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ON THE WINGS OF THE WINDS:
TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF WINGED *MISCHWESEN*
IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

Scott B. Noegel

In this study, I argue that the literary depictions and iconographic images of wings on various hybrid creatures are a means of depicting that creature's association with wind and the cardinal directions,¹ and that recognizing this correlation offers greater insight into the function and meaning of these creatures in the written and iconographic records generally.² As such, I add to our increasing awareness of the close relationship between textual and iconographic motifs in the ancient Near East.³ Furthermore, I contend that attention to the number of wings a creature possesses informs our understanding of the entity's perceived cosmological abilities.

I divide my analysis into five parts. In the first, I examine a variety of ways in which

1. Thus, I intend to nuance the observation of Keel – Uehlinger 1998, 251, who argue that the wings on various Egyptian-inspired hybrid creatures found on iconographic remains in Phoenicia and Israel in the 9th-8th centuries BCE, “stress the celestial aspect... as well as the idea of protection. In combination with the sun god, they convey the idea of a mysterious connection between unapproachable distance and effective protection”. Wood 2008, 88-89, rejects the view of others that the biblical cherubim personify the wind. I posit that it is merely the wings of the creature, and others like it, that signify the wind.
2. Since wind is invisible, one can depict it only by rendering its effect. It is noteworthy that the Sumerian sign *im*, “wind” originally portrayed a sail, as does the hieroglyphic Egyptian logogram and determinative for wind, . On the Sumerian sign, see Deimel 1928-1933, §399. On the etymology of the Egyptian determinative as meaning “airflow, breeze”, see Bojowald 2011, 51-55.
3. Many conceptual overlaps exist between ancient Near Eastern texts and the visual arts (including architecture and textile production) in terms of patterning. One can find narrative programs, repetition and variation, symmetry, gendered parallelism, visual puns, as well as ring structures in ancient Near Eastern texts and the visual arts. See, e.g., Douglas 1999; Albenda 1992, 297-309; Watson 1980, 338, fn. 85; Roaf – Zgoll 2001; Kilmer 2006; David 2014. If the hypothesis of Ataç 2010 is correct that the scribal-sacerdotal elite had a supervisory hand in the design and production of the Assyrian reliefs, then one would expect an overlap between the literary and visual arts.

Mesopotamian, Egyptian, and biblical texts identify winds with wings and the cardinal directions.⁴ In the second, I study a number of literary and artistic depictions of two- and four-winged *Mischwesen* for their connections to the winds and cardinal directions.⁵ In Section 3, I offer a separate survey of winged entities that possess six wings. In the fourth section, I investigate the patterns that emerge when classifying hybrids according to the number of their wings. In the fifth and final segment, I offer some concluding thoughts on the cosmological import of winged hybrid creatures, the spaces they inhabit, and a few other associations that emerge when examining the data from this typological perspective.

1. Wings, wind, and the cardinal directions

1.1. Mesopotamian texts

Numerous cuneiform texts evince a conceptual link between wings, wind, and the cardinal directions.⁶ For example, Gudea refers to the Northwind as a man with “enormous wings” (á.dirig).⁷ In Akkadian, the word *šāru* means both “wind” and a “cardinal direction”.⁸ Thus, Adapa threatens the Southwind by saying: *kappaki lūšebir*, “I will break your wing” (EA 356, 5). In the Old Babylonian myth of the winged Anzû, Belet-Ili tells her son Ningirsu to defeat him in a way that identifies him with the wind: *šārū kappī ana puzurātīm liblunim*, “may the winds carry (his) wings away to distant places” (III, 70).⁹ Ironically, it is a storm wind that brings him down: *ina mithur mehīm abaršū imqut*, “at the onrush of the South-storm, his wing fell” (III, 76). The four winds also appear in a fragmentary portion of the story in the Standard Babylonian version as weapons of protection and fear (III, 6-7). In this version, the defeat of Anzû results in establishing the hero’s holy daises in the *kibrāt erbetti*, “four (world) regions” (II, 143). Observe also Erra’s words to Marduk: *ša šāri* (TU₁₅) *lemni kīma iṣṣūri* (MUŠEN) *akassá idāšu*, “I shall bind the wings of the evil wind as one does to a bird” (*Poem of Erra* I 187).¹⁰ In an oracle to Esarhaddon, Ištar rhetorically asks the

4. I treat Ugaritic texts only parenthetically, because the Ugaritic cognate *knp*, “wing” does not bear this meaning. DULAT 450, *s.v.* *knp*, “wing”. The related term *mknpt* means “span” (used of a battlement in CAT 1.16 i 9; DULAT 543, *s.v.* *mknpt*).
5. On this point, I am indebted to the masterful study by Keel 1977, though my arguments expand upon and nuance his.
6. On the connection between some winged creatures and the wind in Mesopotamia, see Wiggermann 1980/1983; 2007.
7. Gudea, Cyl. A XI 22.
8. See CAD Š/2 133, *s.v.* *šāru*. As discussed by Neumann 1977, the Mesopotamian cardinal points do not represent true North, South, East, and West, but correspond to winds from the Northwest, Southeast, Northeast, and Southwest, respectively. Two of the names of the winds reflect these geographic realities: ^{im}KUR.RA *šadā*, “Eastwind” (= lit. “mountains”) and ^{im}MAR.DÚ *amurru*, “Westwind” (= lit. “Amorites”). The other two are ^{im}SI.SÁ *iltānu/ištānu*, “Northwind” (= “appropriate, straight”, *i.e.*, “common”) and ^{im}ULU *šūtu*, “Southwind” (= “flying”). See Horowitz 1998, 196-198.
9. Cf. the fragmentary Hittite text found in CHD 231, *s.v.* *pata-*: [I]NA GÌR.MEŠ=ŠU=ma=zza ^{KUŠ}E.SIR.ĪI.A=uš *lilimandus* IM.MEŠ=uš *šarkuūt*, “(Tašmitu) put on his feet [the winds] as winged shoes”. Winged deities are rare in the Hittite world. See, e.g., CHD P 80 *s.v.* *paltana-*: “(the bisexual deity) Šaušga-to-be-Invoked: a golden statue (represented as) a man standing, wings coming from (his) shoulders”.
10. Cagni 1969, 78.

king: *šāru ša idibakkani aqapušu lā aksupūni*, “Have I not trimmed the wings of the wind that blew against you?”¹¹ After surviving the flood, Utnapishtim recalls: *ušešīma ana erbetti šārāni* (IM.MEŠ) *attaqi niqá*, “I sent forth (everything) to the four winds, I made an offering” (Gilg. XI, 155). A protasis from an Old Babylonian omen employs the same language: *šār erbettišu mithāriš ill[akē]*, “If the (smoke) goes in all four directions to the same degree...”.¹² The demon Pazuzu also declares:

I am Pazuzu, the son of Hanbu, King of the evil *Lilú*-Wind Demons, I ascended to the mighty mountains that quake. The winds, in whose midst I proceeded, were directed towards the West, I alone have broken their wings (Heeßel 2002, 59, ll. 102-109; Wiggermann 2007).

Moreover, as F. Wiggermann has shown, Pazuzu has his origins in the four cardinal winds (Wiggermann 2007). As I shall explain more fully below, this explains why Pazuzu figurines consistently possess four wings (Fig. 1). Indeed, on a Neo-Babylonian cylinder seal, one also finds the four winds each with four wings (Fig. 2).¹³

The Mesopotamian connection between wings, winds, and the four cardinal directions obtains also in references to the *kippatu*, a term that means “circle, loop, circumference, and totality”.¹⁴ When used of the earth or the winds it represents all directions, *i.e.*, everywhere the wind blows. Thus, we hear about the king: *ana kippat erbette tābti tētepuš*, “you (the king) have shown kindness to all the circle of the four (quarters)”. In the *Poem of Erra*, Anu ordains the winds by commanding them: *kīma šāri z[āq]ma kippata hīta*, “blow like the wind, survey the circle” (I, 36). The stormgod Adad also possesses the *kippat šār erbetti*, “circle of the four winds”, and thus, he *šābit kippat šārē* (IM.MEŠ), “controls all the winds”.¹⁵

1.2. Egyptian texts

In ancient Egypt too, one finds the four winds personified as winged beings, even as early as the *Pyramid Texts*, where they personify the four cardinal directions.¹⁶ Hence the following incantation, which one must recite four times: *n 4 ipw kb3w b3w=k m33w m hr.ny mdw m utwt mr*, “to the four, these strong-winds which are about you, which see with two faces, who contend with fierce roaring (?)” (Spell 311).¹⁷ Spell 340 also states: *dd=ii=n=l hr=k nw hm=k n=l mī hm Bbtj m ht imntj iwt=k m ht=l mī iwt m mhjt m ht rsw dd w3b*, “Recitation: ‘I have come to you, you Ancient One. May you turn back to me as Eastwind is turned back by Westwind; may you come down to me as Northwind

11. Parpola 1997, 4.

12. Both texts cited in CAD Š/2 133, *s.v.* *šāru*.

13. Observed by Wiggermann 2007, 130, 156. Image from (156). Three seals from the Old Babylonian Period show each of the winds with two wings (152-153).

14. CAD K 397, *s.v.* *kippatu*.

15. See Wilson 1962, 90-115 (93:4).

16. On the Egyptian four winds, see de Wit 1957, 25-39; Kurth 1986, cols. 1266-1272; Kákosky 1997, 219-229.

17. Sethe 1908-1910, Spell 311, §497b-c-498a. Translation adopted, with slight modification from Faulkner 1998, 97. Allen 2005, 59, renders this difficult spell (= 216 on Unis’ Anti-chamber): “to those four of yours who go down behind you, who see with two faces and argue painfully about the firstborn...”.

comes after Southwind'. Recitation: set down (the offering)".¹⁸ In the *Coffin Texts*, the four winds appear under the charge of Shu, the god of wind and light. In Spell 80, Shu proclaims: *rdw=i pw krr n pt Bdt=i pw nsn ihbw*, "the storm of the sky is my liquid, and the tempest at dusk is my outpouring".¹⁹ When combined, the four winds represent the totality of divine forces that enlivens one in the afterlife. Accordingly, Spell 162 invokes their primordial power:

*ind hr=tn fdw (4) B.w pw nw pt k3.w nw pt dd=i n=k rn=k rn n rdhw n=k sn rh=i smsy=k
hpr=n=k n msyt rmt n hprt ntrw n sbtt 3pdw n sphbt k3w n 'nut 'rt.wy m3trt s3t ntr sb3y n irt s3r r
ikw nb pt nb B dbh=n=i sn m-' nb shmw swt pw rdi n=i sn mi r=k r=k sd3y=k hn=i di=i
m3=k w3 h3=k im=f skd=k im=f nn wi=i ink iri w3=i ds=i d3y=i im=f r s3nt sd k3=i w3 im
n mh b3 (1000) tp.wy=f skdy=i im=f r rwd n hnt hnt r' skd=f r rwd n hnt*

Hail to you, Four Winds of the sky, Bulls of the sky! I say to you your name and the name of the one who gave them to you. I know your origins. Your name came into being, before people were born and gods came into being, before birds were trapped, before longhorns were lassoed, before the jaws of Matjeret,²⁰ the daughter of the great god, were subdued, and before the doing of the potentate, lord of sky and earth. I asked them from the lord of powers, and he is the one who gave them to me. Come you, voyage with me! I will show you the bark so that you may sail in it. If I am not (accepted), I am he, the one who made the bark myself, that I might cross over in it to the dry-dock. I will draw forth a bark of a thousand cubits from prow to stern, and I will sail in it to the Stairway of Fire, when Re also sails to the Stairway of Fire.²¹

Each of the winds appears visually as having the body of a man, the head of an animal, and bearing four wings (Fig. 3): *kb.ny*, "Northwind" possesses four ram-heads, *shb.ny*, "Southwind" has a lion's head, *hmv-s3s.ny*, "Eastwind" has the head of a ram (sometimes the body of a scarab), and *hd3y.ny*, "Westwind" has a snake's head. In the *Book of the Dead* (Spell 161), each of the winds originates from a separate opening in the sky.²²

The identification of wings as winds also finds literary expression in similes involving birds, because birds not only take flight by using the wind, but the flapping of their wings produces wind. Thus, in one Egyptian myth, a divine falcon beats its wings to create the four winds.²³ Taharqa and his troops also are said to move *mi iw(.t) Bw mi drty.w hwyw dnh.ny m dnh.w=[sn]*, "like the coming of

18. Sethe 1908-1910, Spell 340, §554; Faulkner 1998, 110. See also Spells 226, §360b-d, 520, §1221a-1222a.


19. de Buck 1938, 29.

20. The goddess *m3trt*, "Matjeret" is a celestial gatekeeper, whose jaws are envisioned here as a gate. See Leitz 2002, 239.

21. de Buck 1938, 399-404. Such attributes likely inform the unique image in the Tomb of Nakhtamun (TT 341) of a four-winged being hovering over the scales of justice. Though badly damaged, the figure clearly wears a royal *shdw*-waistcloth and holds an *nb* ("life-sign") in each hand. Blue waves of lines surround the figure, conveying the flapping of its wings and production of wind. Paralleling the four wings is the accompanying text that offers four praises to Nakhtamun's *ka*. Nevertheless, since the head of the entity is not preserved, one cannot be certain if it embodies one or all of the four winds.

22. See Faulkner 1985, 156. Later one also finds the four winds represented by a lion with four heads and two wings. See Gutbug 1997, 328-353. For images, see Budge 1969, 295-296.

23. See Wilkinson 1987, 98-104.

the wind, like kites who fly with their wings”.²⁴ Amun-Re similarly promises Thutmose III that he will be *nb dm3.t it m dgg.t=f r mrr=f*, “lord of the wing, who seizes what he desires”.²⁵ So close are the avian connections to wind that depictions of Shu show him with a feather on his head. Fittingly, Shu also appears with the sign , which represents the four pillars of heaven that stand on the four corners of earth, whence originate the four winds.²⁶

From the Late Period to Roman times, some deities in Egypt also appear with four wings. Chief among them is Tutu (Fig. 4), though Amun-Re, Atum, Bes, Horus, and others also take this form. Sometimes called “pantheistic” or more recently “polymorphic”, these figures typically possess multiple animal heads: *inter alia* of bulls, lions, apes, dogs, falcons, and crocodiles.²⁷ Their images are apotropaic.²⁸ As with the four winds, the four wings on these polymorphic deities express a totality of divine powers. Their forms embody the *ba*-spirits of the Hidden One, in his solar and supreme aspect. In essence, they represent a universal “supergod”.

