Iconography of Deities and Demons: Electronic Pre-Publication

Last Revision: 19 December 2007

Basal

I. Introduction. Levantine god.

→DDD. A discussion of the iconography of B. has two complementary tasks: first, to define the particular iconographic profile of the Levantine →storm god B.; second, to identify additional iconographic profiles borrowed from other deities whose representations may also have been identified with B. in the southern Levant.

CORNELIUS 1994 is the most comprehensive study of the iconography of B. to date (cf. CORNELIUS 1994: 8-11 for a brief research history; LIPINSKI 1996 and CORNELIUS 1998 for a critical review and response). A number of questionable identifications suggested by CORNELIUS have not been included here.

No depiction of B. in Levantine garb is accompanied by an inscription identifying him by name; hence it is “exceedingly difficult” (LIPINSKI 1996: 260) to establish a particular iconography of B. The sole exception is the Mami stela (7*) from Ugarit, dated c. 1300, on which the god is identified as B.-Zaphon. However, this stela shows B. in Egyptian garb, which can hardly provide a starting point for the iconographic definition of a Western Asiatic deity.

Earliest textual evidence for B. comes from the 3rd mill.; Ugaritic B. mythology is partly rooted in early 2nd mill. tradition. It is impossible to distinguish between iconographies of →Hadad or B. in these early periods. For this reason this article concentrates on representations of B. during the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age when B. was clearly identified as a distinct Levantine storm god. However, since B. seems to derive from the Syrian storm god Hadad, it is reasonable to use the latter’s iconography as a point of departure and reference for the pictorial identification and definition of B.

The comparison of an Old Syrian cylinder seal of the Pierpont Morgan collection (→Hadad # =PORA 1948: no. 964; cf. MOORTGAT 1940: No. 523 for a similar seal) with the so-called B. stela from Ugarit (1*) may illustrate the potential but also the difficulty of such an approach. It depicts a standing god opposite a worshipper, one raised arm brandishing a mace in a menacing pose, the other holding a →bull with a leash. The associated inscription reads “Servant of Adad,” suggesting that the deity depicted may be Hadad (although there is no binding relationship between inscribed legends and deities depicted on Syrian cylinder seals).

Striking similarities with the deity on the so-called “B. stela” from Ugarit (1*) suggest that this deity, clearly a major deity in Ugarit, should be identified as B. as well. Hence this stela may serve as a point of departure for the typological study of B. and define his main pictorial profile: menacing pose with a mace in his hand; pointed helmet; short kilt with horizontal lines and a dagger/sword at the waist; one or two long, curled locks; and usually, though not always, a long beard.

II. Typology

II.1. Phenotypes


A. ANTHROPOMORPHIC

1. BRANDISHING A MACE OR SWORD

1.1. Holding a spear. Apart from the B. stela (1*), other stelae (e.g., CORNELIUS 1994: no. BR2) depict similar icon types but their identification with B. has been disputed (cf. LIPINSKI 1996: 259). The same holds true for bronze figurines. Most of c. 150 published bronze figurines in smiling pose are attributed by CORNELIUS to →Resheph and only one (his no. BB1) to B. Even in the latter case, the object’s unknown provenance makes an identification with B. rather than another →storm god problematic, though not impossible (cf. LIPINSKI 1996: 258).

In glyptic art the representation of B. brandishing a weapon and holding a spear is restricted to cylinder seals. Two seals from Ugarit with a deity wielding a mace compare closely with the B. stela, one in details such as the plant spear (2), the other in its overall composition showing a small human (king?) in front of the menacing god (3).

A cylinder seal from Bethel (→Astarte 1*) depicting a menacing god who faces a goddess (→Anat?), with both deities holding upward-pointing spears to enclose the name of Astarte, may be another representation of B. This identification is supported by the combination of several features, which can elsewhere be attributed to the storm god (the ḫps sword held in menacing pose [5*], the upward-pointing spear [42] and the dagger possibly shown at waist height [1*]).

