of the figures under Ashurnasirpal II, but not under Sargon II (Ill. 6, 7). Now the only way to reconcile the figures' royal and at the same time divine status is to assume that they portray dead kings, deified or at least assimilated to the gods in certain respects.²⁸

If we have correctly interpreted the drooping flower, it signifies the fact that this figure with its royal headband represents not the living king or crown prince, but a dead king whose ghost receives sacrifices from and bestows blessings upon the living king. A variant of this type of genius carries not a plant but a bucket in his left hand while blessing the king with his right hand. The carrying of a "lustration" bucket indicates his function partly overlapped that of the mitered or eagle-headed genii engaged in a purification ceremony with bucket and aspergillum. On the reliefs decorating the palace of Ashurnasirpal II at Nimrud (ancient Calah) 43 genii with rosette headbands occur, 31 of them in the king's living room (Room H) alone.²⁹ All of the latter belonged to the variant just mentioned. In throne room B two entrances were flanked by winged genii with rosette headbands and

²³ Austen H. Layard, *Monuments of Nineveh I* (London, 1849), pl. 37b, from the palace of Ashurnasirpal II, 883-859 B.C. = John B. Stearns, *Reliefs from the Palace of Ashurnasirpal II*, (*Afo Beiheft* 15, Graz, 1961), pl. 51; Pierre E. Botta and E. Flandin, *Monument de Ninive I* (Paris, 1849), pls. 43, 74-75; Henri Frankfort, *The Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient* (Harmondsworth, 1954), pl. 97; *Encyclopédie photographique de l'art I* (Paris, 1936), p. 307, from the palace of Sargon II, 721-705 B.C.

²⁴ Julian E. Reade, "Assyrian Architectural Decoration: Techniques and Subject-Matter," *Baghdader Mitteilungen* 10 (1979), pp. 17-49, especially pp. 37-38.

²⁵ Oliver R. Gurney, "Babylonian Prophylactic Figures and their Rituals," *AAA* 22 (1935), pp. 31-96.

²⁶ I.e., among the living, for king and crown prince, Julian E. Reade, "Two Slabs from Sennacherib's Palace," *Iraq* 29 (1967), pp. 42-48, especially p. 47. It was, apparently, the most essential part of the Assyrian royal crown. In single combat with lions, when liberty of movement is needed, Ashurbanipal wears only the rosette headband. Hunting from the chariot, in which he is protected by his attendants, he wears the full crown, Richard D. Barnett, *Assyrian Palace Reliefs* (London, n.d.) pls. 65, 89.

²⁷ Hrouda, op. cit. in note 14, pp. 26-30, pl. 1:6-8.

²⁸ E.g., by their regularly receiving food and drink offerings. There is ample evidence for such practices, especially among Neo-Assyrian royalty, Miranda Bayliss, "The Cult of Dead Kin in Assyria and Babylonia," *Iraq* 35 (1973), pp. 115-125.

²⁹ John B. Stearns, *Reliefs from the Palace of Ashurnasirpal II* (*Afo Beiheft* 15, Graz, 1961), pp. 64-65, pls. 89-90.

plants. One pair had a bucket in its left hand and held a lotus branch up in its right hand.³⁰ The other pair had a young dappled deer on its left forearm and held a palmette branch up in its right hand.³¹ Four more winged genii with headbands were to be found flanking entrances or lining doorways in the south wing. One pair raised the right hand in blessing and held a branch with daisy-like flowers down in its left hand.³² The other carried a young wild goat on the right forearm and held an ear of grain upright in the left hand.³³ Finally, the Ninurta temple seems to have had a pair of wingless genii with rosette headbands and plants at its north entrance. Next to a doorway in the arsenal of Shalmaneser III (858-824 B.C.) at Calah a blessing genius was painted with three pendant flowers in front of his thigh.³⁴ In the palace of Tiglathpileser III (744-727 B.C.) at least two genii with headbands must have been portrayed; one had wings, the other raised his right hand in blessing and held a drooping pomegranate branch in his left.³⁵ The original wall-paintings of the palace at Til-Barsib included a wingless genius with headband and upright lotus flower in the blessing right hand, a drooping flower (?) in the left. Another held a quadruped by a leash.³⁶ Kneeling genii holding a lotus flower up and a branch with three dates (?) down occurred in rooms which seem to have been redecorated under Ashurbanipal (668-627 B.C.)³⁷ In the palace of Sargon II (721-705 B.C.) at Khorsabad (ancient Dur-Sharrukin) all the genii with headbands were wingless and carried plants. Some carry drooping pomegranate branches and bless the king near doorways. They sometimes accompany genii with horned crowns near doorways or appear on a small scale near the guardian colossi on the façades. Others come in pairs, a larger one carrying a wild goat on his left forearm and a smaller one behind.³⁸ As difference in size usually indicates difference in rank on the Assyrian reliefs, one wonders whether the smaller figures might not portray the humbler Assyrian kings of the pre-Empire days.

