

CHERUBIM AND SERAPHIM: ICONOGRAPHY IN THE FIRST JERUSALEM TEMPLE

John Gee

Introduction

When we read an unillustrated text we come up with a picture in our minds of what happened. Elements of the resultant pictures will be drawn from our own background. The further the culture from which the text derives from our own, the further the mental picture will be from the truth.

The biblical description of the First Temple, Solomon's Temple, comes from nearly three thousand years ago.¹ While the biblical text gives something of a floor plan of the temple, its laconic descriptions of the walls are our interest here. The descriptions, along with some recent archaeological discoveries, give us new insight into what the First Temple was like in terms of its iconography. It is not what we might initially think. The two main iconographic images mentioned in the biblical text are cherubim and seraphim.

Seraphim

We begin our look at the iconography of the First Temple with Isaiah's visit to the temple: "In the year that the king Uzziah died, I saw² my lord seated on a high throne and his glory³ filled the temple. Seraphim stood above,⁴ each having six wings: with two he covered his face and with two he covered his feet and with two he flew. And

this one cried to that one and said: Holy, holy, holy is Yahweh of armies, all the earth is filled with his glory” (Isaiah 6:1–3).

From Isaiah’s description, we know that the seraphim are located above the throne. We also know that they had multiple sets of wings. But what is a seraph?

A seraph comes from the Hebrew verb *sārap*, meaning “to burn.”⁵ Thus, it has been suggested that the term signifies “glowing, burning, or the glowing one, the burning one.”⁶ It has alternatively been suggested that these are “composite creatures, or as having human form.”⁷ To solve this puzzle, we need to take a more careful look at the text and the iconography from ancient Israel.

We have an earlier account that describes a seraph from the account of the wanderings of the children of Israel in the wilderness. The children of Israel “set out from Mount Hor by the way of the Sea of Reeds to skirt the land of Edom. But the people grew restive on the journey, and the people spoke against God and against Moses, ‘Why did you make us leave Egypt to die in the wilderness? There is no bread and no water, and we have come to loathe this miserable food.’ The LORD sent seraph serpents [*hannhāšîm hassrāpîm*] against the people. They bit the people and many of the Israelites died. The people came to Moses and said, ‘We sinned by speaking against the LORD and against you. Intercede with the LORD to take away the serpents (*hannāhāš*) from us!’ And Moses interceded for the people. Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Make a seraph figure (*sārāp*) and mount it on a standard. And if anyone who is bitten looks at it, he shall recover.’ Moses made a copper serpent (*nēhāš hannēhošet*) and mounted it on a standard; and when anyone was bitten by a serpent (*hannāhāš*), he would look at the copper serpent (*nēhāš hannēhošet*) and recover” (Numbers 21:4–9).

The serpents that bit the people were the seraphim. They were poisonous. Israel has seventeen poisonous snakes: one elapid,⁸ eight lamprophiids,⁹ and eight vipers.¹⁰ Egypt has nine poisonous snakes: three elapids,¹¹ and six vipers.¹² The serpents are also depicted with wings. To see them represented iconographically, we need only look for iconography of snakes with wings. It happens that we have a number of seals and sealings that depict snakes with wings. These

include one belonging to Elišama' son of the king (eighth to the seventh century BC),¹³ one belonging to [Ze]karyau priest of Dor (eighth century BC),¹⁴ one belonging to Abiyau (eighth century BC),¹⁵ one belonging to Elišama' son of Pallul (no date),¹⁶ one with a broken inscription (no date),¹⁷ one belonging to Delayahu son of Gamalyahu (no date),¹⁸ one belonging to Yaḥmolyahu son of Ma'aseyahu (no date),¹⁹ one belonging to Yirmiyahu son of 'Asa'e['] (no date),²⁰ one belonging to Sa'adah (no date),²¹ one belonging to Šapaṭ (eighth century BC),²² one belonging to Domla' (no date),²³ and one belonging to Sama[k] son of Šepanyahu (no date).²⁴ It is significant that although most of these are not dated, those that are date to the eighth century BC.