1.2. Holding a tree. On a cylinder seal from Ugarit (4) the storm god

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brandishing a mace, dressed in a short kilt, wearing a pointed-horned headgear, and distinguished by a long hair lock, appears on both sides of a tree, which seems to replace the plant spear of the B. stela (1*).

1.3. Slaying a serpent. B.’s well-attested posture of brandishing a weapon was also adopted in the Egypto-Palestinian B. tradition, particularly with regard to his role as →serpent-slayer. On a scarab from Lachish (5*), B. is depicted in this pose with a ḫps sword, holding a horned →serpent by its neck. A fragmentary scarab from Tell Deir ‘Alla (6) once depicted the same scene, but only the horned serpent, with a foot stepping onto it and a hand holding the animal by the neck are preserved.

2. HOLDING A SCEPTER. The Egyptianized B. depicted on the Mami stela (7*) holds a regular was scepter instead of his more distinctive spear.

3. THRUSTING A SPEAR. The “seal of Ini-Teshub, king of Carchemish”, of which a seal impression has been recovered at Ugarit (8*), shows on its left the Hurrian storm god →Teshub, characterized by his triple-horned headgear, and striding over →mountains. To the right, another storm god wearing a round, horned headgear and standing on a →bull thrusts his spear toward a rampant →lion. According to CORNELIUS, this god should be identified with B., though LIPINSKI (1996: 259) has argued for Teshub, who stands on a →bull on another seal from Ugarit (SCHAFFER 1956: 26, inv. no. 17.158). However, this seal shows Teshub brandishing a mace, not thrusting a spear toward a lion. The latter pose, which seems to derive from a theme related to Egyptian →Seth (16-17), is regularly attested for B. in Late Bronze Age iconography but not for Teshub.

4. WINGED (SETH AND B.). Egyptian →Seth was identified with Asiatic →storm gods since the Middle Bronze Age; it comes as no surprise that his iconographic profile considerably influenced the iconography of B. in the Southern Levant. Seth in turn is often dressed as an Asiatic Shasu (note particularly the tassels of his short kilt), a feature which may have favored his association and ultimate identification with B. in the Southern Levant. This is particularly true for images of Seth as a winged deity (whose wings originally symbolized protection but also crushing speed, cf. EGGLER 1998: 276f, n. 554; note that on a scarab from Byblos [CORNELIUS 1994: no. BM28] winged Seth stands on the nwb hieroglyph, which identifies him as Lord of Ombos [GOMAA 1982: 567f; KEEL 1990: 305f]).

4.1. “Sethian B.” as a distinct South-Levantine storm god. KEEL (KEEL/SHUVAL/UEHLINGER 1990: 304-306, figs. 68-71) has shown that on scarabs and other images of the 13th-11th cent., winged Seth may adopt a conical headdress with two horns and a streamer (9*) all of which are characteristic of Asiatic storm gods. Following KEEL, this type of representation is often termed “B.-Seth” (or “Seth-B.”) in scholarly literature, a term which points to the hybrid nature of the icon type, but obliterates the fact that no deity was ever worshipped under such a name in the Levant. Should we identify these images as depictions of Seth, of B., or of still another South-Levantine storm god? Winged Seth seems to be at the origin of this hybrid representation and thus deserves priority when it comes to name-giving. His priority is further supported by the lack of a consistent 2nd mill. tradition of a winged B. along the Levantine coast (but note PORADA 1947: no. 742 [= KEEL 1990: 199 fig. 33]; MOORTGAT 1944: 36, fig. 36; and probably also PORADA 1948: no. 965 for other Asiatic winged storm gods). Hence we should first consider this phenotype as a representation of Seth with Asiatic features rather than an Egyptianizing B. On the other hand, the Asiatic features of winged Seth may not only relate to his standard character as “god of confusion” but derive from some definite interaction between Egyptians and Palestinian Shasu during the Late Bronze Age. Hence it is not unlikely that Egyptian Seth enriched with features of the local storm god (10-15) was perceived in the Southern Levant as a local B. Such an understanding is supported by compositions where the winged deity acts in roles not otherwise attested for Seth (18-39).

