

## The Lady of Assur and her alter-ego

In the old site of Assur aside from Assyrian remains, we find the ruins of a city from the Parthian period, situated on the western bank of the river Tigris, north of the confluence with the tributary Little Zāb river.<sup>1</sup> The inscriptions and graffiti in Aramaic script and language from Assur come from the Assur-Serū temple built as a tripartite palace (OPers. *apadāna*), in this Parthian satrapy, on top of the Assyrian Aššur temple. They enable us to identify several deities of the pantheon of the kingdom.

At the top is 'sr /*Assur*/ (Akkad. *Aššur* city, land, deity), the tutelary god of Assur, who is called *elāhā* 'god, deity'. His special title is *malkā* 'king'. Some texts call the (supreme) god Bēl, *elāhā* 'god', *mārēlāhē* 'lord of gods', corresponding to the Persian *ohrmazd x'adāy* – A lord (/ king) of Assur was called Hormezd.

The lady of Assur is called Serū (sr(w/y) /*srū*/, Akkad. EDIN /Šerūa/). She bears the titles of mrtn /*mārtan*/ 'our lady', *mārteh* (srw mrth 'Serū his lady'), and *eštrā* (srw 'štr 'Serū the goddess').

The third deity is brmryn /*Bar Mārēn*/ 'Son of our two lords (/ lord and lady)' whose title is *elāhā* 'god'. He corresponds to the Assyrian Tammuz (DUMU-ZI). There is also a theophoric name Yhabbarmārēn 'given by Son of our two lords'.

These three deities, Assur and Serū and Bar Mārēn, form the divine triad of Assur.

We find two other theonyms: nbw /*Nbū*/ (Nabū is the Akkadian god of wisdom and writing, the planet Mercury ≈ Pers. *Tīr*); nrgwl /*Nerḡul*/ (Nergal is the Akkadian god of Hell, the planet Mars ≈ Pers. *Vahrām*). The A 14 speaks of other gods; the names of some of them are attested by theophores: the god *Šmeš* (Akkad. *Šamaš*) in 'qabšmā, 'qaššmā; and the goddess *Semyā* in 'bedsemyā.

In some later inscriptions nny /*Nanay*/ takes the place of Serū as Assur's consort. She is called *Nanay malkā* 'Nanay the king'

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<sup>1</sup> . See W. Andrae, *Das wiedererstandene Assur*, 1938, (München, 1977).

just like the Bactrian  $\text{N}\alpha\upsilon\alpha\ \beta\alpha\omicron$  ‘Nana the king’<sup>2</sup>, *mārtan* ‘our lady’ (there is also a theophoric name ‘bdmrtn / Bedmārtan/ ‘Servant of Our Lady’)<sup>3</sup>, and *ba’r̥t Bēl* ‘daughter of Bēl’<sup>4</sup>.

The oldest of the dated inscriptions is A 4.

#### Assur 4<sup>5</sup>

1    šnt ccc  
       xxiiii šlm’ dy  
       r’wt’sr br  
       bnbw’ḥdt  
       dy ḥdt lh ’štt  
       ‘I ḥyyhy w-ḥy’  
       ‘yny brh

‘[In] the year 324 [of the Seleucid era (13/14 A.D.)]<sup>6</sup>. The statue of R’ūṭ’ssur son of Banbū’eḥdet that is dedicated to him by Aštāt<sup>7</sup> for his life and the life of his son ‘Ēnay.’

#### A 6<sup>8</sup>

There are two inscriptions engraved on a marble slab. The reading of the first one is uncertain.

1    b-ywm xxviii [b-q]n[w]n [š]nt  
       ccc[cc]xxviii dkyr ’b[d’  
       br] bsrw [br] ‘qbšm[’] lṭb qdm srw ...

‘On the 29<sup>th</sup> day of [the month] Kānūn, [in] the year 529 (218 A.D.). May be remembered ’Ēbādā son of Basrū son of ‘Qabšmā for good before Srū ...!’

#### A 7<sup>9</sup>

<sup>2</sup> . Cf. also an Akkadian theophore <sup>d</sup>*Na-ni-šar-ra[-at]*.

<sup>3</sup> . A 32.j

<sup>4</sup> . Cf. T 143 in Palmyra: brt bl.