A miniature figure with drooping pomegranate branch and wild goat is seen as part of the backrest of Sargon's throne.³⁹ Below is a table showing the various occurrences of the genius with rosette headband.⁴⁰

	winged	wingless	bucket	kid	deer	blessing hand	drooping plant			upright plant			
							lotus	daisy	pomegranate	grain	lotus	palmette	
Ashurbanipal II	37	6	35	2	2	37		2			2	2	2
Tiglathpileser III*	1	2				1				1		1	
Sargon II				2		ca. 40	2		ca. 40				

*including Til-Barsib wall paintings

³⁰ Layard, op. cit. in note 23, pl. 34a.

³¹ Ibid., pl. 35b.

³² Ibid., pl. 37b.

³³ Ibid., pl. 35a.

³⁴ David Oates, "The Excavations at Nimrud . . .," *Iraq* 25 (1963), pp. 6-37, especially p. 30.

³⁵ Richard D. Barnett and Margarete Falkner, *The Sculptures of . . . Tiglath-pileser III. . .* (London, 1962), pl. 104-106.

³⁶ François Thureau-Dangin and Maurice Dunand, *Til-Barsib* (Paris, 1936), pp. 57, 68, pls. 48, 52.

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 62-63, pl. 46.

³⁸ Pierre E. Botta and E. Flandin, *Monument de Ninive I* (Paris, 1849), pls. 24, 29; Gordon Loud, *Khorsabad I* (OIP 38, Chicago, 1936), fig. 35.

³⁹ Loud, *ibid.*, fig. 44.

⁴⁰ Hrouda, op. cit. in note 14, p. 172, gives a list of museum numbers with references to their publication.

It will be shown that some of the genii hold an upright plant, although they presumably represent dead kings. A more serious objection against our whole "drooping flower" hypothesis might be raised on the grounds that living Assyrian kings are sometimes shown holding the flower down. In one wall-painting from Til-Barsib the king (Tiglathpileser III?) is shown holding his staff in the right hand and a pomegranate branch, with the blossoms hanging down, in the left (Ill. 10).⁴¹ The crown prince, opposite him, has introduced a vanquished foe (?) who prostrates himself and whose fate is perhaps being decided. Could the branch held with the blossoms down signify condemnation, as Falkner has suggested with respect to the staff put to the enemy's head by Tiglathpileser on a relief from his palace?⁴² Here the king holds a lotus horizontally, and Barnett, who disagrees with Falkner, interprets this gesture as signifying, on the contrary, that the foreigner is being reprieved. With respect to another scene, however, in which a spear is held with the point down, they both agree that condemnation is implied.⁴³

In his palace at Khorsabad (ancient Dur-Sharrukin), too, Sargon II had himself portrayed more than once holding a lotus or pomegranate flower down (Ill. 8).⁴⁴ It is certainly not likely that he wished to show himself after his death. Is it a sign of condemnation, this time directed at a group of Medes? Perhaps we have, all along, sought too literal a meaning in these gestures, which might, instead, refer to the receiving of life (the smelling of the lotus) on the one hand, and the bestowing of life (the proffering of the lotus) on the other.