4.2. Slaying a serpent. Both Seth and B. share the role of a →serpent-slayer (KEEL 1990: 234f, 309-311; KEEL 1992: 212, 250, fig. 232). On a scarab from Tell el-Far‘ah (South) (16*; cf. also 17), the winged serpent-slayer looks very similar to Seth embellished with attributes of the storm god. Instead of (Asiatic) horns he wears a (Egyptian) →uraeus on his pointed cap, while on the other hand his kilt has distinctly Asiatic tassels. Since →Apophis, the snake killed by Seth, never has horns, and since the horned snake is a distinctly Asiatic figure, the serpent-slayer on these scarabs should be identified as an Asiatic god, B. being the most likely candidate (cf. 5*).
4.3. **Standing on a lion.** According to Egyptian iconographical standards, Seth is never depicted on a →lion; in contrast, Asiatic, particularly Syrian, storm gods regularly appear in this position (PORADA 1947: no. 742 = KEEL 1990: 199 fig. 33; MOORTGAT 1944: 36, fig. 36; PORADA 1947: no. 741; PORADA 1948: no. 1031). The winged figure standing on a lion on numerous 12th-10th cent. scarabs may therefore be identified as a South-Levantine storm god (i.e., B.) in the garb of winged Seth (alone: 18*-30; with →Resheph standing on a horned animal: 31*-38; with →Anat/Astarte: 39).

5. **ARCHER STANDING ON A LION.** A variant of the phenotype referred to in the previous paragraph depicts B. without wings but with bow and arrow (40-41).

6. **PROBABLE: STANDING ON A LION AND HOLDING TWO SPEARS BY HIS SIDE.** On a cylinder seal from Ugarit a figure in a short kilt and a pointed helmet is shown standing on a →lion and holding in each hand an upward-pointing spear (42). The few diagnostic features support an identification with a →storm god, more accurately with its Levantine form B. Other candidates provide less plausible alternatives (→Resheph is also related to the lion [cf. CORNELIUS 1994: nos. RM31-RM38; YADIN 1985: 269-273 with MAZAR 1980: 101, fig. 34] but never stands on it; →Shadrapa, whose relation to Resheph is disputed, is depicted as standing on a lion [→Shadrapa # (ANEP no. 486)], but clearly identified only on an 8th/7th-cent. stela where he holds neither bow nor arrows).

7. **POSSIBLE.**

7.1. On an Late Bronze Age cylinder seal from Tell el-‘Ajjul (PETRIE 1934: pl. 12:1 = CORNELIUS 1994: no. BM42), a standing figure with a distinct hair lock opposes a winged demon ready to catch a falling human. The figure controls a →caprid and a →lion, which he holds by the tail, but only the hair lock hints at an identification with B.

7.2. The same feature has been used as an identifying criterion for B. with regard to another unique composition, a banquet scene painted on a jug from Ugarit (CORNELIUS 1994: no. BP1). It depicts a standing figure with a hair lock holding a vessel, followed by an animal procession including a →horse, bird, and →fish. Opposite an offering table, an enthroned deity holding a bowl features a similar hair lock with an additional streamer. CORNELIUS (1994: 225) interpreted this scene as B. “standing by Ilu” (CAT 1.2 1-21), identifying the standing god on the sole criterion of the hair lock; however, this feature obviously cannot serve that purpose since it is shared by both deities. On the other hand, the associated animals might help to establish the god’s identification. Horse and bird have been related by POPE (1971: 400) to →Asherah and →Anat, and by KEEL (1990: 215) to Anat alone, who is known as B.’s consort (cf. § II.2.1.2). Furthermore, bird and fish are also connected with the sphere of B. (cf. § II.2.2.4-5).

7.3. A Late Bronze Age cylinder seal from Acco depicts a deity brandishing a sword and holding with his other hand a lion by its hind legs upside down (BECK 1977: 66-68, pl. 21:3 = KEEL/UEHLINGER 1998: fig. 88b). Brandishing a weapon is in itself no diagnostic posture; subduing the lion (cf. § II.2.A.4.2) is sometimes related to the phenotype of B. brandishing a weapon (but note again the →Shadrapa stela).

