

Judah's cultic objects made the deity in some sense visible, the deity's fitness seems to have remained tethered to the unseen agency conceptual base.

In contrast to the deadly nature of the deity's face and the compartmentalization of the loci of their identity, the narrative anthropomorphism of the Bible was unlikely to have been a conscious and intentional rhetorical campaign. In chapter 1, I discussed ways in which certain reflective elaborations on concepts of unseen agency aided their sociomaterial transmission, relevance, and perseverance. These reflective elaborations included stories about sociomaterial interactions with humanity; after all, narratives assigning personhood and all its trappings to deity would be more intuitive and thus easier to visualize, to remember, and to transmit. Anthropomorphism is included in the package with narrativization. Because cultic representations of deity are necessarily visible—even if access is restricted—they are a rich medium for further reinforcing those anthropomorphic literary features that facilitated transmission. Thus, for instance, metal statuary representing national deities in and around Israel and Judah in the Late Bronze and early Iron Ages gravitated towards two broad styles associated with central “doctrinal” features of the deities: the striding “smiting” type, often associated with Baal, and the seated “enthroned” type, often associated with El (but see Ornan 2011, 272–80, and fig. 4.1 below).



Figure 4.1. Bronze and gold foil deity figurines (fourteenth–thirteenth century BCE) in the “enthroned” and “smiting” poses. Drawing by the author.