Professor Dr. Othmar Keel has very generously allowed me to illustrate and discuss a splendid bluish chalcedony cylinder seal (height 3.1 cm, diameter 1.6 cm) now in the collection of the Biblical Institute of the University of Fribourg, Switzerland (Ill. 11). This collection will be published by Marcus Wäfler and Madame H. Keel-Leu. In 1920 the seal was offered to the British Museum by a dealer named Gejau. Its earlier history is unknown. It has been carved out of the hard stone with clearly recognizable use of the cutting disc (e.g., in the left bull's raised foreleg) and the drill (e.g., in the right-hand bull's knee joints and in the winged sun-disc). By moving these tools over the surface a certain amount of modeling has been achieved (e.g., on the bull's haunches). Other parts (e.g., the bull's ribs, wings and necks) are simply hatched. The three-dimensional effect, a hallmark of Neo-Assyrian late 8th-7th century modeled style seals,⁴⁵ has been achieved by an alternation of shallower and deeper carving. The Fribourg seal's principal scene is probably the most common motif on seals of the reign of Sargon II. In it, a four-winged genius holds two rearing winged bulls at bay. His shawl is draped in three apron-like tiers over his backward leg. The scene is closely paralleled, e.g., on a late 8th-7th century Assyrian jaspis cylinder in the British Museum.⁴⁶

It is hard to establish the meaning of such very stereotyped scenes, which come late in the millenary development of Near Eastern seals. For the 8th-7th century Assyrian or Babylonian they may have been as meaningless as our heraldic devices have become for us.⁴⁷ Certainly the association of the bull with the thunder god is no useful clue, as the latter occurs on Neo-Assyrian seals in a completely different guise.⁴⁸ On account of the crescentic

⁴¹ Thureau-Dangin and Dunand, op. cit. in note 36, p. 64, pl. 52.

⁴² Barnett and Falkner, op. cit. in note 35, pp. xvii, 35, pl. 18.

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 35, 42, pl. 96.

⁴⁴ Loud, op. cit. in note 38, figs. 28, 34, 35.

⁴⁵ Edith Porada, op. cit. in note 2, pp. 91-92, nos. 753-763.

⁴⁶ Donald J. Wiseman, *Cylinder Seals of Western Asia* (London, 1959), no. 70.

⁴⁷ The earlier occurrence of comparable motifs as textile patterns may indicate this, see Layard, op. cit. in note 23, pls. 44:1, 3.

frontal view of his horns, however, the bull is also associated with the moon god and thus, some scholars have suggested, with night.⁴⁹ An interpretation of the genius as a genius of day would accord with the border of open lotus flowers. The Egyptian water lily hides its flower at night and opens with the first morning rays. It therefore symbolized the rising sun in Egypt.⁵⁰

The figure most relevant to the subject of this article is the wingless genius that seems to have retreated between the bull's wings. His garb, consisting of kilt and shawl, marks him as divine. He is related to the "royal ghosts" from the palace of Sargon II (Ill. 7) by the animal and plant he carries: on his right forearm a young horned animal (a wild sheep, if its horns are drawn correctly) and, held down by the left hand, a lotus flower. To make his status as a dead, divinized king even clearer, the seal-cutter has raised him on a mountain, the scaly rocks of which are indicated by cross-hatching.

Although the mountain as abode of the gods was a literary rather than an artistic theme in Mesopotamia,⁵¹ gods standing on mountains are a standard feature of Anatolian and Syrian art.⁵² In what may have been his funerary chapel, the Hittite king Tuthaliya IV (ca. 1235-1210 B.C.) is even, according to a highly plausible suggestion of Hans Güterbock's⁵³ represented after his death as standing on two mountains and therefore assimilated to the gods. This would correspond to the common Hittite euphemism "king RN became god" for "king RN died."⁵⁴ In an exceptional Akkadian text from Boğazköy, the death of king Suppiluliuma I (ca. 1350-1324 B.C.) is described as follows: "When RN, my grandfather, took to the mountain."⁵⁵ The discovery of this seal would seem to clinch the points made by Maurice Chehab, Edith Porada, and myself, namely that a whole series of figures holding a drooping lotus flower represents dead kings. On account of the mountain motif, so popular in Anatolia and Syria, the seal may come from the western part of the Assyrian empire. On the other hand the filling motifs—rhomb, winged sun-disc, and, especially, the crossed horned animals—are typically Assyrian. The latter motif also occurs on a late 8th-7th century Assyrian chalcedony seal in the British Museum.⁵⁶

An interesting solution has recently been proposed for the dilemma that according to Greek sources Persian religion was strictly aniconic in the 5th century B.C.,⁵⁷ while many Persian monuments show a figure in a winged ring interpreted by most archeologists as

⁴⁸ For Adad on his bull, see Henri Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals* (London, 1939), pp. 215-216; Porada, op. cit. in note 2, nos. 692, 702.