B. **Theriomorphic.** Theriomorphic representations of B. are less numerous than anthropomorphic ones.

1. **BULL.**

1.1. **Standing.** The equation between the →storm god and the →bull is well attested in numerous texts (cf. GESE et al. 1970: 129; for images cf. WEIPPERT 1961: 95-109; JAROŠ 1974: 351-388; JAROŠ 1982: 211-235; KEEL 1992: 169-193; ORNAN 2001: 14-19). It is therefore likely that figurines of standing bulls in bronze (43*) from the so-called “Bull-Site” in Samaria, 44 from the cella of temple H at Hazor, or 45 from Ugarit) represent the major Levantine storm god. Whether the latter was worshipped as →Hadad, B., or under yet another name depends on the particular historical-geographical and sociopolitical contexts.

1.2. **Charging.** The charging bull with lowered head is depicted on stamp seals from Tell Keisan and Tell el-Far‘ah (South) (46*-47) as attacking a →lion, a constellation which suggests that the bull stands for the →storm god and underlines the latter’s aggressive power (cf. § II.2.B.1.1).

II.2. **Associations.**

A. **ANTHROPOMORPHIC.**

1. ASSOCIATED WITH DEITIES/DEMONS. 1.1. Resheph (31-38, 40-41) 1.2. Astarte/Anat (39, →Astarte 1) 1.3. Teshub (8) 1.4. Yam (5, 16-17) 1.5. Mot (8) 1.6. Possible 2. ASSOCIATED WITH ANIMALS. 2.1. Serpent (5, 16-17) 2.2. Lion (8, 18-42, 46-47) 2.3. Bull (8) 2.4. Bird (4) 2.5. Fish (4) 2.6. Other 3. ASSOCIATED WITH HUMANS. 3.1. Worshippers/royal figure (1, 3, 7) 3.2. Possible B. **THERIOMORPHIC.** 1. ASSOCIATED WITH ANIMALS. 1.1. Lion (46-47) 1.2. Scorpion (47).
A. ANTHROPOMORPHIC

1. ASSOCIATED WITH DEITIES/DEMONS. B.’s appearance with other deities or demons is restricted to the Asiatic Götterwelt (8*, →Astarte 1*) and possibly § II.1.7.1-3), a feature which also persists during the Egyptian-influenced Early Iron Age (5*, 16*, 31*, 46*).

1.1. Resheph. The winged B. on a→lion appears behind a figure standing on a→caprid (31*-38, 40-41), who has been identified as →Resheph (KEEL 1980: 269; KEEL 1990: 204, 302-304).

1.2. Astarte/Anat. On a cylinder seal from Bethel Astarte’s name is written in hieroglyphs between two anthropomorphic deities (→Astarte 1*). Since menacing B. is not labeled, WEIPPERT (1988: 308) has argued that the name of Astarte should not be related to the goddess holding a spear but be understood as indicating the very presence of Astarte as third deity. The goddess depicted was identified by WEIPPERT as →Anat, who is known as B.’s consort and is similarly depicted on the Anat stela from Beth-Shean (→Anat 1*).

Arguing along the same lines, KEEL (KEEL/UEHLINGER 1998: § 50, fig. 109) added a rectangular plaque (39), which also depicts a divine triad including winged B. on a lion, a deity on horseback identified by KEEL with Anat (cf. also § II.1.7.2), and the name of →Amun-Re† written in hieroglyphs. However, “there is no epigraphic proof for Anat on horseback” according to CORNELIUS (1994: 77) who, opting for Astarte in the case of 39, consequently relates the name Astarte to the goddess depicted on →Astarte 1*.

1.3. Teshub. On the seal of Ini-Teshub (8*), the Hurrian storm god striding over →mountains appears together with his Levantine counterpart killing a rampant lion with the thrust of his spear. This royal seal thus depicts two storm gods from neighboring regions in their particular iconographies, which may hint at a close relationship between the two areas.