<sup>5</sup> . W. Andrae, « Aramäische Inschriften aus Assur und Hatra aus der Partherzeit » A. Fundumstände und Beschreibung der Inschriften aus Assur, *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient Gesellschaft* (MDOG) 60, 1920, 5 ; B. Aggoula, *Inscriptions et graffites araméens d’Assour*, IUO Annali 45, Napoli, 1985, 26-8 ; K. Beyer, *Die aramäischen Inschriften aus Assur, Hatra und dem übrigen Ostmesopotamien*, Göttingen, 1998, 11.

<sup>6</sup> . K. Beyer : 424 (seleukidischer Ära =112/3 A.D.).

<sup>7</sup> . In Avesta Arštāt is a female deity, and means ‘Rectitude, Justice’. In Persic Aštād is used as a personal name for both a man and a woman. Cf. ŠKZ 34 aštād ī (fravardag-) dibīr ī mihrān ī az ray.

<sup>8</sup> . W. Andrae, MDOG 60, 1920, 6 ; B. Aggoula, 1985, 28-30 ; K. Beyer, 12.



Blessed be and remembered be for [the beneficence of a] good and proper [life] ... son of Assurḥannī before Assur, Nanay, Nabū, Nerḡul. And whoever carve out [the name ...], may Assur happen unto him.'

A 15<sup>16</sup>



From left to right:

a 1 šlm' dy 'rdwq<sup>17</sup>  
 br 'yny<sup>18</sup> br r'wts[r]  
 br 'bn'<sup>19</sup> [r]bt'<sup>20</sup> d-nny mlk'  
 rby'<sup>21</sup> d-br'lh' [ ..... ] byt'<sup>22</sup>

'The statue of Ardūg, son of 'Ēnay, son of R'ūṭassur, son of 'Bennā, the major-domo of Nanay the king, the young officer ... of the temple.'

<sup>16</sup> . W. Andrae & P. Jensen, 1920 (Andrae, 7-8, Jensen, 21-2, 31); W. Andrae & H. Lenzen, *Die Partherstadt Assur* (1933), Osnabrück, 1967, 109-111, Abb. 45 ; H. Ingholt, *Parthian Sculptures from Hatra. Orient and Hellas in Art and Religion*, New Haven 1954, 12, fig. 78; J. T. Milik, 1972, 344-52 ; B. Aggoula, 1985, 37-41 ; J. Tubach, *Im Schatten des Sonnengottes. Der Sonnenkult in Edessa, Harrān und Ḥaṭra am Vorabend der christlichen Mission*, Wiesbaden, 1986, 277-278, 387 ; K. Beyer, 1998, 14.

<sup>17</sup> . 'drwq /ādarōg ?/. Milik : 'brwq ; Aggoula : 'ddrm 'Adad est haut, exalté'; Beyer: 'rdwq /'Ardūq/.

<sup>18</sup> . Aggoula : 'jnn /'Ainân/. Le n à la fin est presque sûr.

<sup>19</sup> . Milik : bn' ; Aggoula : m/r/'bn'.

<sup>20</sup> . Milik : bt' ; Aggoula : rb(j)t' 'économé, majordome'.

<sup>21</sup> . Milik : br' ; Aggoula : wbr['].

<sup>22</sup> . Milik : [br bn'] byt' '[l'un des domestiques] du temple' ; Aggoula : --- rbjt' '... l'économé'.

b 1 ṣlm' dy nny mlk' mrtn  
brt bl mrlh'

‘The statue of Nanay the king, our lady, daughter of Bēl, lord of gods.’

c 1 ṣlm[ ' dy y]hbrmryn br bzy'<sup>23</sup> gzbr'  
rby..l ...

‘The statue of Yhabbarmārēn son of Bazziyā, the treasurer<sup>24</sup> ...’

d 1 ṣlm' dy br mryn 'lh'  
dy ...<sup>25</sup> ...<sup>26</sup> dy lpsyhy<sup>27</sup> bzy'<sup>28</sup>  
l[ ' ]lm

‘The statue of Bar Mārēn, the god, who [is ...], so that he may save Bazziyā for eternity.’

e [ṣlm]' dy bzy'

‘The statue of bazziyā.’

f 1 [ṣlm' dy ...] 'yn' l' sr  
[ ...] 'l' h'

‘[The statue of ...] ‘Ēni-‘al-Assur, ..., the god.’

### A 16<sup>29</sup>



1 ṣlm' dy hrmz[(d)]  
mry' ...

‘The statue of Hormazd the lord’<sup>30</sup>

<sup>23</sup> . Milik : Bazzayā ; Aggoula : Bazjâ (/ Bûjâ) ; Beyer : Bāziyā.