⁴⁹ René Dussaud, "Notes de mythologie syrienne," *Revue Archéologique* 5 (1904), pp. 234-236; Kurt Erdmann, review of Erich F. Schmidt, *Persepolis I* in *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 13 (1956), pp. 56-65, especially p. 65; André Parrôt, *Mission Archéologique de Mari II: Le palais 2: Peintures murales* (Paris, 1958), p. 76, pl. 17.

⁵⁰ See Tait, op. cit. in note 3.

⁵¹ Henri Frankfort, *The Birth of Civilization in the Near East* (Bloomington, 1951), pp. 54-55; same, *The Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient* (Harmondsworth, 1954), p. 6.

⁵² See, e.g., Kurt Bittel, ed., *Boğazköy-Hattusa IX: Das hethitische Felsheiligtum Yazilikaya* (Berlin, 1975), pls. 24-28; Claude F. A. Schaeffer, "La grande stèle du Baal au foudre," *Ugaritica* II (Paris, 1949), pp. 121-130, especially pp. 128-129; Edith Porada, op. cit. in note 2, nos. 967-968.

⁵³ Hans G. Güterbock, "Yazilikaya," *MDOG* 86 (1953), pp. 65-76, expressed more cautiously by Rudolf Naumann in Bittel, ed., *Boğazköy-Hattusa IX* (see note 52), pp. 123-124.

⁵⁴ Johannes Friedrich, *Hethitisches Wörterbuch* (Heidelberg, 1952), p. 268; Heinrich Otten, *Hethitische Totenrituale* (Berlin, 1958), pp. 119-120; Erich Neu, *Interpretation der hethitischen mediopassiven Verbalformen* (Studien zu den Boğazköy-Tafeln 5, Wiesbaden, 1968), p. 95.

⁵⁵ *KBo* I 8:7.

⁵⁶ Wiseman, op. cit. in note 46, no. 67, cf. review by Edith Porada in *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 18 (1961), pp. 250-251.

Ahuramazda.⁵⁸ On the tombs of Darius I (521-486 B.C.) and his successors, this figure appears to be invoked by the king who is standing before a fire altar (Ill. 12).⁵⁹ Calmeyer has noted that the figure in the winged ring wears a different crown in each generation, sometimes corresponding to the crown of the previous king.⁶⁰ Shahbazi adduces several Greek texts (to begin with Aeschylus' *Persians*) proving that the Persian kings consulted the spirits of their predecessors.⁶¹ Their conclusion is that not Ahuramazda, but the ghost of the king's father or ancestor is represented whenever the figure faces the king; if the figure faces the same way as the king, they interpret it as the living king's own *daimon* or *xvarnah*.⁶²

While a full treatment of this many-faceted problem is beyond the scope of this article, I would like to draw attention to the fact that the streamers hanging down from the winged figure facing the king regularly have a three-pronged ending reminiscent of the stylized lotus flower (Ill. 12). The figures facing the same way as the king have their streamers rolled into a spiral.⁶³ If one accepts the reasoning in the earlier part of this article, Calmeyer's and Shahbazi's hypotheses may receive additional support from this iconographical feature.

Postscript. Since the above article was written, I conducted a seminar on Fabulous Creatures in Mesopotamian Art and Literature at the University of Amsterdam together with Frans A. M. Wiggermann. He has convinced me that the various genii on Assyrian reliefs match the various clay figurines of *apkalle* prescribed by ritual for the purification and protection of houses, as argued in *Jaarbericht Ex Oriente Lux* 27 (1981-1982), pp. 90-105, and in his forthcoming dissertation (cf., among others, Julian Reade, op. cit. in note 24, and Anthony Green in *Iraq* 45, 1983, pp. 87-96). The absence of textual evidence on the headband-wearing genii makes their identification as royal ancestors problematic. On the other hand, Neo-Assyrian kings (including dead ones) are at times called *apkalle* in the texts.

List of Abbreviations

AAA	<i>Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology</i>	JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
AfO	<i>Archiv für Orientforschung</i>	KBo	<i>Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi</i>
AMI NF	<i>Archaeologische Mitteilungen aus Iran</i> Neue Folge	MDOG	<i>Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-</i> <i>Gesellschaft</i>
ANEP	<i>The Ancient Near East in Pictures</i>	MUSJ	<i>Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph</i>
IPP	Institute of Pre- and Protohistory, University of Amsterdam	OIP	Oriental Institute Publications

⁵⁷ Herodotus I:131.

⁵⁸ Edith Porada has drawn attention to the paradox that Darius' inscriptions present him as gratefully dependent on the help of his god Ahuramazda, yet his reliefs show unparalleled assimilation of divine and royal images, review of Erich F. Schmidt, *Persepolis II* in *JNES* 20 (1961), pp. 66-71; Edith Porada, *The Art of Ancient Iran* (New York, 1965), pl. 159.

⁵⁹ Erich F. Schmidt, *Persepolis III* (OIP 70, Chicago, 1970), pp. 85, 92, 100, 106, 107, pls. 22B, 42B, 50, 58, 63, 70; a photograph clearly showing Darius' crenelated crown on the winged figure from Xerxes' tomb is now available in *AMI NF* 13 (1980), p. 28:2.

⁶⁰ Peter Calmeyer, "The Subject of the Achaemenid Tomb Reliefs," *Proceedings of the IIIrd Annual Symposium on Archaeological Research in Iran* (Tehran, 1975), pp. 233-242. On Xerxes' tomb the figure in the winged ring wears the crown of Darius; see also Hubert von Gall, *ibid.*, pp. 219-232.

⁶¹ *The Persians*, lines 607-842; Polyainos IV:3, VII:12, 15.

⁶² Peter Calmeyer, "Fortuna-Tyche-Khvarnah," *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts* 94 (1979), pp. 347-365; A. Sh. Shahbazi, "An Achaemenid Symbol I: A Farewell to . . . Ahuramazda," *Archaeologische Mitteilungen aus Iran Neue Folge* 7 (1974), pp. 135-144; "II: Farnah (God-given) Fortune Symbolised," *AMI NF* 13 (1980), pp. 119-147. Note that Cyrus saw Darius' winged double in a dream, Herodotus I:209-210.

⁶³ See, e.g., the figure above the great king and his son on the eastern doorway of the Tripylon, *AMI NF* 13 (1980), pl. 29:2; further Erich F. Schmidt, *Persepolis I* (OIP 68, Chicago, 1953), pls. 75-79, 103-107.



Ill. 1. Lid of King Ahiiram's sarcophagus, from Byblos Tomb V, ca. 1000 B.C. (after Chehab, *MUSJ* 46).

Ill. 3. Orthostat with inscription and relief of King Kilamuwa, from Sam'al Palace J, ca. 830 B.C. (after Meyer, *Altorientalische Denkmäler*).



Ill. 2. Side of King Ahiiram's sarcophagus, from Byblos, ca. 1000 B.C. (after Pritchard, *ANEP*).

Ill. 4. Stele from Sam'al Southern Portico P, ca. 800-750 B.C. (after Meyer, *Altorientalische Denkmäler*).





Ill. 5. Funerary stele from Sam'al, ca. 730-710 B.C. (after Meyer, *Altorientalische Denkmäler*).

Ill. 7. Relief orthostat from the palace of Sargon II, 721-705 B.C., at Dur-Sharrukin (after Frankfort, *Art and Architecture*).



Ill. 6. Relief orthostat from the palace of Ashurnasirpal II, 883-859 B.C., at Calah (after Stearns, *AfO Beiheft 15*).

Ill. 8. Relief orthostat from the palace of Sargon II, 721-705 B.C., at Dur-Sharrukin (after Loud, *Khorsabad I*).





Ill. 9. Ivory box lid from Megiddo VII, ca. 1350-1150 B.C.
(after Moorey, *Biblical Lands*).



Ill. 10. Wall painting from the palace of Tiglathpileser III,
744-727 B.C., at Til-Barsib (after Parrot, *Assur*).

Ill. 12. Rock relief above tomb of Xerxes, 485-465 B.C.,
at Naqš-e Rostam (after Shahbazi in *AMI* 13).

Ill. 11. Chalcedony cylinder seal, ca. 725-700 B.C.,
in Biblical Institute, University of Fribourg,
Switzerland (photo IPP).