1.5. Mot. The seal of Ini-Teshub (8*) shows B.’s attack on a →lion (cf. also § II.1.A.7.3), which may simply be interpreted as a display of B.’s prowess. Since →Mot, one of B.’s major adversaries (CAT 1.6 VI), is compared to a lion (CAT 1.5 I 14f) and since the storm god is depicted elsewhere as slaying a lion (cf. KEEL/SHUVAL/UEHLINGER 1990: 193, fig. 26), one may suggest that the scene refers to B.’s mythological overcoming of Mot. Such a view may be further supported by representation of a bull overcoming a lion (46*-47).


2. ASSOCIATED WITH ANIMALS

2.1. Serpent. B. as →serpent-slayer (5*, 16*-17) is depicted killing the horned serpent, which may be identified as →Yam.

2.2. Lion. The →lion appears in at least two different roles in connection with B., namely, as opponent to be slain (particularly in the Northern tradition), as a pedestal animal (in the Southern tradition), and possibly also as a helper meant to avert evil. The lion being killed (8*, 46*-47, and cf. § II.1.A.7.3) probably reflects the mythological struggle between B. and →Mot. When B. is standing on a lion (18*-39, 42), the pedestal animal implies B.’s dominance over and control of values and powers represented by the lion. The lion’s subordination is also involved when the animal is actively used to avert or attack evil (cf. § II.1.A.7.1).

2.3. Bull. The bull relates to B. as the storm god’s major pedestal animal (cf. DEMIRCIÖGÜL 1939). Surprisingly, however, B. appears in this stance only in the Northern tradition (cf. seal of Ini-Teshub, 8*).

2.4. Bird. A flying bird appears behind the menacing →storm god on the cylinder seal 4 from Ugarit and may represent the presence of the storm god’s consort (see PORADA 1948: no. 968; cf. also § II.1.7.2).

2.5. Fish. On cylinder seal 4 a fish together with a bird appears behind the menacing B. Cf. also the banquet scene from Ugarit (§ II.1.7.2; CORNELIUS 1994: 225 and POPE 1971: 400 wrongly associate the fish with the enthroned).

2.6. Other. Cf. § II.1.7.1 (caprid), § II.1.7.2 (horse).

3. ASSOCIATED WITH HUMANS

3.1. Worshippers/royal figure. On the Mami stela (7*), B.-Zaphon is worshipped by a human in typical Egyptian dress. On the B. stela (1*) a small figure, probably the royal dedicator of the stela, is placed next to B. Cylinder seal 3 from Ugarit shows a very similar composition.


B. THERIOMORPHIC

1. ASSOCIATED WITH ANIMALS

1.1. Lion. KEEL (1980: 266) suggested that the composition of a →bull overcoming a→lion rather than vice versa (46*; cf. also 47 and contrast, e.g., with CROWFOOT/ CROWFOOT 1938: pl. 10:1) is a symbolic representation of B. overcoming →Mot.

1.2. Scorpion. A →scorpion placed over the bull’s back on 47 hints at the

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The II (pl. 58: 2057, 2059) of the Middle Bronze Age (Ashkelon tradition represented without encroach upon the Northern theriomorphic deity cent.), which as Ramesside mass products” (11th/10th century). At the end of the Late Bronze Age and the transition to Iron Age I, the iconography of B. is increasingly exposed to Egyptian influence. Minor changes involve, e.g., the replacement of the spear by a was scepter (7*), or the mace by a šps sword (5*, →Astarte 1*). More significant is the adoption of Sethian wings (9*, 16*, 18*, 31*). The Levantine storm god can even appear in a guise hardly distinct from →Seth (cf. B. on 7* and Seth on Egyptian stelae [cf. CORNELIUS 1994: nos. BR5; BR6, BR8-BR10, BR12, BR13] and on carnelian scarabs [cf. CORNELIUS 1994: nos. BM18, BM19]), which makes it likely that the winged Seth with Asiatric features (9*) on a series of stamp seals (10-15) could also be perceived as B.

Iconographic types in this transitional and the following Early Iron Age period comprise the singular winged Seth (9*), which may have been perceived as B. in the Levant, the serpent-slaying winged B. (16*; without wings cf. 17*), B. standing on a lion (18*-27), and the so-called “post-Ramesside mass products” (11th/10th cent.), which associate B. with the Asiatic deity →Resheph (31*.38: for the variant with a bow cf. 40-41).