1.3. Biblical texts

The conceptual overlap between wings, winds, and the four corners of earth finds parallels in a number of biblical texts. See, for example, Isaiah’s prophecy concerning the gathering of Judahites *מֵאַרְבַּע כְּנָפֹת הָאָרֶץ*, “from the four ‘wings’ of the earth” (Isa 11:12, cf. 24:16). Ezekiel uses the same idiom to express the totality of Yahweh’s wrath on Israel: “The end! The end has come upon the four ‘wings’ of the earth!” (Ezek 7:2).²⁹ Elihu too employs the idiom in his description of Yahweh’s power: “He unleashes his lightning beneath the whole heaven, and sends it to the ‘wings’ of the earth” (Job 37:3). The “wings” of the earth thus represent the cardinal directions from which the winds hail, and thus, they express a totality. In essence, they represent the combination of two merisms, North to South and East to West, and so they essentially mean “everywhere”.³⁰ Thus, the expression is equivalent to *אַרְבַּע רוּחוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם*, “the four winds of heaven” (Dan 7:2, 8:8, 11:4).³¹ Indeed, the connection of “four-ness” with the cardinal winds and a totality of power finds additional support in Daniel’s vision of a four headed leopard with *גְּפִי אַרְבַּע דִּי-עוֹף*, “four wings of a bird” (Dan 7:6). It is one of four beasts that emerges from the sea after the four winds strike it, and it is to this creature that Yahweh grants *שְׁלֵטָן*, “dominion” (Dan 7:6). Together, the four creatures represent *וְרִבּוּתָא דִּי מַלְכּוֹת תְּחֻמוֹת כְּלִי-שָׁמַיָא*, “the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole of heaven” (Dan 7:27).

24. Shonkwiler 2014, 9.

25. Shonkwiler 2014, 9-10.

26. On Shu’s role in engendering the *hh*-gods as the supporters of the heavens, see Bickel 1994, 193-195.

27. Kaper 2003; Quack 2006, 175-190; Wilkinson 2009, 2-3; First 2011, 53-68.

28. On the roles and interpretations of the pantheistic deities, see Assmann 2001, 240-244; First 2011.

29. Thus, Zimmerli 1979, 203, sees the expression as referring to “the whole world”.

30. For “wings” denoting an extremity or edge of an object, see 1 Sam 15:27, 24:11, 24:4-5, Ezek 16:8, Zech 8:23, Ruth 3:9. On the symbolic associations of the cardinal directions in Ugaritic and biblical texts, see Wyatt 2005, 125-150.

31. In Dan 8:8, the “four winds of heaven” encapsulate the totality of the creature’s will to conquer. The totality of the vision also becomes clear when Daniel interprets the defeated animal as the Medes and Persians and the victorious one as Greece (Dan 8:20-21). In Dan 11:4, the “four winds of heaven” divide the kingdom of a future king who will come to rival the Persian empire.

That the cardinal winds should have wings is clear also in Hosea's prophesy in which he metaphorically describes a destructive storm as a bird: צָרַר רוּחַ אוֹתָהּ בְּכַנְפֶיהָ, "A wind has bound her (Israel) in its wings" (Hos 4:19). See also Zechariah's angelic vision: וְאִשָּׁא עֵינַי וְאָרָא וְהִנֵּה שְׁתַּיִם נְשִׁים יוֹצְאוֹת וְרוּחַ בְּכַנְפֵיהֶם וְלִהְנֶה כְּנָפֵיהֶם כְּכַנְפֵי הַחֲסִידָה, "And I lifted my eyes, and I looked, and behold, two women were going out and the wind was in their wings. Their wings were like the wings of the stork" (Zech 5:9). Speaking from the whirlwind (סְעָרָה), Yahweh also asks Job, הֲמִבִּינְתָּה יְאֻבְרִיגָן יִפְרֹשׁ [כְּנָפָיו] לְתִימָן, "Is it by your wisdom that the falcon soars, and spreads its wings to the Southwind" (Job 39:26, cf. Ps 78:26, Song 4:16)³²

Examples could be multiplied, but these suffice to demonstrate a shared conceptual link in the ancient Near East between wings, winds, and the cardinal directions.³³ In addition, when numbering four, the winged winds in Akkadian, Egyptian, and biblical texts convey a totality. While the language of wings and winds certainly lends itself to poetic and metaphoric expressions, the idioms likely derive from an older mythological association in which the winds were produced by divine wings.³⁴ It is with this background as context that I return to the topic of winged hybrid creatures.

2. Winged *Mischwesen* in the ancient Near East

2.1. Biblical winged hybrids

I submit that the widespread association of wings with the wind and the cardinal directions allows us to understand similarly the literary and iconographic depictions of wings on various *Mischwesen*. They too represent that creature's association with wind and the cardinal directions. The textual and iconographic evidence bears this out.

Arguably the most well-known winged hybrid from the ancient Near East is the biblical כְּרוּב, "cherub". We first encounter it guarding the way to the tree of life (Gen 3:24). The Genesis passage does not tell us exactly how many cherubim there were and it makes no mention of their wings, because their wings have no function in the narrative.³⁵ Nevertheless, we must envision them as capable of flight, but with their wings neatly tucked while standing guard.³⁶ The cherubim on the ark of the covenant appear to possess two wings in most accounts (1 Kgs 6:22-28, 2 Chron 3:11-12), though the

32. 11QtgJob reads the latter stich: ויפרוש כנפיהו לרוחין, "And spreads his wings to the winds".

33. Cf. Rev 7:1: "And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree". Unfortunately, nothing can be said about the identity of the four-winged female figure on a plaque published by Barnett 1980, 173-175, as it is unprovenanced. Perhaps it is an image of the Hittite goddess Šaušga (= Ištar). See Alexander 1991, 161-182.

34. Wiggermann 2007, 127, observes that the Akkadian term for the Southwind (*šūtu*) derives from the verb *šū*, "fly about, flutter, circle", which occurs in reference to birds and winds.

35. כְּרוּבִים is a plural form, and not a dual, suggesting that there were three or more.

36. Westenholz 2004a, 36, argues they are non-flyers, because the text does not describe them as flying. She suggests that their wings simply mark them as supernatural and powerful. I contend that their hybrid nature would convey this even without wings, and so the wings must have significance. Cf. Ezek 1:24-25, in which the cherubim fold their wings when they are not flying. See also Mettinger 1999, 189-192.

construction narrative in Exodus 25 simply uses the plural, leaving the number vague. Equally ambiguous are the descriptions of the Psalmist, who says of Yahweh: *וַיִּרְכַב עַל-כְּרוּב וַיִּעָף וַיִּדָּא עַל-כַּנְפֵי-רוּחַ*: “He rode upon a cherub, and he flew, he soared upon the wings of the wind” (Ps 18:11 = 2 Sam 22:11);³⁷ and *הַשָּׁמַיִם עֲבִימָה רִכְבּוֹ הַמְהִלָּה עַל-כַּנְפֵי-רוּחַ*, “He who appoints clouds his ride, and goes forth upon the wings of the wind” (Ps 104:3).³⁸ In both cases, the term “wings” appears in the plural, but the number is not specified. Nevertheless, the parallelism clarifies that the cherub’s wings embody the wind. As Alice Wood observes, the cherub signifies: “...part of the storm theophany, as one of the supernatural forces of which Yahweh makes use during battle. Just as the elements (wind, thunder, clouds) become Yahweh’s weapons and shields in combat, so the cherub becomes the deity’s charger” (Wood 2008, 94).

Ezekiel’s vision attributes to these creatures four wings and four faces:³⁹

וּדְמוּת פְּנֵיהֶם פָּנֵי אָדָם וּפְנֵי אֲרִיָּה אֶל-הַיָּמִין לְאַרְבַּעַתָּם וּפְנֵי-שׂוֹר מִהַשְּׂמָאוֹל
 לְאַרְבַּעַתָּן וּפְנֵי-נֶגֶשׁ לְאַרְבַּעַתָּן: וּפְנֵיהֶם וְכַנְפֵיהֶם פְּרֻדוֹת מִלְמַעְלָה לְאִישׁ שְׁתַּיִם
 הַכְּרוֹת אִישׁ וּשְׁתַּיִם מְכֻסוֹת אֶת גְּוִיֵיהֶנָּה: וְאִישׁ אֶל-עֵבֶר פָּנָיו יֵלֶכֶן אֶל אֲשֶׁר
 יִהְיֶה-שָׁמָּה הָרוּחַ לְלֶכֶת יֵלְכוּ לֹא יִסְבּוּ בְּלִכְתָּן: וּדְמוּת הַחַיּוֹת מֵרְאֵיהֶם כְּגַת-לֵי-אֵשׁ
 בְּעֵרוֹת כְּמֵרְאֵה הַלְּפָלִים הִיא מִתְהַלֶּכֶת בֵּין הַחַיּוֹת וְנִגְהָ לְאִישׁ וּמִן-הָאֵשׁ יוֹצֵא בָרָק:
 וְהַחַיּוֹת רְצוּא וְשׂוֹב כְּמֵרְאֵה הַבְּזָק:

As for the likeness of their faces, they had the face of a man; and they four had the face of a lion on the right side; and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four had also the face of an eagle. Thus were their faces; and their wings were stretched upward; two wings of every one were joined one to another, and two covered their bodies. And they went every one straight forward; wherever the wind went, they went; they did not turn around when they went. As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like coals of fire, burning like the appearance of torches; it flashed up and down among the living creatures; and there was brightness to the fire, and out of the fire went forth lightning. And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning (Ezek 1:10-14).⁴⁰

Relevant here is the entity’s connection to the cardinal directions: *עַל-אַרְבַּעַת רַבְעֵיהֶן בְּלִכְתָּם יֵלְכוּ*, “As they moved, they would go in any of the four directions” (Ezek 1:17). Moreover, Ezekiel finds them near four spinning wheels, again representing the cardinal directions: *עַל אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה-שָׁם הָרוּחַ*: “Wherever the wind would go, as the wind would go thither, so they went; and the wheels were lifted up beside them; for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels” (Ezek 1:20).⁴¹ Ezekiel’s cherubim would enjoy a long afterlife

37. This song also appears in 2 Sam 22:11. However, some Hebrew manuscripts read *וַיִּרָא*, “he appeared” instead of *וַיִּדָּא*, “he soared”. The former probably is in error.
 38. Cf. the Egyptian parallel in the *Coffin Texts*, Spell 317, in which the Nile god Hapy states: *ḥ=k(w)ḥ m nswt šḥm m ‘=i s’b m ‘=i škdḥ m-hmw ḥgb*, “I have come as king, the scepter in my one hand, and the seal in my other hand, traveling in a cloud”. See de Buck 1951, 125, SIC; Bojowald 2014, 79.
 39. Cf. the two-faced winds in the *Pyramid Texts* cited above.
 40. The chapter never employs the terms *מְרֻכְבָּה*, “chariot” or *כְּרֻבִים*, “cherubim”, but the image is clear enough. Moreover, Ezekiel 10 specifies the creatures as cherubim. Wood 2008, 105-140, contends that Ezekiel 10 constitutes a later tradition concerning the cherubim and an editorial reflection on Chapter 1.
 41. Whether we translate *רוּחַ*, here as “wind” or “spirit” matters little since conceptually they are identical (cf. Gen 1:2).

in Jewish tradition (see Schäfer 2009, 34-52), but for the nonce, I only need to note that the cherubim's wings again personify the winds (Greenberg 1983, 53-58). Like Pazuzu and the Egyptian depictions of the four winds, the cherubim's four wings embody the four winds.⁴² The creatures' "four-ness" allows them to move and face in every direction without needing to turn around.⁴³

Ezekiel adds that, like the wings of the earth to which Yahweh sends his lightning in Job 37:3, the creatures appeared in a cosmic סַעֲרָה רִיחַ, "stormy wind" from the North accompanied with fire and lightning (Ezek 1:1, 1:4-5, 1:13-14).⁴⁴ See similarly the Psalmist's description of Yahweh's ride: עֲשֶׂה מְלָאכָיו רוּחֹת מְשָׁרְתָיו אֵשׁ לֶהֱטֵט, "He makes his angels winds, his servants, flames of fire" (Ps 104:4). The image is reminiscent of the lauding of Horus as the winged disk: *ḥw n=k bḥd.t(y) ḥ.wy ꜥꜣ n ḥꜣmm*, "Praise you the Behdetite of the Two Lands, the Flyer, of flame". Indeed, Horus was conceived "by flame" and born on "the Island of Fire", where the sun first rose in the sky, a place where the sungod's enemies are annihilated by fire.⁴⁵

Indeed, like Horus, winged winds in the Bible generally have solar connections. Such is the case in Amos 4:13.

A Behold! The one who forms *mountains*/
 B the one who creates wind/
 C and the one who tells mankind what his thoughts are/
 B' the one who makes the winged disk (עֵיפָה) appear at dawn/
 A' the one who treads upon the *high places* of the earth
 —YHWH, God of the hosts is his name.

As John Whitley recently has shown, the term עֵיפָה here refers to the winged solar disk, and thus serves as a poetic reference to the sun.⁴⁶ Note that it stands in parallelism with the "wind". See similarly Malachi's promise: וְיִרְחַק לְכֶם יְרֵאֵי שְׁמִי שְׁמֵשׁ צְדָקָה וּמְרִפָּא בְּכַנְפֵיהָ, "for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings" (Mal 3:20), a statement that

42. Cf. *3 Enoch* 19:2-3, in which the angel of the chariot wheel is named Rikbiel (*i.e.*, "El rides"), and is encompassed by four winds "storm wind, tempest, strong wind, and wind of earthquake". In *3 Enoch* 21:1-2, the four living beings correspond to the four winds. "Each face is as the face of the East. Each being is as the space of the whole world. Each wing is like the cover of the universe".

43. It is unclear in the text whether the creatures each had one set of hands, or whether, with earlier exegetes, they each had four sets of hands, one for every face. See Greenberg 1982, 44. For an analysis of the numerous iconographic parallels for four-winged creatures, including the four winds, see Keel 1977, 194-216, 241-243. Nevertheless, Keel calls the connection between the cherubim and the four winds into question by concluding that Ezekiel's vision might refer to "... die Vision das traditionelle Bild das vier kosmischen Winde (?) als Träger des Himmels(gottes)..." (324).

44. The Northwind usually is favorable in Mesopotamia and Egypt. See Wiggermann 2007, 133; Kurth 1986, col. 1267; Bojowald 2014, 79-80.

