

Genetic Manipulation 5000 Years ago?

A contribution by George Pennington

Cylinder seals are between one and three centimeters long. They were used in Mesopotamia about 5000 years ago to validate the authenticity of information or wares.

The cylinders were engraved with images (today we would call them pictograms), and were rolled over a soft piece of wax or clay attached to the goods in question. The pictogram was thus transferred onto the clay or wax. As long as it was intact it attested to the authenticity of the letter or the provenance and quality of the wine.

Every person doing business or interacting in any official way with others had his/her own seal. The pictograms on these seals were very finely carved. They represented scenes or objects that had something to do with the owner of the seal, thus identifying him. From the pictograms archeologists can draw conclusions about the circumstances of early mesopotamian life.

A few years ago I found the cylinder seal depicted below in a mediterranean archeological museum. I am not saying which museum. I fear the artefact might disappear in the archives forever should it be known. As far as I am aware it is still on display in its showcase.



The pictogram on this particular cylinder seal is more than just strange. It shows different possibilities of genetic manipulation. The main figure is a man sitting on a stool doing something to the rear end (sexual organs) of an antelope. Behind him stands a strange figure which seems to be advising him, and behind this figure is another one, a being with wings and a strange, birdlike head on a human body. The significance of these two figures remains mysterious, but what the man does to the antelope is made very clear. Observe the image of the chromosome above the antelope, and the two antelopes to the left, reminiscent of the „before-and-after“-pics that are so popular in hair-growth adverts. In contrast to the first antelope the other two have bent horns and quite different noses. The wing shape above looks just like the tubes of the female urogenital tract. And the garland above is strangely reminiscent of the DNS-double helix.

In the upper part of the pictogram the topic is further elaborated on. On the right hand side is a lion, and next to it a human head. In the next image the human head is on the lions body. Two little pictograms in between tell us how this is done: again the picture of a chromosome, and a hand - the literal translation of which seems to be „genetic manipulation“.

I can't quite make sense of the next figure (to the left of the human-headed lion). The winged lion on the other hand obviously represents one of the more complex result of their genetic endeavours. Many old legends tell us about chimeras, beings composed of human and animal parts. The best known chimeras are the sphinx and the centaurs, the minotaur and the winged lions of the Assyrians. There are countless others. One could say: much smoke, but no visible fire...

This strange cylinder seal sheds new light on the topic. It doesn't just depict „fabulous creatures“, it is a documentation of concrete knowledge about the origin of such creatures. The images of chromosomes and the DNS, the man manipulating the genetic organs of the antelope, the „before-and-after“ images of antelopes and lions - all this is much too concrete to be interpreted as mere symbolic imagery.

The question posed by this cylinder seal is: just how much did the people of those times know about genetics and the possibilities of influencing them? (The two „advisors on the bottom left are obviously not human.) How could this imagery find its way onto a cylinder seal? It betrays knowledge about matters we are currently only beginning to explore - and is therefore highly topical for our time.

I am grateful for the opportunity to publish this piece of information on the web. As many people as possible should see it and look for a plausible interpretation. Maybe there are other possible interpretations, different from the one I am suggesting. But neither I nor the people who have studied the cylinder seal until now were able to come up with one. All I can see is a very elaborate and convincing depiction of genetic manipulation.

I hope there will be a lively discussion around this picture.