<sup>24</sup> . gzbr' /gazzabrā/ from Old Ir. *ganza-bara-*.

<sup>25</sup> . Milik : nhyr ; Aggoula : 'ḥd.

<sup>26</sup> . Milik : hw w ...l ; Aggoula : [bh bz/wy'].

<sup>27</sup> . Milik : wnšwhn ; Aggoula : dlpšjhj.

<sup>28</sup> . Milik : bnny hw ; Aggoula : wbnjhj.

<sup>29</sup> . W. Andrae & P. Jensen, MDOG 60 (Andrae, 8-9; Jensen, 22, 37) ; W. Andrae & H. Lenzen, 108 ; B. Aggoula, 41 ; K. Beyer, 15.

<sup>30</sup> . P. Jensen suggests that this inscription is not Aramaic, but Parthian.

« Unter denen in aramäischer Schrift befindet sich eine einzige, die nicht

## A 17<sup>31</sup>

There are two inscriptions with different dates.

b-ywm xi b-nysn d-šnt cccc[c]xxi dkyr ...<sup>32</sup>

‘On the 11<sup>th</sup> day of Nīsān in the year 521 (210 A. D.). May be remembered ...’

1 b-ywm viii b-nysn šnt cccccxxxii  
dkyr ’ly br ’bdbwhy br  
mlbl w-ḥn’ br ’ḥysr w-’sr’q[b]  
br ’ḥysr qdm<sup>33</sup> ’sr ’lh’ w-sr  
’štr’ lṭb w-l-šnpyr l-ymt  
[’]lmy

‘On the 8<sup>th</sup> day of Nīsān in the year 532 (221 A. D.). May be remembered ’Ellay son of ’Ēbādēbūh son of Mlābēl and Ḥannā son of ’Ēḥīyassur and ’Assur’qab son of ’Ēḥīyassur before Assur the god and Serū the goddess for good and for favour (/ favourably) for the days of eternity!’

## A 18<sup>34</sup>

1 [dkyr ... br]  
’srḥdyn  
qdm ’sr  
w-srw

‘[May be remembered ... son of] ’Assurḥedden (Assarḥaddōn) before ’Assur and Serū!’

## A 25<sup>35</sup>

Eight different inscriptions.

b-ywm xx ...

‘On the 20<sup>th</sup> day of ...’

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aramäisch, sondern iranisch zu lesen ist, nämlich eine in Pehlevi Schrift (Nr. 16). » 22 Then we can read it thus : padkar cē hormazd x<sup>v</sup>adāy.

<sup>31</sup> . W. Andrae & P. Jensen, MDOG 60 (Andrae, 8-9; Jensen, 17) ; B. Aggoula, 41-3 ; K. Beyer, 15. Cf. also A 23.

<sup>32</sup> . B. Aggoula : [bs]rj ( ?)

<sup>33</sup> . Text : qmd

<sup>34</sup> . W. Andrae, MDOG 60, 8-9 ; B. Aggoula, 43 ; K. Beyer, 15.

<sup>35</sup> . W. Andrae & P. Jensen, MDOG 60 (Andrae, 8-9; Jensen, 18) ; B. Aggoula, 47-9 ; K. Beyer, 17-8.

1 b-ywm ix b-nysn dkyr ' [sr ...]  
br 'ḥy' sr  
[qdm 'sr] w-srw lṭb

‘On the 9<sup>th</sup> day of Nīsān. Remembered be 'Assur-... son of  
'Ḫīy' assur before 'Assur and Serū for good!’

1 dkyr 'ḥysr w-'bdbwhy  
qdm 'sr w-srw

‘May be remembered 'Ḫīy' assur and 'Ḫbādēbūh before  
'Assur and Serū!’

dkyr 'srdyn br 'srdyn qdm 'sr w-srw l-ṭb

‘May be remembered 'Assurdayyān son of 'Assurdayyān  
before 'Assur and Serū for good!’

1 b-ywm xi b-nysn d-šnt ccc[cc]iii[i?]  
dkyr ...<sup>36</sup> br blby qdm 'sr w-srw l-ṭb

‘On the 11<sup>th</sup> day of Nīsān in the year 503/ 504 (192 or 193 A.  
D.). May be remembered ... son of Bēlēbī before 'Assur and  
Serū for good!’

dkyr bsrw

‘May be remembered Basrū!’

1 dkyr mlbl br  
'ḥysr br  
šrmwt  
qdm srw mrth  
lṭb w-l-šnpyr  
l-'lm

‘May be remembered Mlābēl son of 'