Hare

I. Introduction. The brown h. (Lepus europaeus syriacus), mentioned only twice in the Hebrew Bible within lists of unclean animals (Parnæbæt in Lev 11:6; Deut 14:7), only plays a marginal role in the iconography of the Levant. It has never been venerated in a cult and most likely does not represent any deities. It is, however, found frequently as a space-filler or a symbol of vitality on seals and amulets. Among the great neighboring cultures of Palestine/Israel, different strands of the symbolism of the brown h., or in Egypt the Cape h. (Lepus capensis), can be distinguished. No autochthonous developments of the motif are noticed in Palestine/Israel.

In *Egypt* h.s (HORNUNG/STAEHELIN 1976: 114f; BRUNNER-TRAUT 1977; WIESE 1996: 135f) appear as animals of the desert as early as the Hunter's Palette and the Old Kingdom tomb reliefs. They were rarely hunted. They did not acquire symbolic meaning before the 6th dvn. Up until the 9th dyn. or First Intermediate Period, pyramidal stamp seals or button seals with single h.s in repose, h.s arranged tête-bêche, or h.s in combination with other motifs can be found (WIESE 1996: 135f and nos. 558, 564-577). As a desert animal the image of the h. most likely conjures up the spheres of death and overcoming death. The h. sometimes appears in the form of a demon on ivory wands (Zaubermesser) and in vignettes of the Books of the Dead. Since the Middle Kingdom the h. seems to acquire more than apotropaic meaning. Its closeness to the →Hathor symbol (HORNUNG/STAEHELIN 1976: 325, no. 678) or to the sphere of Hathor (lotos flowers, tilapia [→fish, green \rightarrow monkeys, etc.) is more easily explained given the animal's reproductive capacity resulting and the symbolism of regeneration, and brings the h. into the erotic-vital ambience of the goddess. A female h. accompanies the goddess Unut of the 15th Upper Egyptian nome. The h. is seldom found on scarabs (HORNUNG/STAE-HELIN 1976: 114f, no. 678); on the other hand h. amulets were very popular in the Late Period (8-14). Their bluish-green glazing evokes refreshment and the strengthening of vitality (for models of h. amulets from Egypt cf. HERRMANN 1985: 70f, nos. 277-278; for Egyptian h. amulets cf. HERRMANN 2002: 144f, no. 120).

In *Anatolian* art the h., often jumping and fleeing, is depicted since the 2nd mill. in the claws of raptors (15^*) or in the hands

of the \rightarrow master-of-animals (CANBY 1972-1975: 131).

The oldest representation from Syria of a h. in repose is a unique alabaster vessel from the Neolithic Period (KAY/STROM-MENGER 1982: 10, 25 no. 8; FORTIN 1999: 177 no. 105). Finds from the Early Bronze Age are rare; only on Tell Brak in the so-called Eye Temple were stamp seals and faience amulets in the shape of a h. found (MALLOWAN 1947: 106, 108 with pls. 13:4a-b; 14:11-13). The h.s eyes are open from birth and the animal's general alertness might be the reasons for the h.'s importance at this site.

While the h. is seldom found in the glyptic from the workshops of Western Syria (Yamhad region), it is the most popular animal after \rightarrow caprids and \rightarrow lions (OTTO 2000: 252; see also WINTER 1987: figs. 192, 200, 233, 234, 262, 272, 280, 285, 289, 293, 365, 371, 440, 448, 475, 506) on the cylinder seals from Northern Syria, most of them private seals, and on the finds from the Levantine coast (COLLON 1985: 66f, nos. 2-3, 6, 13-14; as a raptor's catch: 68 nos. 17, 19; cf. also COLLON 1986 on the "Green Jasper Group," originating perhaps from Byblos). H.s or heads of h.s can be found as a frieze on the upper or lower border of cylinder seals, often in antithetical arrangement. H.s can be accompanied by lions, \rightarrow bulls, \rightarrow griffins, doves, or green \rightarrow monkeys, or scattered on the surface of the seal along with \rightarrow scorpions, astral symbols (\rightarrow Astral deities and symbols), and ankh signs. Often the h. is associated with the sphere of the erotic goddesses (rendezvous with the goddess [cf. 2*] and with city rulers [1, 6-7]) or erotic banquet scenes. Dignitaries sometimes offer a hunted h. as a sacrifice to a person seated on a throne (deity or deified king?). The erotic connotations of the h. are still present in Roman art where it is represented as a play-animal in the company of Bacchus, Erotes, and girls (HÜNEMÖRDER 1998).

II. Typology

II.1. Phenotypes

1. IN REPOSE. Reposing h.s (1-14) are always shown in profile and distinguished by their long ears and short tail. The forelegs are straight in front in accordance with nature, not folded under the body (KEEL/SHUVAL/UEHLINGER 1990: 280ff). Nonetheless, it is not always possible to distinguish between h.s and \rightarrow caprids in glyptic representation, although h.s never turn their heads back as caprids may do.

2. JUMPING OR FLEEING. A h. is depicted as the prey of a vulture or a similar raptor in only one case, i.e., on an 8th cent. stamp

seal from Megiddo (15*).

II.2. Associations

H.s are shown within a greater context only on cylinder seals. The finds from Palestine/Israel show h.s associated with the following: the courtly Syrian goddess who receives worshippers (2^*) ; a meeting between a city ruler and armed warriors (7); two rulers greeting each other (1); two worshippers paying tribute to a ruler with twigs in his hands (6); a walking man in an arrangement with a caprid, cartouche, and green monkey (3); a scene with two men at a stylized tree (5).

III. Sources

III.1. Chronological range. In Palestine/Israel h.s can first be found in Old Syrian glyptic (18th/17th cent.; 1-7). After a long break, Egyptian amulets in the form of reposing h.s were introduced during the Iron Age III and the Persian Period (6th-4th cent.) along the Mediterranean coast (8-14), several of which have been found in graves. However, h.s are virtually unrepresented on scarabs, which are so important for the iconographic tradition of Palestine/Israel. They are only found in some rare instances as the phonogram wn in the cryptographic writing of the name of \rightarrow Amun (e.g., from Tell el-Hesi see BLISS 1894: 131 and 79 fig. 118).

III.2.-3. Geographical distribution and object types. Both the North Syrian cylinder seals and the amulets of the Iron Age III/Persian Period are found in the coastal region, where they most probably were produced (cf. also HÖLBL 1986: I 137).

IV. Conclusion. The symbolic meaning of the h. in the iconographic tradition of Syria in the Levant grew out of its biotope (animal of the open fields and the desert) on the one hand, and out of its stunning reproductive capacity (the superfecundatio was known since antiquity) on the other hand. The latter accounts for the h.'s proximity to goddesses (Old Syrian →naked goddess, \rightarrow Hathor). However, on cylinder seals found in Palestine/Israel the h. is more frequently linked with scenes dealing with the preservation of a world in good order (through worship or by meeting the representatives of power) than with the Syrian goddess. In these scenes the h. is most likely to represent the wilderness opposing the order conjured up in the remaining part of the scene. Along with the gazelle, the h. stands for the open fields, symbolizing the nonhabitable, potentially dangerous world as well. Or in a broader sense, it may stand for the fertility of the land, which is only possible with sovereign power and order. The singular occurrence of a h. as a raptor's prey on the scarab from Megiddo (15^*) must be interpreted in the context of the guardian \rightarrow griffin and the motif of the \rightarrow lion hunting a gazelle. The owners of the seal most likely claimed the vital forces of the victorious hunters and the protection of the guardian griffin for themselves. H.-amulets (8-14) may have stood for the vital forces connected with fertility (see also their bluish-green color), alert quickness, and swiftness of the animal, and are to be viewed as life-giving symbols.

V. Catalogue

1 Cylinder seal, haematite, Jericho, 1780-1730. PORADA 1965: fig. 304:3; OTTO 2000: pl. 19:249 2* Cylinder seal, haematite, 20.5 x 9.7 mm, Tell el-'Ajjul. 1750-1550. Jerusalem, Rockefeller Museum, 38.532. *PARKER 1949: no. 10; MACKAY/MURRAY 1952: pl. 9:33 3 Cylinder seal, haematite, Tell el-'Ajjul, 18th/17th cent. COLLON 1986: no. 7 4 Cylinder seal, steatite, Tell el-'Ajjul. 18th/17th cent. COLLON 1986: no. 8 5 Cylinder seal, grey stone, Palestine, 18th/17th cent. COLLON 1986: no. 9 6 Cylinder seal impression, clay, Shechem, 19th/18th cent. SELLIN 1927: pl. 30; NOUGAYROL 1939: no. 102; Otto 2000: pl. 21:272 7 Cylinder seal, haematite, Moza Illit, 1750. BRANDL 1996: figs. 3-5 8 Amulet, composite material, 'Atlit. 6-4th cent. HERRMANN 1994: no. 809 9* Amulet, composite material, 21 x 18 x 11 mm, ⁽Atlit. 6-4th cent. Jerusalem, Rockefeller Museum, 32.744. *HERRMANN 1994: no. 810 10 Amulet, composite material, 'Atlit, 6-4th cent. HERRMANN 1994: no. 811 11 Amulet, composite material, Dor. 6-4th cent. HERRMANN 1994: no. 812 12 Amulet, composite material, Ashkelon. 6-4th cent. HERRMANN 1994: no. 813 13 Amulet, composite material, Dor. 6-4th cent HERRMANN 1994: no. 814 14 Amulet, composite material, Atlit. 6-4th cent. HERRMANN 1994: no. 815 15* Scarab, most likely steatite, 27.3 x 20.2 x 11.1 mm, Megiddo, 8th cent. Istanbul, Archaeological Museum, 2263m, SCHUMACHER 1908; fig. 212a-b; WATZINGER 1929: fig. 63; Keel/Uehlinger 1998: no. 231a

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