45. Faulkner 1968, 40-44; van Dijk 1979-1980, 11-15; Dorman 1999, 83-99.

46. Whitley 2015, 127-138, argues that the Hebrew term derives from the root עוּף, "fly", and is cognate with the Egyptian *ḥꜣ*, "flyer, winged solar disk", and that it also relates to the Phoenician term עִפְתָּא, "flyer" on the Yehawmilk stele and the Aramaic word עִפְתָּא, "the flyer" on an amulet from Arslan Tash, both of which also feature artistic depictions of winged beings. The root עוּף also appears elsewhere in the Bible for the winged disk. See Noegel, "Eyelids of the Dawn", forthcoming.

Jeffrey Tigay avers refers to the winged scarab.⁴⁷ The Psalmist also states that Yahweh is present even אָשָׂא כְּנַפְי־שָׁחַר, “if I rise on the wings of the dawn” (Ps 139:9). It is implicit also in Yahweh’s rhetorical query to Job: הַמִּימָיִד צוֹיֶתָ בְּקֶרֶךְ יְדַעְתָּהּ [יְדַעְתָּהּ] שָׁחַר [הַשָּׁחַר] מִלְּמִו: לֵאחֹז בְּכַנְפוֹת הָאָרֶץ וַיִּנְעֲרוּ רַשְׁעִים מִמֶּנָּה, “Have you in your day ever commanded a morning, or made the dawn know its place, to seize the ‘wings’ of the earth and shake the wicked from it”? (Job 38:12-13). Such an association lies behind the ‘wings’ of the earth and shake the wicked from it”? (Job 38:12-13). Such an association lies behind the מְרַכְבוֹת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ, “chariots of the sun” that Josiah destroyed with fire (2 Kgs 23:11).⁴⁸ Like the winged solar disks of Egypt, they stood at the מִבְּאֵי בַיִת, “entrance of the temple”. Note too that Yahweh stations the cherubim לְגַן־עֵדֶן, “east of the garden of Eden”, thus orienting them with the rising sun (Gen 3:24). Numerous protective two-winged griffins, sphinxes, scarabs, and serpents also appear on a variety of Phoenician and Israelite seals dating from the 9th-8th centuries BCE,⁴⁹ which Othmar Keel and Christoph Uehlinger argue, form an interchangeable assemblage of solar figures.⁵⁰

2.2 Mesopotamian winged hybrids

The hybrid creatures from Mesopotamia most often compared to the biblical cherubim are the *kuribū* (cognate with כְּרִיב), *aladlammū*, and *apkallū*.⁵¹ No known images of the *kuribū* exist.⁵²

47. Tigay 1986, 95. Ornan 2005, 207-241, opines that, as the winged disk made its way from Egypt to the wider Near East in the early second millennium BCE, it lost its connection to the solar cult, and instead, it became the symbol of a celestial entity, usually the chief god of the pantheon. See also Noegel, “Eyelids of the Dawn”, forthcoming.
48. Koch 2012, 211-219, argues that the items are not evidence of a solar cult, but rather connected to Yahweh in his role as a stormgod. They were decorated with the winged disk and served as a ritual symbol of his power. Koch also draws attention to ivory horse blinkers from Nimrud that contain an image of a sphinx (215). Cf. the cultic stand from Taanach, which features a solar disk atop a horse as well as cherubim. See Beck 1994, 352-381. Note also the image of Shamash standing atop harnessed horses in the Neo-Assyrian relief of a divine procession at Malatya. Keel – Uehlinger 1998, 341-344, discuss the horses in relation to terracotta rider figurines discovered in Jerusalem. On the horses of Shamash in Mesopotamia, see Scurlock 2002, 370.
49. Despite a lack of a unified taxonomy for the many winged supernatural entities in the ancient Near East, most scholars have allowed for some degree of overlap between sphinxes, griffins, cherubim, and other hybrid entities. See, e.g., Albright 1938; Choche-Zivic 1984; Meyers 1992; Kolbe 1981; Wiggermann 1992; 1994; Green 1994; Freedman – O’Connor 1995; Uehlinger 1995; Borowski 1995; Keel – Uehlinger 1998, 248-262; Westenholz 2004b, 20-42; Wyatt 2009; Gräff – Ritter 2011, 51-65. Wood 2008, 157-207, advocates a far more conservative (minimalist) approach and argues that the cherubim are solely a textual phenomenon, and thus, one must develop a typological profile of the biblical cherubim before applying the comparative archaeological material. Wood also contends that inconsistencies in the descriptions of the cherubim testify to editorial activity and/or represent textual conflicts (161-162). Nevertheless, she concludes that the closest parallels to the biblical cherubim are human or eagle-headed winged lions (202). Given the wide variety of types of sphinxes, griffins, and other *Mischwesen*, I find it more plausible that there were a range of options when depicting such creatures (e.g., the number of wings), depending on what cosmological aspect the artist/author wanted to emphasize.
50. Keel – Uehlinger 1998, 248-262. The Egyptian sphinx also bears the name *hr-m-3bt*, “Horus on the (eastern) horizon”. Na’aman 2016, 111-125, argues that the two- and four-winged disks were royal symbols during the reign of Hezekiah, but that after 701 BCE, the four-winged variety were rejected possibly because they were perceived as Egyptian in import.
51. Eichler 2007; 2015, argues that the biblical cherubim were upright and so they are most likely to have been winged bird or human figures. This would make the parallels to human and raptor *apkallū* even stronger.

However, a letter to an Assyrian king records the creation of 50 *šalmū kurībī šalmū šārāni* (50 NU *kurībī* NU TU₁₅. MEŠ KUG.UD), “fifty images of cherubs and winds” (l. 13).⁵³ It is difficult to imagine what “winds” here might signify other than “wings”, which, like many sculpted appendages, were often manufactured separately and inserted.⁵⁴ Another Assyrian text describes the dream of prince Kummâ, in which the wife of the underworld’s vizier has the head of a *kuribu* and hands of a human.⁵⁵ What form this head took is unknown, but it clearly was not human. Though nothing more is known about the *kuribu*, its composite nature and linguistic relation to the כַּרְיָב suggests its pertinence.

The *aladlammû* are represented by winged hybrids that have a human face and the body of a lion or bull (Fig. 5).⁵⁶ Their horned headdress signifies that they are divinized, though they are not major gods. One usually finds them guarding the entrances of Neo-Assyrian royal structures. Though they mostly appear to possess two wings, one could argue that their depictions on orthostat colossi show two sets of wings closely tucked together. Indeed, versions that clearly display four-wings spread out are known.⁵⁷ Regardless of how many wings they possess, their connection with the cardinal directions is clear. Thus, Sennacherib records their placement in his palace *ana erbetti šārī*, “in all four directions (lit. winds)”.⁵⁸ The alignment is significant, because Mesopotamian monumental structures generally were laid out so that their sides faced the four winds.⁵⁹ Sennacherib says of his palace: *ana erbetti šārē 15 abullāti* (KÁ.GAL.MEŠ) *panu u arka ina šilli kilallān ana eribi u aši ušaptā kiribšu*, “I opened fifteen gates to the four winds, in front and behind, and on all sides, for entrance and departure”.⁶⁰ Archaeological evidence for such an arrangement comes from Sargon’s palace at Dur-Sharrukin, where five pair of *aladlammû* were stationed on the main exterior entrance to the palace: one pair in each of the three entrances and two pairs facing each other on the buttresses between the entrances. The same plan informs the façades of the principal and subsidiary throne rooms. The *aladlammû* also stood at other entrances within the palace and at

52. The term *kuribu* is likely unrelated to *kurību*, “bird”, since the latter is identified in lexical lists with the *kurukku/karakku*, a type of duck or goose. See HAR.GUD = *imrū* = *ballu*, C I 34 in *MSL* 8/2 172, cited in CAD K 572, *s.v.* *kurību*; K 572, *s.v.* *kurukku*. Thus, contra Delitzsch 1874, 107-108, the *kurību* is not a vulture or bird of prey. Wiggermann 1992, 243, suggests that we relate *kuribū* to Semitic *gārib*, “raven”.

53. Cole – Machinist 1998, 28, line 13.

54. Whether made with ivory, metal, or stone, statues often were composite constructions. See, e.g., the ivory flask made in five segments, and multipiece spoon in Oates – Oates 2001, 96, 103, Figs. 57, 61; and the colossal bull’s head from Persepolis at the Oriental Institute with mortise holes where the horns and ears were attached. Cf. the reference to a Hittite statue in CHD 199, *s.v.* *partawa(r)*: “They placed in each corner a bronze statue of ^dNIN.É.MU.UN.DÛ... and one ox of [...], (with) wings of bronze, weighing one mina”.

55. Livingstone 1989, 68-76 (r. 3). Cf. Ezek 10:14 in which one of the faces of the beast is that of a cherub, and thus, distinguished from that of a human. Discussed by Greenberg 1983, 182-183.

56. The *aladlammû* (^dALAD.^dLAMMA.MEŠ) is a general term for *šedu* (^dALAD) and *lamassū* (^dLAMMA), the former of which is usually male, and the latter, female. On all the allied beings and their histories, see Foxvog – Heimpel – Kilmer 1980/1983, 446-453; Wiggermann 1980/1983, 224, 242-243; Greenfield 1999; Ritter 2010; Dalley 2011; Gane 2012, 21-33, 43-47, 83-87. Green 1994, 262, posits that the male genies (here identified, with Wiggermann, as human-*apkallû*) might represent the *aladlammû*.

57. See the cylinder seal (Berlin VA 7737) in Moortgat 1988, 68, no. 610; Gane 2012, 57.

58. Grayson – Novotny 2012, 39, line 85.

59. Neumann 1977, 1051-1054.

60. Grayson – Novotny 2012, 143, col. vii, lines 70-73.

several of the city gates.⁶¹ Indeed, like Sennacherib, Sargon also states that he created his residence at Dur-Sharrukin to face the four winds.⁶² Therefore, there is a direct correlation between the four winds, the number of *aladlammû* that adorn the palace structure, and the directions they face.⁶³

The *apkallû* are winged creatures that possess a human body and the head of either a man (Fig. 6)⁶⁴ or raptor (Fig. 7).⁶⁵ The former are known as *ûmu-apkallû* (i.e., “day-*apkallû*” and/or “storm-*apkallû*”) and the latter as raptor-*apkallû*.⁶⁶ They appear on Assyrian reliefs, often tending to a sacred tree, and as terracotta figures (Fig. 8), and images of them spread well beyond Mesopotamia.⁶⁷ They also came to represent the antediluvian sages who transmitted knowledge of writing, divination, and the crafts to human civilization.⁶⁸ Both the *aladlammû* and *apkallû* have their origins in atmospheric phenomena, and their images had ritual functions as *apotropaia*.⁶⁹ Thus, they also appear on

61. See Albenda 1986, plates 16, 26, 35-40; Russell 1999, 103-108.

62. *ina rêšê u arkâtê ina šilê kilallân mēbrît 4 šārê 8 abullê aptēma*, “In front and in back, on both sides, facing the four winds (text reads 8 by dittographic error), I opened eight gates”, in Lyon 1882, 11, line 66.

63. Numerous *aladlammû* feature in the palace architecture at Nimrud. See Paley – Sobolewski 1987; 1992.

64. A possible parallel to the human-headed *apkallû* is a four-winged human carved in bone and discovered in a private house at Hazor, who holds in each hand a stylized bough or blossom. Keel – Uehlinger 1998, 195-196, understand the youthful figure as Ba’al or perhaps an attendant to the Lord of Heaven, and regard his four wings as denoting his celestial nature and omnipresence. They see him as interchangeable with the four-winged scarab, a symbol of the sungod. However, the four-winged scarab represents the Eastwind in the *Book of the Dead* (Spell 161). Unfortunately, one cannot identify the figure for certain. Note similarly, their discussion of four-winged female figures on seals of the 8th-7th centuries BCE (336-341), which represent Assyrian and other international influences, and perhaps depict the Queen of Heaven, Astarte, Asherah, Ištar, or another female deity. Keel – Uehlinger (340, illus. 331b) also cautiously identify an image on one Hebrew seal as depicting Yahweh (with two wings), standing on a cherub (two wings), before Asherah (four wings), who hovers over a sacred tree. However, these figures also closely resemble *apkallû* and *aladlammû*. The seal appeared originally in Bordreuil 1986, no. 58. On Assyrian influences upon the Levantine artistic tradition, see Schmitt 2014.

65. The bird’s head has been labeled inconsistently as that of an eagle or vulture. The identification is important, as these species are very different in terms of behavior, and thus, also in their significance and associations. I use the term “raptor” as it suffices to represent both birds of prey and those that feed on carrion. Nevertheless, since many of the reliefs show the raptor-*apkallû* to have a long, hooked beak, feathered beard, and upright head plumage, I aver that it can be only one of three species of vulture: the bearded vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*), also known as the lammergeier, Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*), or cinereous vulture (*Aegyptius monachus*). The latter species feeds primarily on bone marrow. Green 1994, 252, observes that the entity appears on Middle Assyrian seals in hunting scenes. However, the connection to hunting need not relate to the actions of birds of prey, but to the spotting of vultures in flight to mark the site of a recent kill. Alternatively, it might suggest the role of the winds in wafting the scent of the hunt. Wyatt 2009, 34, fn. 3, opines that the Assyrian figures represent priests wearing bird masks.

66. Wiggermann 1992, 73-76, understands the anthropomorphic types of *apkallû* that wear horned head gear as gods, and reserves the term *ûmu-apkallû* for those wearing a headband (74). However, see the useful survey of alternative views by Zoltán 2008, 79-80, fn. 193. For the history of the raptor-*apkallû*, see Wiggermann (75-76) and the important additions by Green 1994, 252-253, who refers to the being as a “griffin-demon”.

67. *Apkallû* of both types appear in Hittite reliefs and ivory works of Syrian manufacture. See, e.g., Winter 1981, 101-130; Herrmann 1992, plates 32, 33, 112, 126, 127, 131, 134; Orthmann 1971, 326, Taf. 8b, 12f, 15d, 26d, 43b, 43d, 50c, 55a, 59b.

68. Wiggermann 1992, 74-75; Greenfield 1999.

69. See Wiggermann 1980/1983; 1983; 1994; Green 1994.

furniture.⁷⁰ In the Neo-Assyrian period, ritual experts invoked *ūmu-apkallū* to remove illness and they identified them as Marduk's mace (Wiggermann 1992, 65). At Dur-Sharrukin, four *ūmu-apkallū* also appear inside the entrances guarded by the four *aladlammū*, each on one side of the entrance, and each facing one another. Facades L and M on the northwestern, southeastern, and southwestern walls follow a similar plan, though here raptor-*apkallū* appear instead of the *ūmu-apkallū*.⁷¹ Therefore, as with the *aladlammū*, there is evidence for an architectural correlation between the four winds, the number of *apkallū*, and their orientation with the four winds.⁷²

Unlike the cherubim in the Bible, the *kuribū*, *aladlammū*, and *apkallū* do not serve as divine transport. Nevertheless, a mythological association between the winds and winged draft animals was known. In some cases, the animal is called an *ūmu* (U₄), “storm, day”, the same word used to describe the human-type *apkallū*. Thus, already in 2400 BCE, Sumerian hymns sing of Father Iškur, whom Enlil commissions: *u₄-imin haš (TUMxĒŠ)-gin₇ hē-re-lá u₄ um-me-si-lá-lá*, “Let the seven storms be harnessed for you like a team (of animals). Harness the storms for yourself”.⁷³ In a hymn to Gula, Lugalbanda also *murteddū ūmē šamrūti*, “drives fierce storms”.⁷⁴ In *Enūma eliš*, Marduk gathers the four winds and *narkabta ūmu lā mahri galitta irkab*, “mounted a storm chariot, unequalled in terror” (IV:50).⁷⁵ In fact, one of these creatures was named *mupparšu*, “winged” (IV:52). Elsewhere, the word *šāru* (IM), “wind” is used. Thus, in the *Atrahasis Epic*: *Adad ina šāri erbetti* (IM.LIBBU.BA) *irtakab parē[šū] šūtu iltānu šadū amurru*, “Adad rode on the four winds, his mules, Southwind, Northwind, Eastwind, Westwind” (122, Ur 5).⁷⁶ The chthonic Sumerian god Ninazu and the baby-stealing demon Lamaštu also ride upon the four winds.⁷⁷ Ritual conjurers too invoked the four winds to transport *voces magicae* and release the bind of black magic.⁷⁸

70. See the *apkallū* tending to a sacred tree on a lid of a Urartian pyxis and ivory piece of furniture, in André-Salvini – Salvini 2014, 90-92, Figures 32-35a. *Aladlammū* appear on a pyxis in a relief in the palace of Ashurbanipal. See Albenda 1976, 71, Figure 23.

71. Albenda 1986, plates 16, 43, 51-54, 56. One finds *apkallū* also in the entrances of Rooms 2, 5, 11 (plates 71, 92, 110).

72. See similarly the numerous *apkallū* that appear often tending to the sacred tree in many entrances and private rooms at Nimrud including, *inter alia*, the king's throne room (including behind the throne), reception suite, and washroom. See Paley – Sobolewski 1987.

73. Sjöberg – Bergmann 1969, 36-37, Temple Hymn, no. 27.

74. Lambert 1967, 126, 173.



75. Noted by Wiggermann 1994, 241.

76. Though wings are not used for winds in Ugaritic texts (see above), Ba'al does ride a storm-cloud. Hence, his epithet *rkb 'rpt*, “rider of the clouds”, which appears fifteen times in the corpus. See Rahmouni 2007, 288-291. Elsewhere Ba'al is told: *qb 'rptk rbk mdlk mtrk*, “take your clouds, your wind, your lightning, your rain” (CAT 1.5 v 7). Rahmouni notes (290, fn. 7) that the cognate epithet *rākīb erpēti* does not appear in Akkadian, because in Mesopotamia, Adad rides the storm, e.g., *rākīb ūmu rabūtu*, “(Adad) who rides the great storm” (CT 15, 15:7). However, since both ride winds, I see the distinction as less meaningful. Cf. Isa 19:1: “behold, Yahweh rides upon a swift cloud (כַּיִן)”.

77. Concerning Ninazu, we hear that he *rākīb šāri gimiršunu*, “rides all the winds”. See Lambert 1967, 118-119, 52. As for Lamaštu, she appears in exorcist texts: *itti iššūri šamē lū tapparšima*, “May you (Lamaštu) fly away with the bird of heaven” and *ušarkabki šāri (IM) erbetti*, “I will make you (Lamaštu) ride the four winds”. See Lutz 1919, 74, 77, no. 113, and corrected in CAD Š/2 136, s.v. *šāru* A.

78. *Maqlū* ii 151, lists *keš*, *libeš*, *kideš*, *arabbeš*, and *nadreš*, and describes them in unison as *ša dipāri rākīb šāri*, “(carrier) of the torch, rider of the wind”. The strong paronomasia and lack of clear identification lead me to conclude that they are *voces magicae* rather than minor (perhaps Elamite?) deities or demons. See Abusch 2015, 62-65.

2.3. Egyptian winged hybrids

There are a number of Egyptian hybrid entities found in texts and tomb reliefs, but none is more ubiquitous or pertinent here than the winged solar disk. I have touched upon it briefly above in conjunction with Amos 4:13 and Levantine seal inscriptions. However, its use and meaning in Egypt differ considerably, as it is not merely a solar symbol associated with kingship. Indeed, as Randy Shonkwiler's recent comprehensive study reveals, the disk's primary function was protection, and so it appears over liminal spaces like tomb and temple doorways and over the heads of pharaohs.⁷⁹ On steles it also marked sacred space and time for gods, pharaohs, and the sacred dead. From the Ramesside period on, the winged disk increasingly was identified as a god of rebirth for non-royalty. Moreover, the winged disk was a hybrid image that could represent various gods. In most cases, it was understood as *hr bhdty*, "Horus the Behdetite" who *sšp bddwt šn n pt hr dnḥw=f*, "shines rays of light, the circuit of the sky being under his wings".⁸⁰ However, in other contexts it could be Re-Horakhty, Khepri, Re, Amun-Re, or even Isis, in some cases simultaneously. Thus, it is said of Re: *i skdī ḥw m-ḥmw dnḥ.wy=f*, "Oh you let the wind go in the midst of his two wings".⁸¹ In P. Berlin 3049 IV, line 5, we find: *rs=k m ḥtp imn-r' {n} (ḥ)py ntry n'f=f 3ḥt ḥpri nḥp=f m dnw*, "May you awake in peace O Amun-Re, divine Flyer (*ḥpy*), when he sails from the horizon, Khepri when he rises early in the morning".⁸² Here the determinative for *ḥpy* is the flying bird sign . The falcon wing sign  also can be used logographically for the verb *prī*, "come forth", said of the sun rising at dawn. The two cobras that often adorn the winged solar disk are the goddesses of the Two Lands, Nekhbet and Wadjet. Thus, the *ḥpy*, "winged solar disk" was inherently polyvalent, as was Horus (as god and pharaoh incarnate), and when appearing with the cobras, it was a composite of living gods. Henry Fischer explains this hybridity as an extension of the hieroglyphic writing system:

...this seemingly monstrous aspect of ancient Egypt is in fact more apparent than real. The animal-headed gods are hieroglyphic composites, products of a style of representation that was hieroglyphic from its inception, at the beginning of the Dynastic Period (Fischer 1987, 13).

Thus, when "reading" iconographic depictions of Egyptian gods one must consider their composite parts as communicating various aspects of divinity, as David Silverman observes:

The images were not meant to represent actual forms; they were references to a higher idea of the divine. For that reason, a particular force could have multiple images, traits, and descriptions, each of which referred to any or all of its numerous mysterious aspects (Silverman 1991, 17).

Given the nature of complex polytheism in Egypt, this polyvalence should not surprise us. Indeed, both the composite nature of the hieroglyphic script and the images of composite gods embody the hybridity of divinity inherent in complex polytheism. The word *ntr*, "god" could refer

79. Shonkwiler 2014. Prior to this, the only major study was that of Gardiner 1944.

80. Chassinat 1892, 472, line 9. Cited in Shonkwiler 2014, 166.

81. Sander-Hansen 1937, 55; cited in Bojowald 2014, 79.

82. Cited by Shonkwiler 2014, 147.

to any god that one addressed at any given moment, and that god, regardless of his or her rank in the pantheon, could stand in simultaneously for others invoked by the supplicant (see Hornung 1982). Thus, to some degree, every *ntr* is a hybrid, at once itself, but with the potential to be another. This flexible conception of the divine explains how texts can describe the king as morphing into a crocodile, serpent, or hybrid falcon-jackal or serpent-falcon.⁸³ It also informs the interchangeability between the anthropomorphic, zoomorphic, and emblematic depictions of gods, which never presented a theological compromise.

3. Hybrids with six wings

The earliest six-winged hybrid creature known to me appears on a Mesopotamian seal from the third millennium BCE (Fig. 9).⁸⁴ It depicts the creature in profile, thus with three of its wings showing. It is unclear to which species the composite creature belongs, but it clearly has two appendages (hands?) and a fin or feather-like tail. Since it is generally serpentine in form, perhaps we should think of it as an early seraph. Beneath it appears the upper portion of a scorpion, an image associated with fertility, but also with the forces of chaos.⁸⁵ Two *lahmu*-figures flank the creature's sides and appear to be holding it at bay. Since *lahmū* appear on other seals holding off lions to protect cattle, the six-winged creature likely embodies the chaotic dangers of the steppeland (Green 1994, 248).

A six-winged sphinx, again in profile, also occurs on a Syrian seal that dates to the 18th century BCE (Fig. 10).⁸⁶ It appears in the upper register facing another multi-winged hybrid, perhaps also with six wings. In the lower register are a number of quadrupeds (cattle and deer), one mounting another, and their young. The winged figures thus again protect the fertility of the cattle in the steppeland. Separating the registers is a line of guilloche perhaps distinguishing the sublime and mundane worlds.⁸⁷ To the right, stand a man and woman or perhaps a god and goddess, though neither wears a horned headdress. The male figure holds a bow in his right hand, itself a fertility symbol. The female figure's skirt falls open to reveal her nudity. She holds up her right arm in a pointing gesture towards the animals. Unfortunately, again nothing more is known about the hybrid.

Another six-winged hybrid appears on a black basalt orthostat discovered at Tell Halaf in Syria that dates to the 10th-9th centuries BCE. It features a female figure holding a rod in each hand (Fig. 11).⁸⁸ The figure's identity and significance are unknown, though her horned headdress identifies her as a goddess. The stone is hewn in the local style, though the discovery there of elaboratively

83. Discussed by Kákosky 1982, cols. 145-148 (146). See the *Pyramid Texts*, Spells 507a, 511a, 865a.

84. Found in Weber 1920, no. 299, and discussed by Morenz – Schorch 1997, 382-383.

85. van Buren 1937-1939, 1-28, connects it also with the goddess Išhara. For the connection to chaos, note its appearance on the famous Tel Asmar seal (As. 32.992) in which a male figure holds off a scorpion on one side and the multiheaded dragon of chaos on the other (see van Buren, Fig. 20).

86. Found in Keel 1980, 101, and discussed by Morenz – Schorch 1997, 383-384.

87. The guilloche pattern is typically Syrian and separates visual spaces on other cylinder seals that contain images of female nudity, wild animals, and griffins or sphinxes. See Collon 1990, 47-49.

88. Wildberger 1972, 247, suggests it as a parallel to the seraphim. For the image, see Moortgat 1955, Taf. 95, no. A 3/166; Orthmann 1971, 316, Taf. 10e. The orthostat sits in the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore.

carved imported Phoenician ivories suggests that the site might represent Syrian influence (Orthmann 2002, 93-97). Since it was placed alongside other orthostats depicting fantastical creatures it might have had an apotropaic function.

In the Hebrew Bible, the only entity said to possess six wings is the הַרְפָּאִים , “seraph”, a mythological flying serpent with destructive power associated with the desert (Deut 8:15), whose bronze image Moses fashioned atop a pole in order to heal those bitten by them (Num 21:6).⁸⁹ Neither Numbers nor Deuteronomy mentions their wings, but Isaiah explicitly refers to them as capable of flying (Isa 14:29, 30:6).⁹⁰ In his vision, they have six wings and possess hands that enable them to use tongs and cleanse the prophet’s sins by touching his lips with a hot coal (Isa 6:2-7).⁹¹ They are capable of human speech and use it to praise Yahweh and communicate with the prophet. Two of the wings covered their faces, two their feet, and two enabled flight.⁹² Isaiah does not state how many seraphim he saw,⁹³ but a tradition recorded much later in *3 Enoch* states that there were four, one for each of the four winds.⁹⁴

Some scholars have connected the seraph to the Egyptian winged guardian known as *srj* / *sfr*, “griffin”.⁹⁵ However, since the Hebrew root הַרְפָּאִים means “burn, incinerate”, others associate it with

89. 2 Kgs 18:4 states that Moses’ bronze serpent received offerings in the temple before Hezekiah destroyed it. Münnich 2008, argues that the seraph in 2 Kings is a wingless bronze serpent. However, an 8th century BCE bronze bowl featuring a winged seraph on a pole with a solar disk on its head was discovered at Nineveh. Alongside the seraph are a winged scarab beetle and cherub. The bowl likely was taken from Israel as booty by Tiglath-Pileser III or possibly Sennacherib during a campaign. See already Layard 1853, plate 68; Barnett 1967, 3*, and Fig. 2.
90. Efforts to distinguish the various kinds of seraphim largely have been abandoned. See Mettinger 1999b. However, Wyatt 2009, 32, maintains a distinction between the natural and supernatural (flying) types.
91. Wyatt 2009, 32, holds that the creatures in Isaiah’s vision are not serpents, but a variation on the griffin or cherubim, noting that the Septuagint uses the term $\gamma\rho\upsilon\psi$ for both the cherub and seraph. He adds that the creatures’ hands and feet stretch the definition of a snake. I concur on the latter point, but I note that human speech and wings already make the snake extraordinary, and that the presence of serpents with wings and feet in Egyptian iconography suggests Egyptian inspiration behind the biblical image.
92. Niditch 1997, 44; Blenkinsopp 2000, 223; and Wyatt 2009, 32, 36, fn. 52, view the creatures as covering Yahweh’s face and genitals. Keel – Uehlinger 1998, 274, see them as protecting themselves from the rays of holiness. Cf. Moses in Exod 33:20, and Elijah in 1 Kgs 19:13. Rashi, citing Tanhuma, אמור ה , identifies their feet as calves’ hooves, which they covered so as not to recall the sin of the golden calf. I understand the seraphim as covering their own faces and genitals, the former, so as not to see God and die, and the latter, so as not to shame themselves in the sanctuary.
93. In Isa 6:3, they call to one another, and since הַרְפָּאִים is a plural form, and not a dual, there must be at least three.
94. *3 Enoch* 26:8-9 reads: “How many are the seraphim? Four, corresponding to the four winds of the world. And how many wings have they each one of them? Six, corresponding to the six days of creation. And how many faces have they? Each one of them four faces. The measure of the seraphim and the height of each one of them correspond to the height of the seven heavens. The size of each wing is like the measure of all firmament. The size of each face is like that of the face of the East”. On the date of the text, see Alexander 1983, 225-229.
95. Thus, Wyatt 2009. Fischer 1987, 16-17, views the griffin as an import from the ancient Near East. See already Amiet 1957, 126; Morenz – Schorch 1997. Morenz and Schorch see the biblical seraphim not as winged serpents, but winged four-legged hybrids, as in Spell 1006 of the *Coffin Texts*. Cf. Moluchthas, the winged serpent associated with the wind in the Coptic *Paraphrase of Shem* NHL VII 34, 9-15. Unfortunately, the passage is very obscure. I thank Michael Williams for bringing the Coptic text to my attention.

the dangerous *šft*-snake or the winged *ʾrmt*, “uraeus” that spits fire in Egyptian texts and reliefs.⁹⁶ Nevertheless, artistic portrayals of winged serpents in Egypt have only two wings,⁹⁷ and those found on seals in Israel have either two or four. Neither has six.⁹⁸ The seals had apotropaic and protective functions and generally are understood to reflect Egyptian inspiration.⁹⁹ Indeed, a lack of winged snakes in Mesopotamia and the connection of the biblical seraphim to narratives and prophecies involving Egypt, suggests the same.¹⁰⁰

A figure of later date known to possess six wings is Kronos (= El), as found on the reverse of a number of coins from Byblos from the Seleucid Period (*i.e.*, r. Antiochus IV, V, Alexander I, Tryphon, and Antiochus VII). He appears nude and holding an Egyptian-type *wšs*-scepter (Fig. 12).¹⁰¹ The former communicates his sexual potency and the latter his dominion. The numismatic evidence suggests the inspiration of Egyptian pantheism as mediated through Hellenism.¹⁰² Indeed, there is no evidence that El has wings in the texts or artistic remains from Ugarit.¹⁰³ Only the goddess ‘Anat is said to fly, and apparently, she has two wings.¹⁰⁴ Some have identified El as the

96. On *šft* in the London Medical Papyrus, see Ward 1969, 142, fn. 2. On various other proposals, see Mettinger 1995b.
97. Cooper 1873, 12, offers a drawing of a four-winged serpent, which he names “Chanouphis or Bait”, and relates to the “four corners of the earth”. His source is Seti I’s sarcophagus in the Sir John Soane Museum in London. However, the earliest publications of that text show the serpent with just two wings. Hence, Sharpe 1908, 110. Budge identifies it as *smj*, “Semi”, the divine boat’s guide who heralds the dawn. I visited the Soane Museum in July 2015 and obtained access to the sarcophagus. Unfortunately, the lighting was poor and no flashlights were permitted. Nevertheless, it appeared to me that the creature has just two wings. This means that Cooper’s error has been perpetuated in scholarship, e.g., Joines 1967, 412. To my knowledge, there are only two-winged serpents in Egypt. There does appear a four-winged serpent as a hieroglyphic sign in an inscription on the walls of the temple of Esna. However, it is a scribal invention of the Graeco-Roman period. See Hallof 2011, 10, Fig. 12, online. On the invention of numerous signs during this period, see Kurth 2007, 31-100.
98. Ward 1969, 138, argues that the Israelites transformed the Egyptian two-winged uraeus into the four-winged variety. Keel – Uehlinger 1998, 273, conclude: “The six wings in Isaiah 6 signify an increase in potency even by comparison with the four wings that the *urawi* have on the Judean name seals”. Nevertheless, by this period the tradition of the four winds as having four wings already was long-lived.
99. Keel – Uehlinger 1998, 197, treat the winged serpent and winged scarab beetle as interchangeable. In Egyptian, the winged solar disk *ḥy*, “the Flyer” also can be written with a two-winged scarab, and the two were interchangeable. See Shonkwiler 2014, 122, 145-148.
100. In agreement with Keel 1977, 70-124, who offers a number of Egyptian parallels.
101. See Hoover 2009, 136, 150, 182, 210, 218, nos. 662-663, 757, 911, 1062, 1089, SC 1443-1444, 1578, 1822, 2044, 2099.
102. The numismatic evidence recalls an account attributed to the Phoenician priest Sanchuniathon, cited in Philo of Byblos’ *Phoenician History* (Jacoby 1958, 802-804, no. 790), and thus also in Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica* I 10.36-37, that describes the design of a royal insignia for Kronos/El that had four eyes (two open in front and two closed behind) and four wings. According to him, the eyes signified that Kronos could sleep while awake, and see while sleeping. Similarly, the four wings conveyed the notion that he could fly while at rest and rest while flying. The gods with two wings merely accompanied Kronos in flight. The two wings placed on Kronos’ head symbolized his all-ruling mind and sensation. See also Baumgarten 1981, 63-93. Keel – Uehlinger 1998, 197, fn. 14, note this reference and describe the insignia’s four wings as representing the god’s leadership. I understand the eyes and wings as emblematic of his omniscience and omnipresence, *i.e.*, his “everywhere-ability”, again representing a totality of power.
103. For a useful comparison of various traditions concerning El/Kronos, see Oldenburg 1969, 8, 11, 113, 128-129, 148.
104. In CAT 1.108 8-9, ‘Anat is called a *diy*, “falcon”, which suggests she has two wings. In 1.10 ii 10-23, she lifts her wings and flies to locate Ba’al, and when she finds him he anoints her horns, apparently in mid-flight (whether Ba’al also is in flight is not said). See Fensham 1966, 157-164. Efforts to identify ‘Anat in

four-winged figures on bronze horse trappings found in an 8th century BCE tomb at Salamis, Cyprus.¹⁰⁵ Those figures are bearded and stand amidst stylized flora and below a winged solar disk. However, they are unnamed and could represent local adaptations of *apkallû*.¹⁰⁶

The only other figures known to me that possess six wings are the living creatures in John's vision on Patmos.

And the first living-creature (ζῷον) was like a lion, and the second living-creature like a calf, and the third living-creature had a face as a man, and the fourth living-creature was like a flying eagle. And the four living-creatures had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come" (Rev 4:7-8).

As is well-known, the passage combines the traditions of the seraphim from Isaiah 6 and the cherubim from Ezekiel 1. It thus represents the sort of conflation of beings that was taking place in early Judaism during this period between cherubim, seraphim, and angels.¹⁰⁷

4. The number of wings

The various hybrid creatures examined herein mostly possess two or four wings, and more rarely six. The differences in number can hardly be accidental or irrelevant, and yet, surprisingly little discussion has focused on this matter.¹⁰⁸ I submit that the number of wings these creatures possess conveys meaningful information concerning their cosmological abilities and purposes. Of course, though all possess wings, the great majority of these creatures are never described in flight, because they appear in artistic remains, or in the case of the cherubim on the ark and in the temple, descriptions of artistic remains. Nevertheless, it is clear from ritual and other texts that the images on sculptures, reliefs, seals, and other objects either constitute divine hypostases, render divine aspects or powers in glyphic form, and/or represent real creatures that the ancients believed to

the iconographic record have been unsuccessful. Some have opined that she is the two-winged figure on a cylinder seal (RS 5.089 = Louvre AO 17.242). Others identify her as the two-winged female figure with bull horns suckling young males on an ivory bed panel (RS 16.056+28.031). For a photograph, see Gachet-Bizollon 2007, 434, plate 84, 2/H. However, both identifications are disputed. See Cornelius 2008, 39, 108, for the various proposals and bibliography.

105. See Karageorghis 1975, 122, Fig. 224.

106. Keel – Uehlinger 1998, 195-198, have identified similar, though unbearded, figures in ivory from Hazor and on seals from Israel and Phoenicia, as Ba'al or as an allomorph of the four-winged scarab or human with a falcon head. Nevertheless, these figures too hold boughs of stylized trees, and thus, they too could be *apkallû*.

107. See Mach 1992; Olyan 1993.

108. Ohler 1970, 161, argues that the addition of wings magnifies the being's powers. This view has been adopted by Keel 1977, 195, who states that the doubling of wings from two to four "heightens the celestial aspect by emphasizing the omnipresence of this god". With regard to winged serpents, they note: "The increase in the number of wings from two to four would supposedly increase their protective powers" (273). Alonso-Schökel 1960, 158, suggests that the three sets of wings on the seraphim accord with other sets of three in the vision, including the threefold repetition "Holy, holy, holy" (Isa 6:3). Cited in Keel 1977, 112-113, fn. 220.

exist.¹⁰⁹ Regardless of how one might “read” the various *Mischwesen*, when one classifies them according to the number of wings they possess, fascinating patterns emerge that suggest similarities in purpose and cosmic import.

It is noteworthy that, in the Hebrew Bible, only the cherubim adorning the ark of the covenant and Solomon’s temple are explicitly said to have two wings.¹¹⁰ All other texts that describe living cherubim or the “wings of the wind” do not specify the number. Nevertheless, even if we envision the ambiguous cases as connoting two wings, it is significant that texts consistently describe them as moving in a single direction. The ark never moves side to side, but only forward. In fact, it was designed to do so. Even when the Philistines place the stolen ark on a new cart and allow cows to take it away unguided, the narrator informs us that it went *וַיִּשְׁרָנָה*, “straight ahead” and that *וְלֹא־סָרוּ יָמִין וְשִׁמְאֹל*, “it did not turn to the right or the left” (1 Sam 6:12). Thus, whether carried by priests or transported on a cart, it always moves forward in a single direction from one place to another. When Yahweh rides the cherubim, no mention is made of motion left or right, upwards or downwards. In Ps 18:11, Yahweh simply *וַיִּרְכַּב*, “rides” the creature. In fact, Yahweh never steers his cherubim to the earthly plane, but instead “sends from on high” one of his host to save the sufferer (Ps 18:17). In Psalm 104, Yahweh remains in his “upper chambers” when sending the rain (104:3, 104:13), and *וַיִּהְיֶה לְהַיָּדָה*, “moves (forward)” upon the wings of the wind.¹¹¹ It is as if the cherubim in these passages are envisioned as soaring swiftly from one “wing” (*i.e.*, cardinal direction) to another and never descending to earth. In such cases, their linear movement signifies quickness and a singularity of aim and purpose.¹¹²

Interestingly, the only other two-winged beings described in flight also move swiftly with a singular aim.¹¹³ The first is the goddess ‘Anat, who flies on a mission to find her brother Ba‘al (CAT 1.10 ii 10-23). Her identification as a *dij* “falcon” marks her flight as swift (CAT 1.108 8-9). The

109. Thus, the Egyptian sphinx is called a *šꜥp nḥ*, “living image”. See Choche-Zivie 1984. The only exception discussed herein is the four-winged leopard in Daniel 7, which is merely a dream image that requires interpretation.

110. The second creature in Daniel’s vision is said to be like a lion and *וַיִּנְשַׁף כְּעֵיט*, “it has wings like an eagle”. The comparison to an eagle suggests it has two wings, especially since the text explicitly describes the next beast as having four wings, but the use of the plural instead of the dual leaves the matter ambiguous. Indeed, in this same chapter we find other duals, e.g., “two teeth”, “two feet” (Dan 7:7). However, the dual also appears for the plural in the phrase *וַיִּקְרַנְיָן עֲשָׂר*, “ten horns” (Dan 7:7). Nevertheless, though the creature is said to move vertically (*i.e.*, *וַיִּנְטִילֵת מִן־אֶרֶץ*, “it was lifted from the earth”), the text clarifies that the wings did not enable the flight, because they had been *מִקְרִיטוֹ*, “torn off” (Dan 7:4). In any event, the creatures appear in a dream, so one must grant some creative license.

111. The verb *וַיִּרְכַּב*, “ride” implies swiftness and a singularity of purpose, since horses were bred for speed and used for specific purposes. Cf. Isa 19:1: “Behold, Yahweh rides upon a swift (קל) cloud”. The piel form of the verb *וַיִּלָּךְ* suggests the same. It is used, *inter alia*, for ships on the sea (Ps 104:26), valley springs (Ps 104:10), arrows and spears (Hab 3:11), foxes (Lam 5:18), sudden poverty (Prov 6:11), righteousness (Ps 85:14, Prov 8:20), and walking on Yahweh’s path (Ps 81:14).

112. Their singular direction is just the opposite of that conveyed by images of two-headed sphinxes in double-ended formations joined at the back and facing in opposite directions. Similar double-ended images of serpents with each head facing opposite directions also exist. Both communicate celestial movements in two directions. See Kaper 2003, 69-70, who cites Wilson 1997, 705.

113. Though not described in flight, the god Tutu can take the form of a sphinx with outstretched wings. The gesture hieroglyphically communicates the word *ḥꜥḥ*, “swift”, and thus, it evokes Tutu’s epithet *ḥꜥḥ nmtt*, “swift of pace”. Moreover, one can write the name Tutu with the sphinx hieroglyph. See Kaper 2003, 41, 81-82, 299.

second is the Egyptian solar disk. It too moves at great speeds, because the inspiration for its wings was the Peregrine falcon, a raptor that can fly up to sixty-two miles per hour laterally, and ninety miles per hour in a stoop (Shonkwiler 2014, 8). If it is not soaring from the horizon to give light, it is diving to attack. Thus, a hymn describes Amun-Re in his solar form as: *bik ntrj pd dnḥwy ḥ3ḥ it ph sw m km n 3t*, “Divine falcon with spread wings, who stoops and seizes the one who attacks him in an instant”.¹¹⁴ The speed of Horus the Behdetite is apparent also in the “circuit of the wall” coronation ritual, when the king embodies his movement to unite all of Egypt (Wilkinson 1985, 46-51).

ntr nfr phrr nmtt ḥf mks ḥr sn gšt ḥns w3d-wr idfw nnt nmt r-r' stwt itn tḥm ḥ hr ḥnk sḥt n nbt=s
The perfect god, swift of strides, who holds the document holder, is running quickly, traversing the ocean, the four sides of the sky, moving through as far as the rays of the sun disk, treading the earth, offering the field to its lady.¹¹⁵

Thus, when two-winged beings appear in flight, they share in common great speed, unidirectional movement, and a singular purpose.