These seals and sealings from Israel match the biblical description of the seraphim. But the serpents depicted on the seals and sealings are all cobras, elapids in the *naja* family, none of which are actually native to Israel. This is also true of amulets from Israel.²⁵ The Israelite iconography is actually taken from Egypt, and the snake depicted on them is the *Naja nubiae*, the Nubian spitting cobra. This is clear from Egyptian depictions that are colored since the coloring is closer to the Nubian spitting cobra (*Naja nubiae*) than it is the Egyptian cobra (*Naja haje*). The Nubian spitting cobra is not found north of Asyut in Egypt,²⁶ so the iconography must be borrowed from Egypt.

In Isaiah's account, the seraphim are located above the throne. This follows Egyptian temple iconography, where rows of serpents are depicted above the shrine of the deity.

From the eighth century BC prophet Isaiah, we learn that the seraphim had multiple wings (Isaiah 6:2). The images of serpents with wings that we find on ancient seals are seraphim. Isaiah twice uses the expression *sārāp m'ôpēp*, which is normally translated "fiery flying serpents" (Isaiah 14:29, 30:6). This certainly fits the iconography. The slight change of a vowel would make it *sārāp mi'ôpēp* "serpents from Apophis," which also holds intriguing possibilities by seeing the serpents as spawn of the Egyptian demon serpent, but it seems preferable to leave the vowel as is since it explains the iconography. Slightly later, during the reign

of Hezekiah, “he also broke into pieces the bronze serpent (*n^eḥaš hann^eḥošet*) that Moses had made, for until that time the Israelites had been offering sacrifices to it; it was called Nehushtan” (2 Kings 18:4). Hezekiah lived at the end of the eighth century BC, and it may be more than coincidence that after the destruction of the bronze serpent, the winged serpent ceased to be an object adorning Israelite seals.

Cherubim

The other iconographic fixtures of Solomon’s temple are the cherubim. Cherubim appear in three contexts in the Hebrew Bible. The first context is as guardians for the tree of life (Genesis 3:24), the second is their appearance in the temple, and the third is part of the heavenly ascent.

Although the Bible states that cherub had wings (see 2 Samuel 22:11, Psalms 18:10), until recently, discussions of the iconography of cherubim were largely guesswork. Recent publication of an inscribed throne, however, has settled the question. The throne was made from marble and was found in the Eshmun temple at Bustan esh-Sheikh. The inscription on it identifies it as a *ks’ krbm*, “throne of the cherubim.”²⁷ The figures on either side of the throne are described as sphinxes. They have lion bodies with wings and human heads. It is also claimed that “these life-size sphinx thrones are the prototypes that inspired the throne of Yahweh described in the Bible.”²⁸ While Phoenician workers were used in the construction of Solomon’s temple (see 1 Kings 5:1–12) and might have brought over some of their artistry to that structure, they were not involved in the construction of the earlier tabernacle. This raises the question of what the difference was between the cherubim in the tabernacle and those in Solomon’s temple.

In the tabernacle, cherubim were placed on the ark of the covenant on either side of the throne (see Exodus 25:18–22, 37:7–9). Unlike Phoenician cherubs, where the cherubs face the same way as the individual sitting on the throne, on the ark of the covenant, the cherubs faced each other (see Exodus 25:20, 37:9). God sat between the cherubim (see 1 Samuel 4:4, 6:2).²⁹ Cherubim were also

placed on the inner face of the outer curtains of the sanctuary of the tabernacle so that they would show on the inside but not on the outside of the tabernacle (see Exodus 26:1). Cherubim are also placed on the veil of the temple (see Exodus 26:31, 36:35). The fabric in both cases is of the highest quality, *hōšēb*,³⁰ the same quality that is reserved for the high priest's ephod and breastplate.³¹

While the ark of the covenant was brought over from the tabernacle, the curtains were not. Instead, in Solomon's temple, the cherubim, ten cubits high, were placed in the Holy of Holies (see 1 Kings 6:23–32).

Were the Phoenician style cherubim used in Solomon's temple? Phoenician style cherubim are winged sphinxes. They have a human head, a lion body, and wings. Thus, some biblical scholars have claimed that cherubim "had the bodies of winged lions and human heads."³² However, when we look at similar iconography in the Israelite glyptic repertoire, we see something slightly different. On Israelite seals and sealings, cherubs are depicted as either human-headed like that belonging to Ḥannah (no date)³³ or Šelomit (no date, authenticity questioned);³⁴ Falcon-headed like that belonging to 'Aba' (eighth century BC),³⁵ 'Asap (eighth century BC),³⁶ Gegy (no date),³⁷ Hošea' (eighth century BC),³⁸ Zakkur son of Hošea' (eighth century BC),³⁹ Ḥimni (eighth century BC),⁴⁰ Ḥananyau (no date),⁴¹ Yehoqim (eighth century BC),⁴² Yonatan (no date),⁴³ Yeḥezaq (eighth to the seventh centuries BC),⁴⁴ Peḥa' (eighth century BC),⁴⁵ Rama' (no date),⁴⁶ or Šema' (no date);⁴⁷ or as a human-headed bull like that belonging to Yi[h]yahu (no date).⁴⁸ One of the representations shows a figure in Egyptian dress spearing a falcon-headed figure belonging to Yaqamyahu (eighth century BC).⁴⁹ Each representation seems to be a representation of the Israelite cherubim, and usually they are shown with the head of an eagle or falcon rather than a human head. This indicates that the Israelites were not generally using Phoenician iconography.

One thing to note about the depictions of the cherubim on Israelite seals is that in front of the cherub is an *ankh* sign. In Egyptian, this is the sign for life. Because the cherubim guarded the way to the tree of life, this may be a representation of the tree of life.

The Hebrew term cherub (*kerûb*) seems to come from a Semitic root attested in the Akkadian word *karābu*, meaning “to pray.”⁵⁰ The particular form seems to be cognate with the Akkadian word *karūbu*, meaning “honored person,”⁵¹ but its definition fits more with *kāribu*, which is a divine image making a gesture of adoration.⁵² It has been hypothesized that this is the origin of the Greek γρούψ, or “griffin,”⁵³ which in turn is the origin of the English word “griffin.”

Change and Decay in All Around I See

It has been noted that “the cherubim of the Bible are hardly the round-faced infant cherubim known in Western art.”⁵⁴ How did the cherubim change from being depicted as a winged, falcon-headed lion to a baby with wings? The process actually starts in biblical times. When Nebuchadrezzar⁵⁵ conquered Jerusalem and destroyed the temple, the cherubim disappeared from the walls, the Holy of Holies, and the ark of the covenant.

The cherubim are associated with revelation since God spoke to Moses from between the cherubim (Numbers 7:89). It is in this context that we can appreciate the description of the cherubim in Ezekiel. For Ezekiel, the cherubim appear when he sees God. Ezekiel provides two descriptions of the cherubim. He was of priestly lineage and may have seen the temple when young, but he does not describe the cherubim as they appeared in Solomon’s temple; instead, they have changed a bit. Ezekiel says that the cherubs were the living creatures that he saw at the Khabur river (Ezekiel 10:15). In that description, he described them as “the image of four animals and this is their form: they had the image of a man, and each had four faces and four wings to each one of them. And their feet were straight feet and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf’s foot and sparkling like polished bronze. And the hands of a man were under their wings on the four sides and their faces and their wings were on their sides. . . . and the likeness of their faces were the face of a man and the face of a lion on the right side and the face of an ox on the left, and the face of an eagle on the side” (Ezekiel 1:5–8, 10).

Where the cherubim in Solomon's temple had the face of a falcon or an eagle, Ezekiel's cherubim had multiple faces. As David Halperin put it: "Ezekiel's *hayyot* do not look very much like cherubim. The *hayyot* have basically human bodies (Ezekiel 1:6) and animal faces; cherubim have the reverse."⁵⁶ Ezekiel's visions have provided much confusion for those without access to his actual visions. Whether because Ezekiel came in the Babylonian exile or because he was misunderstood by later scribes, the current state of the text represents a first garbling of the depiction of the cherubim.

The cherubim were not part of the rebuilt temple of Zerubabel, and their understanding and imagery seems to have been forgotten. It has been argued that without the presence of the cherubim and the ark of the covenant, the temple "could have led only a shadowy existence" and lacked "a centre of gravity."⁵⁷ But the second temple lacked both and yet still had some gravity. For Jews of the Second Temple Period, the cherubim, which were no longer part of the architecture, faded into the background and were not depicted.

The real change in the iconography, however, came with Philo. For Philo, the cherubim were to be construed allegorically (ὑπονοιῶν εἰσάγει) as representing the movements of the whole heavens (τὴν τοῦ παντὸς οὐρανοῦ φορὰν), the cherub on the right representing the outermost sphere of fixed stars (ἡ μὲν οὖν ἑξωτάτῳ, τῶν λεγομένων ἀπλανῶν), and the one on the left representing the inner sphere with moving planets.⁵⁸ He alternately considered the cherubim as the two hemispheres of the heavens.⁵⁹ To an even higher allegory—which derives, Philo says, from his own thought—is the idea that the cherubim represent goodness (ἀγαθότητα) and authority (ἐξουσία).⁶⁰ But mostly the cherubim were "the winged and heavenly love of the gracious God [τὸν πτηνὸν ἔρωτα καὶ οὐράνιον τοῦ φιλοδώρου θεοῦ]."⁶¹ Philo uses the term ἔρωσ, or Eros, here, which is noteworthy for two things. The first is that the love of God is termed ἔρωσ, which is not the way modern theologians have erroneously taught us to consider the love of God. The second is that in Greek iconography, Eros (love), along with Himeros (yearning), "are portrayed as winged youths

and later also as child putti.”⁶² In the history of Greek art, over time, “Eros grows young. He begins as a fairly grown-up boy in the archaic period, is a young boy in classical art, and becomes a playful putto in the Hellenistic age.”⁶³ A gem from Late Antiquity shows Philo’s conception with two Erotes representing the cherubim in a depiction of the ark of the covenant.⁶⁴

In the Late Antique world, “in the West the cherubim are given the appearance of the four living creatures of Rev 4:6-7; in the East, the four heads and four wings of Ezek 1:10.”⁶⁵ Illustrated manuscripts were promoted in the West under Pope Gregory the Great but not in the East until the Empress Theodora sanctioned them.⁶⁶

Thus the chain of transmission for the tradition was broken, and the original depiction was lost. It was then left for another tradition to supplant the original one.

Ascension

The cherubim were placed outside the garden of Eden, “to protect the way of the tree of life” (Genesis 3:24) The verb used here, *lišmor*, means “to keep, watch over, . . . take care of, preserve, protect, observe . . . observe an order, stick to an agreement, keep an appointment.”⁶⁷ The association with the tree of life is preserved in the iconography as the cherubim are depicted in front of an *ʿnh*-sign representing life. The garden story was part of the law that was read every seven years at the temple during the feast of tabernacles (see Deuteronomy 31: 10–12). The cherubim were also depicted on the veil guarding the entrance to the Holy of Holies (see Exodus 26:31, 36:35). In both the Garden of Eden and the temple, the cherubim guarded the way to the presence of God, who sat on a throne of cherubim.

Ezekiel takes this horizontal arrangement and makes it vertical. The cherubim still guard the way to God, but God has to be reached through a heavenly ascent.

Conclusions

The cherubim and seraphim are two decorative motifs that appear in Solomon's temple. The mediaeval and modern imaginings of these figures are notably off mark. When we look at the iconography from ancient Israel, we find that these two images are among the more commonly found: ancient Israelite cherubim have a lion's body, a falcon's head, and wings, and ancient Israelite seraphim are depicted as winged cobras. They are notably not images of anything otherwise viewable "that is in the heavens above or in the earth beneath or that is in the waters under the earth" (Exodus 30:4). Thus, they did not fall under the interdiction of the ten commandments. Both served as guardians of the presence of God. The strangeness of the imagery should remind us that much of what we imagine about the divine realm may be different than we suppose. The temple, however, can serve as a corrective to that.

