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THE WINGED SETH STANDING BETWEEN TWO URAEI

During the New Kingdom there appeared on scarabs, scaraboids and plaques a motif of a winged deity with Asiatic features standing between two uraei (Fig. 1)¹. The Asiatic features are a high conical helmet resembling the crown of Upper Egypt, a tasseled streamer dangling from its apex, two horns projecting from its brow and a long, pointed beard. These are the typical attributes of Asiatic gods depicted in Egyptian art.

There has been a diversity of opinions as to the identity of the deity. The following deities have been taken under consideration: Seth, an aspect of Seth, Astarte, Baal, Reshep and Seth-Baal².

¹ W. M. F. Petrie, Hyksos and Israelite Cities, London 1906, Pl. XXXVII: 20 (cf. Fig. 1: b); idem, Buttons and Design Scarabs, London 1925, Pl. XV: 1077, 1079, 1082 (in the last two cases the left uraeus is replaced by an unidentified sign); idem, Beth-Pelet I. Tell Fara, London 1930, Pl. XXII—186, Pl. XXXI: 308 (cf. Fig. 1:i); M. Dunand, Fouilles de Byblos II, Paris 1950, Pl. CXCIX: 7128, Pl. CC: 7656; J. Leibovitch, Le problème des Hyksos et celui de l’Exode, IEJ 3, 1953, p. 104 (five examples not numbered) (cf. Fig. 1:c); J. Leclant, Astarté a cheval. D’après les representations égyptiennes, Syria 37, 1960, Fig. 33b (cf. Fig. 1:g) the deity differs from the other cases in the style of carving and in the Egyptian garment; J. M. Saleh, Les antiquités égyptiennes de Zagreb, Paris 1970, p. 78: 247; E. Hornung, E. Staehelin, Skarabäen und andere Siegelamulette aus Basler Sammlungen, Mainz 1976, No. 707 (cf. Fig. 1:a); O. Keel, Jachet-Visionen und Siegelkunst. Eine neue Deutung der Majestätsschilderungen in Jes 6, Ez 1 und Sach 4, Stuttgart 1977, Figs. 71, 72 (cf. Fig. 2 d, e).

Fig. 1. Winged Seth between two uraei (different scales)

We find, when looking for parallels, a few small objects, mostly scarabs, showing a similar god in Asiatic garment with outstretched wings, spearing a serpent (Fig. 2: a-c). 3 Although there has also been no agreement as to the interpretation of this deity, there is no doubt, however, that Seth is portrayed

3 Petrie, Beth-Pelet I, Pl. XII: 17 (cf. Fig. 2:a); F. L. Griffith, The God Seth of Ramessu and an Egypto-Syrian Deity, PSBA 16, 1894, Fig. on p. 89 (cf. Fig. 2:c); I. Beste, Skarabäen, Teil 2 [in:] Lose-Blatt-Katalog Ägyptischer Altertümer. Kestner-Museum Hannover, Lieferung 2, Mainz 1976, Fig. on p. 182 (cf. Fig. 2:b); Leibovitch, Le problème..., p. 105: 12, 13; R. Givon, Egyptian Inscriptions from the Dayan Antiquities Collections (Hebrew), [in:] Y. Aharoni (ed.), Excavations and Studies: Essays in Honour of Professor Shemuel Yeivin, 1973, p. 180: 2; F. G. H. Price, A Catalogue of the Egyptian Antiquities in the Possession of F. G. H. Price I, London 1897, p. 371: 3107; R. Engelbach, B. Gunn, Harageh, London 1923, Pl. XXI: 169; M. Cassirer, A Scarab with an Early Representation of Reshep, JEA 45, 1959, Pl. I.
here⁴ and not Reshep as has been believed by many scholars⁵. The scene is an illustration of an Egyptian myth that takes place in the underworld⁶. Seth, as a forerunner of Re, is killing the Apophis serpent, a demon of evil. This myth is depicted on some stelae and reliefs where we see the winged Seth, identified in the accompanying caption, with some Asiatic attributes⁷. We do not have any such representation of Reshep. What is more we have not any knowledge about any winged image of Reshep dated from the New Kingdom⁸.

The similarities between Seth killing Apophis and the god standing between two uraei are seen in the headdress with Asiatic features and especially in the presence of wings. These point to the fact that the latter is Seth as well. We have already mentioned above that Reshep was not portrayed with wings. The same can be said of Ba'al who although represented with a conical helmet with a tasseled streamer hanging down from its apex and two horns in front of the helmet, was not portrayed with wings⁹.

I also base my opinion on the representations of the winged Seth with a zoomorphic head, flanked by a pair of uraei dated from the New Kingdom as well (Fig. 2: d, e). Here we can also recognize the similarity in composition between these two groups of representations.

Because all known depictions of the winged Seth dated from the New Kingdom are directly or indirectly connected with the combat with Apophis¹⁰, I am of opinion that the representations of the winged Asiatic Seth flanked by a pair of uraei are also related to this motif¹¹. In all probability the representation of Seth standing between two uraei is a transformation and stylization of older and more realistic scenes of Seth killing Apophis (cf. Fig. 2: a-c). The stylization can be seen in the straightening of the god’s figure, the disappearance of the realistically depicted serpent, the appearance of the

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⁷ The complete list of stelae and reliefs is given by Vandier, Le dieu Seth..., p. 191, Nos. C 1—6; see also p. 193, No. E 7.

⁸ Schulman, The Winged Reshep, pp. 69—84.

⁹ The only questionable representation in purely Egyptian style of the actual Ba'al Saphon shows him without wings, see C. F. A. Schaeffer, Ugaritica I, Paris 1939, Fig. 30.

¹⁰ Cf. note 7.

Fig. 2. Winged Seth: fighting with Apophis (a-c); with zoomorphic head (d, e); standing on a lion (f-i) (different scales)

two conventional uraei which are compositional elements\textsuperscript{12}, the disappearance of the spear and the simplification of wings.

\textsuperscript{12} Keel, \textit{La glyptique}, p. 278 when discussing scarabs and other seals with the representation of Seth with zoomorphic head and one wing lifted up in a gesture of protection, accompanied by a solar disc and one uraeus, expressed the opinion that we have here the triad — Re, Seth, uraeus — fighting together against Apophis.
In addition to that we should mention another group of scarabs showing the winged, Asiatic deity standing on the back of a lion (cf. Fig. 2: f-i)\(^\text{13}\). The same iconography of the god suggests that Seth or a god in his type is portrayed in these cases as well. Thus it provides the solution of some problems connected with this category of artifacts.