Nevertheless, given that the cherubim possess four wings in Ezekiel’s vision, and that elsewhere the wings of the wind refer to the four cardinal directions,¹¹⁶ one cannot assume that when unspecified, only two wings were envisioned.¹¹⁷ Indeed, restricting the cherubim to two wings on the ark might have been a constraint brought about by artistic or manufacturing concerns.¹¹⁸ Compare Ezekiel’s reference to the cherubim as having two, rather than four faces, when describing a wooden relief outside the entrance to the inner sanctuary (Ezek 41:18-19). As espied by Daniel Block, carving a creature with four faces in two dimensions is naturally impossible, so the partial profile served metonymically for all the faces.¹¹⁹ A similar situation obtains in Mesopotamian iconographic portraits of the *apkallū*. Though sometimes carved with all four wings, two facing

114. Zandee 1948, plate III, line 3. Also cited in Shonkwiler 2014, 9.

115. Chassinat 1928, 116-117, line 18. Translation adopted with slight alteration from Shonkwiler 2014, 498.

116. When used in the expression “wings of the earth”, the term “wings” appears as a feminine plural, *i.e.*, תנפוח, probably on analogy with תורה, “winds”.

117. The number of wings is ambiguous in Mal 3:20, Ps 18:11, 104:3, 139:9. When the number is specified, the dual form can be used distributively. Thus, שש פנינים, in Isa 6:2 means “six wings” total, not “six pair of wings”, *i.e.*, “twelve wings”. Note too that the plural form is used of Ezekiel’s four-winged cherub in Ezek 1:11. See similarly Wiggermann 1992, 13-15, who discusses a ritual text that calls for the fashioning of seven *apkallū* figurines with the head and wings of a bird. Though the texts do not specify the number of wings, the known apotropaic figurines of raptor-headed *apkallū* have four wings.

118. See similarly the winged hybrid creatures on the sides of various thrones (e.g., Tutankhamun, sarcophagus of Ahiḥam, Megiddo ivory, etc.). These creatures are consistently at rest, and so rendering all four wings might have been difficult or might not have been an option. First 2011, 57, similarly considers constraints of representation determined by the material of manufacture.

119. Block 1998, 558. Compare Essarhaddon’s description of the temple of Aššur that he rebuilt: *ḏlahmē ḏkuribi ša šariri ruššū idi ana idi ulziḏ É papāḥ aššur EN-ia ALAM.MEŠ KÙ.GI binūt ZU.AB ZAG u GÜB ulziḏ É.GAR8.MEŠ KÙ.GI kīma siri asir... šalam aššur-DÜ.A DUMU ridutiya abtani šerusšu 2 kusarikki šutātūte ša panišunu panu u arka inattalū*, “*lahmē*-monsters and cherubs of red *šariri*-gold, I set up, side by side... I set up golden statues of the creatures from the Apsû on the ri[ght] and left of the chapel of Assur, my lord, I covered the walls with gold like it was plaster... I cast from shining bronze two bison positioned opposite each other, their faces looking forward and backward”, in Leichty 2011, 136, obv. ll. 24-25, rec. ll. 29-30. See also the 8th century BCE Urartian bronze depiction of multiple winged beasts with heads of various types, in Westenholz 2004a, 98-99.

upward and two, downward (Fig. 13), artists also limned them in profile with one wing raised (metonymically representing both upper wings) and another pointing downward (representing both lower wings), an avian posture that otherwise would be impossible with two wings (Figs. 6-7).¹²⁰

The connection between the four winds/directions and four-wingedness also bears on the movement of the cherubim in Ezekiel's vision, which is also linear: "And they went every one straight forward; wherever the spirit was to go, they went; they turned not when they went" (Ezek 1:12).¹²¹ Indeed, we later hear that אִישׁ אֶל-עֶבֶר פָּנָיו יֵלְכוּ, "each one went straight ahead" (Ezek 10:22). Nevertheless, unlike their two-winged counterparts, their "four-ness" allows them to move in each of the cardinal directions: "As they moved, they would go in any of the four directions" (Ezek 1:17).¹²² They also move vertically: "when the creatures rose from the ground, the wheels rose along with them, because the spirit/wind of the living creatures was in the wheels" (Ezek 1:21). The creatures apparently transport the prophet in flight to the captives on the Chebar River (Ezek 3:12-15). Later, we also hear that וַיָּרֹמוּ הַכְּרֻבִּים, "the cherubim arose" (Ezek 10:15). Thus, their straightforward movement is both vertical and lateral in all the cardinal directions, but never unrestricted. This is because, as draft animals, we must envision them controlled by reins.¹²³ In this regard, it is noteworthy that while the singular direction of two-winged beings implies a singularity of aim and purpose, the movements of the four-winged cherubim in Ezekiel's vision demonstrate Yahweh's ability to control their motions in all directions. Thus, their movements represent a display of the totality and reach of divine power.¹²⁴

120. Thus, I concur with Gane 2012, 44, that there are only four-winged *apkallû*. I add that birds do have an ability to lift one wing and not the other, but only when preening, mantling (*i.e.*, stretching), or performing distraction displays, none of which is relevant to the ritual context in which we find the *apkallû*. In addition, when lifting one wing, birds typically leave the other tucked, and not fully extended downward in the opposite direction. Moreover, the reliefs of *apkallû* with four wings show their upper and lower wings in positions identical to those in profile with two. I thank Marc Devokaitis of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology for the information on bird behavior and physiology. See also the four-winged human-*apkallû* figure on a basalt orthostat from Tell Halaf in the Vorderasiatische Museum. The artist carved only three of its four wings (one above, and two below), because carving the fourth would have interfered visually with the figure's right hand holding a long staff. See Cholis – Martin 2011, 230, upper photograph, slab on ground.

121. Is their straight forward movement connected to their coming from the North in a Mesopotamian setting? In Sumerian and Akkadian, the Northwind is named ^{imsi}SI.SÁ = *ešēru*, "straight".

122. Compare the four-faced bronze figure probably from Ischali in the Oriental Museum in Chicago (OIM A7119) dating to the 18th-17th centuries BCE, which likely represents the four winds. For other depictions of creatures with multiple faces, see Keel 1977, 217-229.

123. It is noteworthy that images of winged cherubim, sphinxes, and the like appear on a variety of horse trappings. Perhaps they were added to harness the power of the winds. See, e.g., the ivory horse blinker from Nimrud (8th-7th centuries BCE) in Herrmann – Laidlaw 2009, plate Q, 257; and the winged horses on iron shoulder rondels, blinkers, and girths on the chariot horses in Layard 1849, plate 27. See also the horse trappings discussed above, found in Karageorghis 1975, 122, Fig. 224. Cf. the *Dream Stele of Thutmosis IV* (ll. 4-5): *ssmwt=f b3h =.y r β*, "his horses were swifter than the wind" (in Helek 1956, 1541); and P. Anastasi I 18,5: *nḥbt=tw n=k smt 3rš mi=s 3by dš(r) idnwt=f iw=f mi 'dw n βw ḥft pry=f*, "There are harnessed for you horses, fast as a leopard, with red ears, that gallop forth like a storm-wind" (in Gardiner 1911, plate 30).

124. The four-winged leopard with four heads in Daniel 7 does not appear in motion. Nevertheless, it is not to be understood as a real living creature, but as a dream image that requires interpretation. Yet, even as a dream, the creature demonstrates Yahweh's power, because Yahweh sends the dream, and because its interpretation results in all world powers serving him (Dan 7:27).

Nevertheless, regardless of whether the cherubim have two or four wings, their flight always occurs physically below Yahweh. Thus the Psalmist states that Yahweh *וַיִּט שָׁמַיִם וַיִּרְד*, “bent the heavens and descended” in order to mount his cherub, adding *וַעֲרַפֵּל תַּחַת רַגְלָיו*, “A dark-cloud was beneath his feet” (Ps 18:10-11). Ezekiel also watches the cherubim in flight with the glory of God *מִלְּמַעְלָה*, “above” them (Ezek 10:19).

There is an additional aspect of the cherubim’s movement that is worthy of consideration. The cherubim that adorn the ark were eventually placed in Solomon’s temple, which also contained large wooden cherubim overlaid with gold, and cherubim on its doors, walls, curtains, and temple furniture (Exod 26:1, 1 Kgs 6:23-35, 2 Chron 3:14). Though the ark apparently remained in place after it was moved to the temple, it had long been mobile, which made it at least inherently possible for the cherubim to move in and out of the inner sanctum. The Psalmist too pleads with Yahweh to mount his living cherub and to leave his temple to deliver him (Ps 18:7-10). The cherubim in Ezekiel’s vision similarly enter and leave the temple.¹²⁵ Much like the Egyptian winds, they emerge through a portal in the sky after *נִפְתְּחוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם*, “the heavens were opened” (Ezek 1:1). Though no texts describe the *apkallû* in flight, their wings suggest that they were inherently mobile. Indeed, even as apotropaia, they were created in one location and ritually deposited in another.¹²⁶ Similar too are the two and four-winged griffins, serpents, and scarabs found on Israelite and Phoenician seals that served as portable apotropaia. It is precisely their portability that made them powerful, because they could protect one while on the move. It is this shared context of mobility that I aver informs the gilded cherubim that rested above the ark and featured prominently in the temple’s decor. They were not mere ornamentation, but cosmically apotropaic.¹²⁷ They both ritually protected Yahweh (1 Sam 4:4, Ps 80:2) while on the move and guarded the sacred space for receiving his oracles (Exod 25:22, Lev 16:2, Num 7:89).¹²⁸ Their ability to move in and out of sacred space characterizes them as *Grenzgänger*, “border crossers”.¹²⁹

The movements of the seraphim stand in stark contrast to those of the cherubim. They fly to the highest cosmic zenith and hover *מִמַּעַל*, “above” God’s throne (Isa 6:2), a position that cannot

125. Ezekiel’s metaphoric description of Tyre as a carefully crafted cherub that is cast from the sacred mountain and destroyed (Ezek 28:11-19) also shows that they were mobile and that such images possessed a protective and/or apotropaic function. See Wood 2008, 61-63, 75-84.

126. Ritual experts created *ūmu-apkallû* figurines out of *e’ru*-wood, painted them with various colors, and buried them beneath the heads of beds to ward off evil and procure life. They made raptor-*apkallû* figurines from clay (sometimes mixed with wax) and deposited them at the entrance or along the wall at the heads of beds. Both types were installed in private quarters. On reliefs the two types often hold a *banduddû*-bucket in one hand (usually the left) and a *mulillu* (lit. “cleaner”) purification cone in the other. The latter object is either the male inflorescence of the date palm or a cone of a coniferous tree. See Wiggermann 1992, 46, 54, 65-67, 75.

127. On the performative and chthonic aspects of the ark and its cherubim, and the influence of Egyptian ideas, see Noegel 2015, 223-242.

128. Eichler 2014, 358-371, argues that we should translate *יֹשֵׁב הַכְרֻבִּים*, as “he who dwells among the cherubim”, *i.e.*, in Eden. However, as he also notes, the Septuagint and Peshitta understood it as “the one seated upon the cherubim” (359). Wood 2008, 85-88, 203-204, contends that cherub-thrones do not exist in the material record after the Bronze Age, and thus, they have been imposed upon the biblical record. She also sees no justification for understanding the cherub in Ps 18:11 as collective (in agreement with the various textual witnesses that render it as a plural).

129. The term was coined by Ahn 1997, 1-48.

be their ordinary habitat, since otherwise they would occupy a permanent place higher than God.¹³⁰ They also move freely in all directions. They ascend and descend, fly to and from the throne, and access the altar (Isa 6:1-6). Moreover, since the seraphim have the bodies of serpents, they naturally have chthonic associations. Indeed, like all serpents, they are capable of moving vertically to the lowest cosmic point – the underworld. Further underscoring the seraph’s chthonic connections is its identification with the desert, itself a location associated with liminality and death (Num 21:8, Deut 8:15, Isa 30:6).¹³¹ Though the seraphim move more freely than the cherubim, their ties to the temple and desert reveal that their movements are restricted to liminal space. In fact, the seraphim test these limits when their voices quake the *הַמְּסָדִים*, “foundations of the (temple’s) threshold” (Isa 6:4) and threaten to breach the boundary between the sacred and profane. Moreover, the seraphim usher in *אֲשָׁפָר*, “smoke” (Isa 6:4), and they cleanse the prophet’s sins (Isa 6:7), powers usually ascribed to Yahweh (Gen 15:17, Exod 19:18, Isa 1:18, Ps 104:32).¹³² Thus, Isaiah grants the seraphim a numinosity not shared by the cherubim.¹³³ Indeed, Yahweh himself identifies with them when he asks the prophet: “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us (*לִנְנוּ*)?” (cf. Gen 1:26), a query that implies the seraphim’s inability to leave on his behalf.¹³⁴ Thus, unlike the cherubim, whose atmospheric powers Yahweh yokes and harnesses, the seraphim function as extensions of the divine spirit, and therefore, they remain outside the world of domestication.

A final observation concerns the powers that the ancients attributed to the four winds. While each of the cardinal winds accounts for certain seasonal or other atmospheric phenomena, when united, they possess a special cosmic import.¹³⁵ In Mesopotamia, the four winds are the “sons of one mother” and messengers of the skygod Anu. They also are linked to major gods: Ninlil (or

130. Keel – Uehlinger 1998, 273, also note their placement above God, but credit the lack of theological compromise to the notion that the seraphim are non-human in form. Supported by Morenz – Schorch 1997. I would think that an animalian form would be all the more apostate, if not endowed with special privilege. Blenkinsopp 2000, 225, opines: “We are perhaps meant to imagine the seraphim hovering in place around but not above the Enthroned One...”.

131. The seraphim thus are able to move to the heaven above the sky (hence the dual form *שָׁמַיִם*, “heavens”) and to the underworld below the subterranean waters. On the Israelite’s five-part cosmology, see Noegel 2017. On the desert as a chthonic location, see Wyatt 2005, 38-54. Winged serpents with limbs also appear in chthonic contexts in Egypt. See, e.g., the winged serpent whom Re-Atum grasps in the eleventh hour of the Amduat in the *krnt ššt njt dšt*, “secret cavern of the netherworld”. Depicted in the tomb of Thutmosis III, KV 34 (Theban Mapping Project #10653). See also the two-headed snake with four legs in the tenth hour (TMP #18219).