Notes

1. The estimated date for the reign of Solomon is about 970–930 BC; see K. A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2003), 83.
2. The Masoretic text's reading of האראו rather than the Dead Sea Scrolls reading of הארה is linguistically older and more likely to be original. For the variants, see Donald W. Parry, *Exploring the Isaiah Scrolls and Their Textual Variants* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 74–75.
3. Throughout the essay, we will follow the translation of the Septuagint (δόξα). The Masoretic text has וילוש "his hems." The Targum Jonathan has ויזמ "hair"; see Alexander Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic*, (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 537. Even the ancient translators of the text had trouble figuring out what was to be understood by the Hebrew text.
4. The Dead Sea Scrolls' reading of הלעממ rather than the Masoretic text's לעממ is linguistically older and more likely to be original. For the variants, see Parry, *Exploring the Isaiah Scrolls*, 75.
5. Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2001), 2:1358-59.
6. *Koehler and Baumgartner, The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, 2:1360.
7. *Koehler and Baumgartner, The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, 2:1360.
8. The black desert cobra (*Walterinnesia aegyptia*).

9. These are: the Israeli mole viper (*Atractaspis engaddensis*), the eastern Montpellier snake (*Malpolon insignitus*), the Montpellier snake (*Malpolon monspessulanus*), the false cobra (*Malpolon moilensis*), Müller's black-headed snake (*Micrelaps muelleri*), Tchernov's chainling (*Micrelaps tchernovi*), *Psammophis aegyptius*, and the Schokari sand racer (*Psammophis schokari*).
10. These are: the Saharan horned viper (*Cerastes cerastes*), the Arabian horned viper (*Cerastes gasperettii*), the Saharan sand viper (*Cerastes vipera*), the painted saw-scaled viper (*Echis coloratus*), the blunt-nosed viper (*Macrovipera lebetina*), Field's horned viper (*Pseudocerastes persicus fieldi*), Bornmueller's viper (*Montivipera bornmuelleri*), and the Palestine viper (*Vipera palaestinae*).
11. These are: the black desert cobra (*Walterinnesia aegyptia*), the Nubian spitting cobra (*Naja nubiae*), the Egyptian cobra (*Naja haje*).
12. These are: the Saharan horned viper (*Cerastes cerastes*), the Saharan sand viper (*Cerastes vipera*), Field's horned viper (*Pseudocerastes persicus fieldi*), the Egyptian carpet viper or northeast African saw-scaled viper (*Echis pyramidium*), the saw-scaled Viper (*Echis carinatus*), and the painted saw-scaled viper (*Echis coloratus*).
13. Nahman Avigad and Benjamin Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals* (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, the Israel Exploration Society, and The Institute of Archaeology, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1997), 53.
14. Avigad and Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*, 60.
15. Avigad and Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*, 66.
16. Avigad and Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*, 76–77.
17. Avigad and Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*, 83.
18. Avigad and Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*, 89–90.
19. Avigad and Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*, 109.
20. Avigad and Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*, 113.
21. Avigad and Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*, 133.
22. Avigad and Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*, 160–61.
23. Avigad and Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*, 193.
24. Avigad and Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*, 253–54.
25. Christian Herrmann, *Ägyptische Amulette aus Palästina/Israel* (Freiburg: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), 601–605.
26. Wolfgang Wüster and Donald G. Broadley, “A new species of spitting cobra (*Naja*) from north-eastern Africa (Serpentes: Elapidae),” in *Journal of Zoology*, vol. 259 (2003), 350–354.
27. André Lemaire, “Trône à kéroubs avec inscription phénicienne,” in *Phéniciens d'orient et d'occident: Mélanges Josette Elayi*, ed. André Lemaire, (Paris: Editions Jean Maisonneuve, 2014), 127–45; Hélène

Sader, *The History and Archaeology of Phoenicia* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2019), 208–209. The full inscription is:

28. ks' krbm 'z p'l 'bd'lnm
29. bn šdytn khn mlqrt bn bd'štrt
30. rb 'lp b'l mtt 'štrny bn mlk
31. ḥrm l'dny lmlqrt ybrk by
32. rḥ mrzḥ bštm l'srm št lmlk
33. y mlk mhrb'l
34. “The throne of the cherubim which Abdalonim son of Šidyaton, priest of Melqart, son of Bod'aštart, chief of a thousand, master of the donations of 'Astonoe, son of king Hiram, made for his lord, for Melqart. May he be blessed. In the month of Marzeah, in the twenty-second year of the reign of king Maharba'al.”
35. Sader, *The History and Archaeology of Phoenicia*, 208.
36. See also 2 Kings 19:15; Psalms 80:2; 99:1; Isaiah 37:16.
37. Menahim Haran, *Temples and Temple-Service in Ancient Israel*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 160–61.
38. Haran, *Temples and Temple-Service*, 167–68.
39. Ziony Zevit, *What Really Happened in the Garden of Eden?*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 236.
40. Avigad and Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*, 63.
41. Avigad and Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*, 157.
42. Avigad and Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*, 65.
43. Avigad and Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*, 77.
44. Avigad and Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*, 86.
45. Avigad and Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*, 92.
46. Avigad and Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*, 94.
47. Avigad and Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*, 99.
48. Avigad and Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*, 101.
49. Avigad and Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*, 106.
50. Avigad and Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*, 108.
51. Avigad and Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*, 109.
52. Avigad and Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*, 144.
53. Avigad and Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*, 150.
54. Avigad and Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*, 157.
55. Avigad and Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*, 103.
56. Avigad and Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*, 110–11.
57. *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian*, eds. Jeremy Black, Andrew George, and Nicolas Postgate (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2000), 192–98, s.v. *karābu*.
58. *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian*, 240, s.v. *karūbu*.
59. *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian*, 216–17, s.v. *kāribu*.

60. *LSJ* 361.
61. Carol Meyers, “Cherubim,” in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1:900.
62. An anonymous peer reviewer has queried my use of this spelling of the name. The Bible has two different spellings of this name. Jeremiah (usually) and Ezekiel (always) use the spelling Nebuchadrezzar (see Jeremiah 21:2, 7; 22:25; 24:1; 25:1, 9; 29:21; 32:1, 28; 35:11; 37:1; 39:1, 5, 11; 43:10; 44:30; 46:2, 13, 26; 49:28, 30; 50:17; 51:34; 52:4, 12, 28, 29, 30; Ezekiel 26:7; 29:18, 19; 30:10). Other biblical writer use the spelling Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah and Ezekiel were pro-Babylonian, and the others were not. The anglicized spellings of the Hebrew names reflect two variants of the Akkadian name. Jeremiah and Ezekiel use the Hebrew form of the proper name of the king, Nabu-kudurri-ušur, which means: “O Nabu, protect my eldest son!” Those who hated the Babylonians and the Babylonian captivity used the Hebrew form of the satirical name, Nabu-kūdani-ušur, which means: “O Nabu, beware the jack-ass!” It is doubtful that anyone would have dared to use the name Nebuchadnezzar to his face. Since Jeremiah and Ezekiel used the official name, I have followed suit.
63. David J. Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot: Early Jewish Responses to Ezekiel’s Vision* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1988), 41.
64. Menahim Haran, *Temples and Temple-Service*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 4.
65. Philo, *On the Cherubim*, VII 21-24.
66. Philo, *On the Cherubim*, VIII 25-26.
67. Philo, *On the Cherubim*, IX 27-28.
68. Philo, *On the Cherubim*, VI 20.
69. Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1985), 152.
70. George M. A. Hanfmann and John Richard Thornhill Pollard, “Eros,” in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 407.
71. Erwin R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1953–1968), 4:133.
72. C. Carletti, “Angel. II. Iconography,” in *Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity*, ed. Angelo Di Berardino, (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2014), 1:128.
73. *Sacred: Books of the Three Faiths: Judaism, Christianity, Islam*, ed. John Reeve, (London: British Library, 2007), 104.
74. *Koehler and Baumgartner, The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, 2:1582-83.