Egyptian influence apparently did not encroach upon the Northern theriomorphic tradition representing B. as a bull. Bronze bull figurines from the Levant, known from the Middle Bronze Age (Ashkelon: STAGER 1991: 24-29; Byblos: DUNAND 1937/1939: pl. 58: 2057, 2059-2061), Late Bronze Age II (44-45), and Iron Age I (43), may be equated with B. (and note 46-47 for the Iron Age I motif of the bull overcoming a lion).

III.2. Geographical distribution.
The provenanced objects depicting B. show that in terms of north-south distribution, Ugarit (1*-4, 7*, 42, 45 and possibly § II.1.A.7.2) and Byblos (12-14, 18*) are the most prominent sites for B. iconography, not only in the north but for the whole Levant. Representations of B. from Hazor (9*, 44) correspond to this Northern tradition. A second, southern concentration may be observed at Tell el-Far‘ah (South) in the Negev (10-11, 16*, 31*, 38, 47). Two items were found in Egypt (19, 20) and one in Cyprus (30). More than half of the items discussed in this article come from sites along the Levantine coast (Ugarit, Byblos, Acco [40 and possibly § II.1.A.7.3], Tell Keisan [32, 46*], Dor [37], Tell Qasile [15], and possibly Tell el-‘Ajul [cf. § II.1.A.7.1]).

While the earlier and Syrian-influenced representations of the Levantine storm god are restricted to the northern Levant (1*-4, 9*, 42, and possibly § II.1.A.7.2), the later Egyptian-influenced representations (10-11, 16*, 19-20, 31*, 38) did not penetrate the Levant beyond the Carmel with the exception of the coastal city of Byblos (18*, 12-14). However, the motif of winged B. on a lion together with →Resheph on a →caprid occurs north of the Carmel at Tell Keisan (32).

III.3. Object types. Objects which depict the Levantine →storm god comprise stelae (presently confined to Ugarit: 1*, 7*), cylinder seals, and stamp seals (mostly scarabs), bronze figurines, and possibly a pottery vessel. Representations on cylinder seals (2-4, 8*, 42, →Astarte 1*, and possibly § II.1.7.1.3) are found primarily in the Northern Levant (exceptions are seals from Bethel and possibly Tell el-‘Ajul), while scarabs are by and large found south of the Carmel with notable exceptions at the coastal sites of Acco (40), Tell Keisan (46*), and Byblos (18*, 12-14).

IV. Conclusion. The predominant type of early B. iconography corresponds to the Syro-Aramean model of the Levantine storm god in its canonical form of the high-classical Syrian period (OTTO 2000: 217): a “smiting god” holding a mace in his right hand and often a spear in his left (1*-4). Despite the smiting pose, the compositions are generally rather static, suggesting that the smiting pose functions primarily as a visual symbol of power rather than to characterize the god as actually fighting. B.’s power is not directed toward hostile

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forces but protects prosperity of life, a view stressed by floral elements such as plant spears (1*, 2) or the tree (4).

With the end of the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age, the Egyptian influence brings in a significant shift in B.’s role and iconography. The imagery of this period reflects the need for a more active —storm god fighting and overcoming life-threatening forces, as indicated by the protective and power-evoking wings of —Seth —a feature exclusively limited to the southern Levant — and apotropaic —Israelite (10-15) on the one hand, and B.’s role as serpent slayer (5*, 6, 17) or lion slayer (8* and possibly § II.A.7.3) on the other. Along the same lines, the —lion as pedestal animal (18*-39, 42) should be considered as a symbol of subordination and as a demonstration of B.’s ultimate control over life-threatening forces. The protection granted to a human against an attacking winged demon (cf. § II.A.7.1) and the blending of —Yam and —Apollo in the serpent-slayer tradition are emblematic for the spirit of a new age in which the storm god has become a protector against all kinds of evil. B.’s appearance together with —Resheph (31*-38, 40) underlines his new role in this period.

V. Catalogue

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