132. Observed also by Keel 1977, 121-123.

133. Keel 1977, 124, also notes the creatures’ heightened numinosity.

134. For the seraphim among Yahweh’s host, see Wood 2008, 14-18.

135. The Northwind is generally cool, dry, and favorable throughout the Near East, though it sometimes brings dangerous sandstorms to Mesopotamia. The Southwind in Mesopotamia can be calm and favorable, but often it is hot and humid and comes with violent storms. It can be connected with the *alû*-demon (see CAD A/1 376, *s.v. alû* A). In Egypt, the Southwind was understood to benefit the Nile harvest, strengthen a woman’s pregnancy, and as Re’s weapon for killing the serpent of chaos, Apep. The Eastwind in Mesopotamia occurs most often in the winter months and sometimes brings rainfall, but when it occurs in the summer it is a hot wind. The Eastwind in Egypt is said to open the portals of the sky, raise the sun and moon, and make plant life flourish. The Westwind in Mesopotamian can be strong, hot, and bring sandstorms. In Egypt, it is considered the oldest of the four winds. It receives the *ba*-spirits of the gods when they go to the netherworld and it allows vegetation to grow. See Neumann 1977; Kurth 1986.

Adad or Ninurta)¹³⁶ with the Northwind, Ea with the Southwind, Anu with the Westwind, and Enlil with the Eastwind.¹³⁷ They embody the healing powers of the stars,¹³⁸ and one can invoke them ritually for protection while traveling long distances.¹³⁹ Marduk raises the four winds in order to clear a temple's foundation of sand.¹⁴⁰ In *Enūma eliš*, he employs them as weapons to slay Tiamat, whose body he uses to construct the universe (IV:42, 47, 95-101).

In Egypt, the four winds unite to create the universe by dividing the earth from the heaven. In the *Book of the Dead*, they also are connected to major gods: Osiris with the Northwind, Re with the Southwind, Isis with the Westwind, and Nephthys with the Eastwind.¹⁴¹ The four winds' inherent creative power allows priests to invoke them when resuscitating the deceased in the afterlife.¹⁴² Thus, in both the Mesopotamian and Egyptian contexts, the four winds combined constitute a healing, protective, and enlivening force – a divine primordial power for creation and order.

Turning to the Hebrew Bible, one finds winged winds in contexts that suggest similar associations. I already have cited the healing wings in Mal 3:20. Yet, note also how the Psalmist immediately follows the mention of Yahweh's windy ride with a detailed description of his creation and the fertility with which he sustains all life. We hear how Yahweh established the earth on its foundations and divided the cosmic waters, setting their boundaries forever (Ps 104:5-9); how he provided springs and plants to feed the fauna and rains to water the flora (Ps 104:10-18); and how he appointed the moon and sun, and Leviathan, and made the earth tremble and mountains smoke (Ps 104:19-35).¹⁴³ In Psalm 18, the sufferer invokes Yahweh and his winged winds to deliver him from Death and She'ol. Again, the event is cosmic: the earth's foundations tremble and quake, Yahweh breathes smoke and fire, and summons hail with burning coals. He sends forth his lightning and rescues the devout from מַיִם רַבִּים, “mighty waters”, a phrase rich with cosmic overtones (Ps 18:5-17).¹⁴⁴ In Ezekiel's vision, the vocabulary of creation and the cosmos is everywhere present. The cherubim arrive in a great fiery cloud, and they flash like lightning (Ezek 1:4, 1:13-14). The prophet sees the celestial רִקִּיעַ, “firmament” and compares the sound of the cherubim's wings, again, to מַיִם רַבִּים, “mighty waters” (Ezek 1:22-26). The appearance of the man standing above the firmament also is likened to a rainbow (Ezek 1:28), the symbol of Yahweh's

136. Ninurta's connection to the four winds explains his appearance with four wings on a 9th century BCE relief from Nimrud in which he hurls thunderbolts at the monster Anzu (BM 124571). Anzu's two wings mark him as less equipped to escape Ninurta.

137. Nougatol 1966, 72-74; Wiggermann 2007, 133.

138. In the form of Pazuzu, they drive away evil. See Oppenheim 1959, 283:40, for an incantation that invokes MUL ^dIM.GIŠGAL ^dIM.SI.SÁ ^dIM.KUR ^dIM.MAR, “the stars of Northwind, Southwind, Eastwind, and Westwind”. MUL.APIN II i 68-71, identifies each of the winds with constellations: Northwind (Ursa Major), Southwind (Piscis Austrinus), Westwind (Scorpio), and Eastwind (Perseus and the Pleiades). Observed by Wiggermann 2007, 131.

139. Wiggermann 2007, 132.

140. See Langdon 1912, 96, col. 1, lines 20-22: *šārē irbitti ušatbamma epirē qirbišu issuḫma immamra ušurāti*, “He (Marduk) made the four winds rise and removed the sand from its midst making visible the layout”.

141. See Faulkner 1985, 156.

142. Smith 2002, 62, concludes that “the four winds of the sky merged into a single high wind which brought the universe into existence by separating the sky from the earth and forming or fertilising an egg from which the sun (= Pshai) emerged”.

143. On the Phoenician/Egyptianizing themes in Psalm 104, see Uehlinger 1990, 499-526; Dion 1991, 43-71.

144. See May 1955, 9-21. Such prooftexts constitute additional arguments for seeing the cherubim in the Psalms as having four wings rather than two.

covenant following the deluge. Moreover, notions of resuscitation appear when Yahweh promises that he will instill in all those who keep his statutes a new רִיחַ, “spirit/wind” and “heart of flesh” just before the cherubim lift up their wings and a רִיחַ, “spirit/wind” lofts the prophet to Chaldea (Ezek 11:19-24). Moreover, in Ezekiel’s prophecy, Yahweh summons the four winds to resuscitate the dead (Ezek 37:9-10). Isaiah also describes the cosmic attributes of the four winds when describing how the branch of Jesse will restore Israel:

The wind (רִיחַ) of Yahweh will rest upon him,
The wind of wisdom and of understanding,
The wind of counsel and might,
The wind of the knowledge and fear of Yahweh (Isa 11:2).

Like several of the figures discussed above, Yahweh will use wind as a weapon: “He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the wind of his mouth he will slay the wicked” (Isa 11:4).¹⁴⁵ Indeed, with a powerful wind he will strike the Euphrates and gather the remnants of Judah from the מְאַרְבַּע כְּנָפֹת הָאֲרָץ, “four wings of the earth” (Isa 11:12-15).

5. Conclusions

The textual and artistic materials examined above provide evidence for an association between a number of winged hybrid creatures and the winds.¹⁴⁶ Previous scholarship, especially on the iconographic depictions of such creatures on Israelite and Phoenician seals, has posited that the wings represent celestial or protective aspects inspired by Egyptian solar imagery.¹⁴⁷ Others have simply suggested that the more wings a creature possesses, the greater power it has.¹⁴⁸ This study provides additional nuance to these views by revealing a number of other associations behind the winds and their representation as wings. Moreover, it demonstrates that, far from being an insignificant artistic embellishment, the number of wings a creature possesses conveys meaningful information concerning the creature’s perceived power, function, and cosmic abilities.

Of all the types examined herein, the most frequently attested are those with two wings. Two-winged griffins, serpents, scarabs, and solar disks appear throughout the Near East. Generally, they

145. Interestingly, 3 *Enoch* 23:1, 23:9 identifies the Isaiah passage with the four winds that come from beneath the cherubim’s wings.

146. The scorpion man also appears in the iconography with four wings and a scorpion’s tail. Green 1994, 250, observes that scorpion men serve as attendants to Shamash by supporting the solar disk, and that in the *Gilgamesh Epic* IX:2-4, a scorpion man and woman guard Mt. Māšu, where the sun rises and sets. The creature’s solar connections suggest that its wings also represent the four winds that originate from the four pillars of earth. If the so-called “Burney” or “Queen of the Night” relief depicts the *Lilitu*-demon, then it is noteworthy that she also bears wings. Nevertheless, the identity of the figure remains debated. See Albenda 2005, 171-190.

147. Thus, Keel – Uehlinger 1998, 251.

148. See the views voiced in fn. 108. Scholem 1962, 62, perhaps comes closest to the mark, when he observes: “Sechs gilt also kosmische Zahl. Sie umfaßt die vier Himmelsrichtungen der Welt. Man spricht daher nicht von vier, sondern von sechs Himmelsrichtungen oder kosmischen Kardinalpunkten. In der Mitte der Sechs, also im Zentrum der Welt, dachte man sich den Tempel, den Thronort Gottes anwesend”. Cited in Keel 1977, 113, fn. 220.

represent an interchangeable assemblage of images informed by Egyptian solar cults or Mesopotamian iconography. To what degree they are connected with resurrection, like the winged solar disk, is uncertain. Only the Mesopotamian *aladlammû* have no solar connection. Nevertheless, like the others, they too have an apotropaic function, and thus, two-winged hybrids appear on seals, furniture, and thresholds. However, only winged disks, cherubim, griffins, and sphinxes appear on furniture and objects used for transport. The only members belonging to this group described as living beings in flight are the winged solar disk, ‘Anat, and the cherubim. All soar at high speeds and appear to fly in a single trajectory: the disk along the sun’s path, ‘Anat on a quest to find Ba‘al,¹⁴⁹ and the cherubim from one “wing” of the earth to another. Their straightforward flight pattern imparts to them a singular purpose, whether for weal or woe. None of the two-winged hybrids is ever said to fly above the natural sky.

Representing the largest number of species are four-winged *Mischwesen*. The only four-winged hybrids described as living creatures in flight are Ezekiel’s cherubim and the Egyptian and Mesopotamian four winds. Each serves as transport for deities and has an ability to fly on a linear path, but also in all directions laterally and vertically to and from the heavens. Four-wingedness generally appears to have its origins in the Levant or in Mesopotamia. Even the four-winged scarabs and serpents, which appear to be amplified versions of their two-winged counterparts, are Levantine adaptations of Egyptian types.¹⁵⁰ Thus, while some four-winged hybrids, such as the scarab, serpent, polymorphic gods, and Egyptian four winds, have solar associations, four wingedness primarily signifies the four winds, which as a double merism represent a totality of cosmological power. This is most obvious with Ezekiel’s cherubim, Pazuzu, and the Egyptian and Mesopotamian four winds, but it also informs the placement, import, and/or perceived powers of the *apkallû*. Perhaps in some of these cases, the solar connections to four-winged hybrids relate not to a cultic relation with the sun-god, but to another idiomatic merism for expressing totality by describing the sun as it moves “from sunset to sunrise”. For example, Tiglath Pileser III, like many other kings, employs this merism when boasting his world domination: *ša ultu šit dšamšī adi ereb dšamšī mātāti kalīšina qātēya ikšudā*, “from the going-out of the sun to the entering of the sun, the lands, my hands conquered all of them”.¹⁵¹ The idiom can be used temporally as well, and variations of it are found in Ugaritic and biblical texts.¹⁵² Thus, the movement of the sun from one horizon to the other comes to mean “everywhere” and “anytime”. Regardless of the origins of the connection, in Egypt and Mesopotamia, the creatures with four wings can represent the totality of power comprised of the major deities of the pantheon. In Israel, they represent the totality of Yahweh’s creative and life-sustaining power and his control over the cosmos.

Six-winged entities are far more distinctive. Like the two and four-winged creatures, they can be destructive or protective and use their wings to cover objects. Yet, they differ from them in nearly

149. See CAT 1.10 ii 10-23.

150. See Ward 1969, 139-140, who argues that four-wingedness has its origins in Mesopotamia and that the later four-winged scarabs in Egypt were a reverse borrowing from Canaan. The earliest image of a four-winged creature to my knowledge is an eagle on a Hittite stamp seal of the early second millennium BCE. See Beran 1967, 101, plate 4, no. 34. Only the Egyptian four-winged winds in the *Book of the Dead* appear to have native origins.

151. See Tadmor 1994, 104, lines 18-19.

152. See CAD E 258, *s.v. erebu*; DULAT 181, *s.v. ‘rb*; Gen 19:23, Judg 5:31, Isa 13:10, Ps 75:7.

every other way.¹⁵³ For one, none of the six-winged hybrids appears to have solar connections.¹⁵⁴ In addition, their movements and the spaces they inhabit differ considerably. Of all the six-winged species, only the seraphim and derivative beings in Revelation are ever described in flight, and only the former, in any detail. The seraphim enjoy unrestricted movement within sacred space moving explicitly from the highest cosmic realm (above God) to implicitly the lowest (the underworld). However, unlike the two and four-winged species, six-winged hybrids do not move outside of liminal or sacred space. This also appears to be the case with the living creatures in John's vision.¹⁵⁵ Thus, winged hybridity in itself does not convey an ability to move in and out of sacred space. The six-winged creatures on the cylinder seals also are connected to the liminal space of the steppeland. Little can be said about the six-winged female figure from Tell Halaf other than that her horned headdress identifies her as a goddess, but as such, she probably was perceived as dwelling in sacred space. As the image of Kronos appears on a coin it certainly circulated in public spaces, but since the coin had no performative function, we must think of Kronos' image merely as a representation. We cannot know whether the coin depicted a cult statue in the temple, but presumably, those who worshiped Kronos at Byblos perceived him as dwelling in sacred space. The connection of six-winged beings to liminal space also means that they cannot be domesticated and serve as transport. Indeed, the anthropomorphic nature of Kronos and the six-winged figure from Tell Halaf also rule this out.

Moreover, six-winged creatures also have connections to fertility. This is most clear in the six-winged creatures on the seals and the nude figure of Kronos. However, since the seraph is part serpent it also is associated with fertility.¹⁵⁶ It is noteworthy that unlike the four-winged cherubim, which use two of their wings to cover *גְּוִיָּהֶֿנָּה*, "their bodies", each of the seraphim use two to cover *רַגְלָיו*, "its feet". If, as some suggest, the feet euphemistically refer to their genitalia, then the seraphim too bear outward signs of their fertility.¹⁵⁷ Perhaps then too we should see similar

153. Wood 2008, 93-94, 133-134, 207, calls for further examination of the comparisons between the seraphim in Isaiah 6 and the cherubim in Ezekiel 1. The evidence offered here suggests that, while similar language is employed in the respective pericopes, the differences sharply distinguish the two species. Nevertheless, later Jewish tradition conflates the creatures, along with angels, and attributes to them a protective function. Traditions connected to the *apkallû* from Mesopotamia also make their way into Jewish tradition. Thus, according to the *Book of Jubilees* 4:15-17, angels descended from heaven before the flood and taught humankind justice. *The Life of Adam and Eve* 22:2 states that the angel Michael transmitted knowledge of agriculture to Adam. In *1 Enoch* 8 Azazel taught humans metallurgy, and how to make weapons and jewelry. Semjaza taught humans incantations and astrology, and other angels taught various other sciences.

154. Based on the comparison to the Egyptian *stf/sfr* and the cherubim in Ps 104:4, Morenz – Schorch 1997, 384-386, opine that the seraphim might relate to the solar aspect of Yahweh. They also cite (385, fn. 103) the seal published by Hestrin – Dayagi 1974, 27-29, that belongs to a servant of Hezekiah named יהוֹרָח, "Yahweh Shines (like the sun)". However, none of the six-winged creatures here has clear solar connections. The recently discovered seal impression of King Hezekiah in Jerusalem also contains a solar disk with two wings flanked by *ankh* signs. See *Haaretz*, December 2, 2015.

155. The seraphim and living beings in Revelation praise God, but unlike the other species, the former have the ritual power to purify mortal sin. However, if we understand atonement as a form of healing, then they share this power with some other two- and four-winged beings. Note that 2 Chron 7:14 equates the pardoning of sin with healing the land. Jer 8:22 also implies that atonement is a form of healing. Cf. Moses' use of the bronze seraph to heal the people (Num 21:9).

156. The perceived connection between the serpent and fertility is widespread and well-documented. See conveniently Joines 1974.

157. See fn. 92 above.

significance in the fact that the six-winged deity from Tell Halaf is female.¹⁵⁸

A final observation concerns the degrees of divinity represented by the various entities. Some winged figures, such as ‘Anat, Kronos, the scarabs, serpents, solar disk, polymorphic gods, and female figure from Tell Halaf, are deities in their own right. Others, like the *aladlammû*, griffin, Pazuzu, and the Egyptian and Mesopotamian four winds, do not have the status of gods, but are divinized and/or associated with gods.¹⁵⁹ A third type, which includes the *apkallû*, cherubim, and seraphim, are not divinities or divinized in any way, but work on behalf of gods.¹⁶⁰ Since two-, four-, and six-winged hybrids can be found in each of these groups, the number of wings a creature possesses generally cannot be said to convey information concerning the degree of a hybrid’s divinity. Nevertheless, it seems clear that six-winged beings were intended to convey cosmological powers beyond that of the winds, and thus, even beyond totality.¹⁶¹ In a sense, they represent corybantic and inherently dangerous superpowers, which in the case of the seraphim, remain firmly and theologically within Yahweh’s control.

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158. It is noteworthy that the majority of entities examined herein appear to be male, if one can use linguistic gender as a determinant. The only exceptions are the goddess from Tell Halaf and the stork-winged women in Zech 5:9. The latter are unique in ancient Israel. According to the *Book of Jubilees* 15:27-29, the angels are born circumcised, and there are no female angels in Judaism. Representations of ^d*aladlammû* appear in both male and female forms.

159. The term ^d*aladlammû* and name of the demon ^dPazuzu also are written with the DINGIR determinative marking them as divine.

160. The term *apkallû* (NUN.ME) does not take the divine determinative, though some gods are called *apkallû*. See CAD A/2 171, s.v. *apkallu*.

161. An Egyptian magical papyrus from the Late Period, now in the Brooklyn Museum of Art (no. 47.218.156a-d), features the so-called “nine-headed Bes” with eight wings. Though the figure has the head of Bes, it was not intended to represent the god Bes, but rather a solar god of universal nature. It is thus a further extension of the pantheistic Bes. He protects the birth of the king and the sun. He also is connected to the evening portion of the solar cycle, and thus, he also guards women and children while sleeping. Standing next to him on the papyrus is Atum as a serpent deity with human arms and legs holding a solar disk. On the pantheistic Bes and the papyrus, see Kaper 2003, 91-104.

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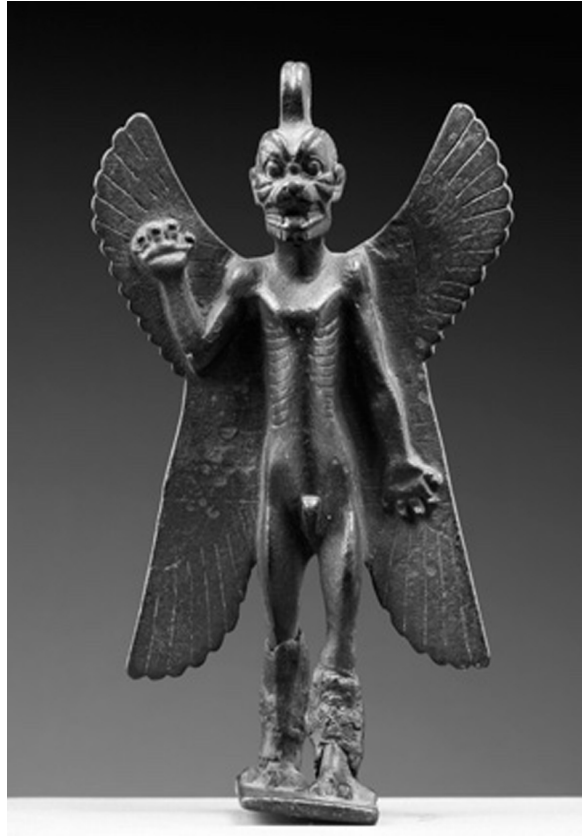


Figure 1. Pazuzu. Courtesy of the Musée du Louvre (MNB 467).



Figure 2. Neo-Babylonian cylinder seal depicting the four winds.
From Wiggermann 2007, 156. Courtesy of the author.

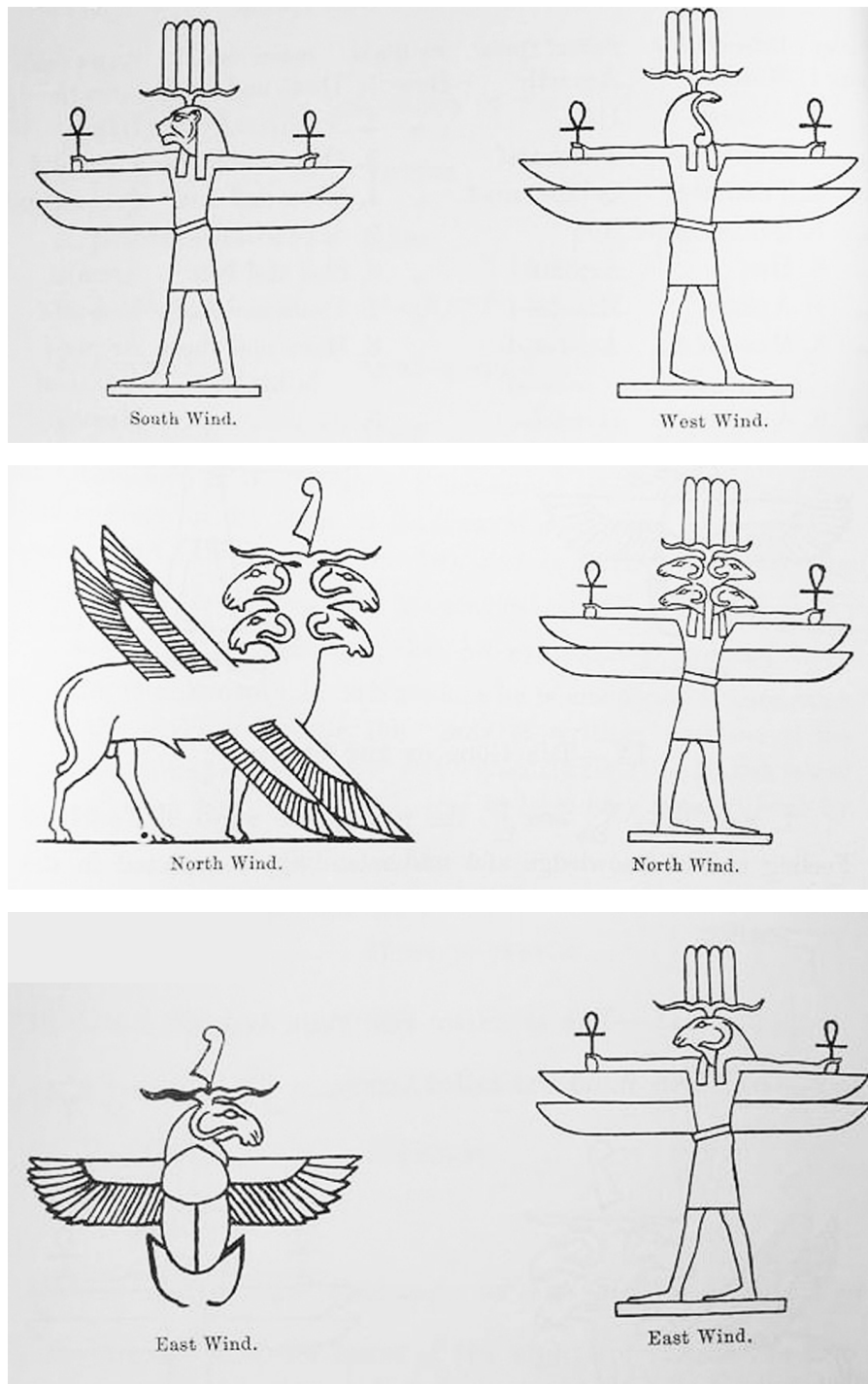


Figure 3. Four winds of Egypt. From Budge 1969, 295-296.



Figure 4. Four-winged polymorphic Tutu image with multiple animal heads on a relief in Athribis.
From First 2011, Fig. 13. Courtesy of the author.

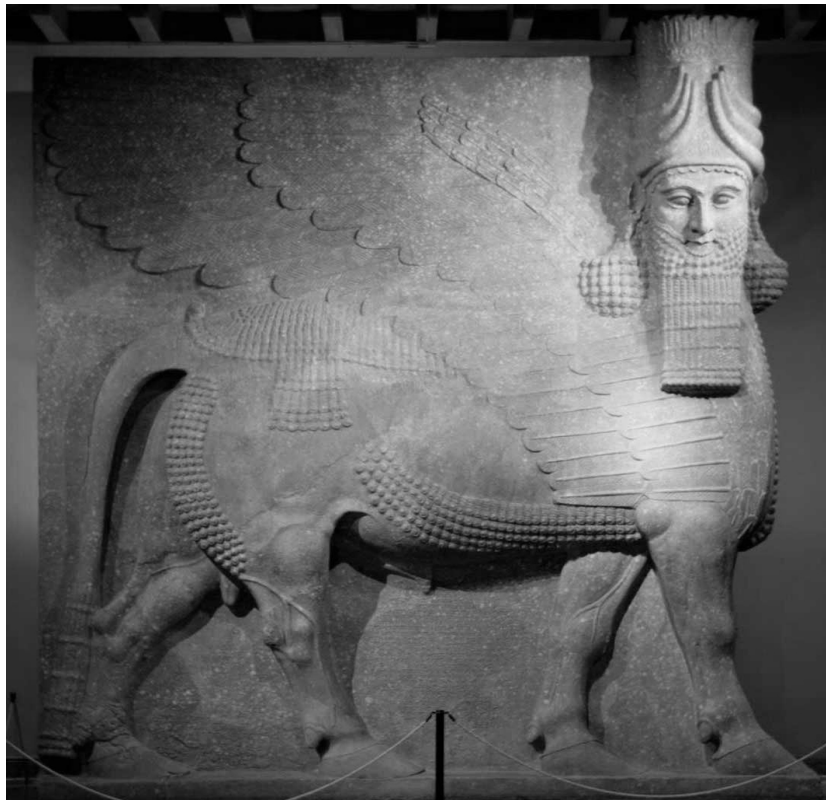


Figure 5. *Aladlammû* of Sargon II. Oriental Institute (OIM A7369). Photograph by the author.



Figure 6. *Ūmu-apkallû*. Courtesy of the Brooklyn Museum (55.147).

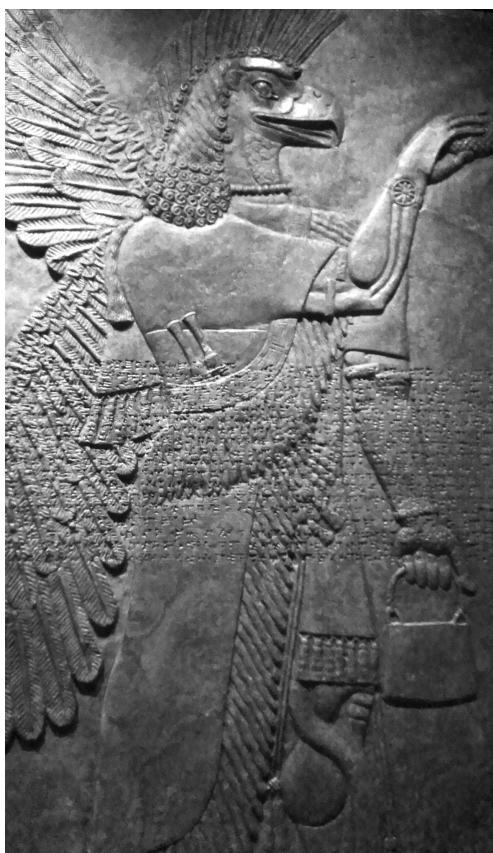


Figure 7. *Raptor-apkallû*. Courtesy of the Bristol City Museum (H794).



Figure 8. Terracotta *Apkallû*. Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (54.117.26).

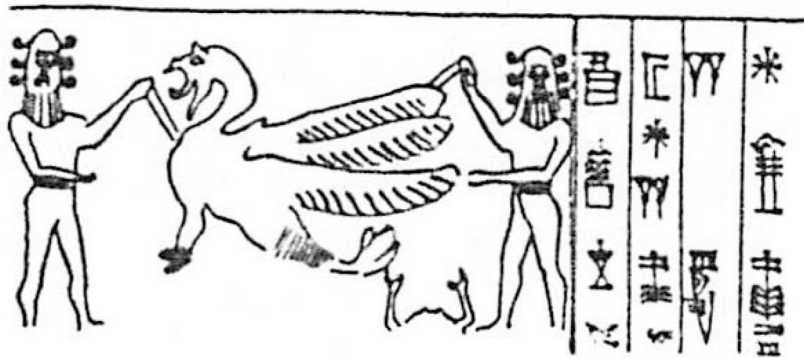


Figure 9. Six-winged hybrid. From Weber 1920, No 299.



Figure 10. Six-winged hybrid. From Keel 1980, 101
([C] Bibel+Orient Foundation Fribourg, CH).



Figure 11. Six-winged figure from Tell Halaf. Courtesy of the Walters Art Museum (21.16).



Figure 12. Six-winged El (= Kronos) on coin from Byblos, r. Antiochus IV. From Hoover 2009, 136, No. 663. Courtesy of the Classical Numismatic Group.



Figure 13. *Ūmu-apkallû* with four wings. Courtesy of the Musée du Louvre (AO 19865).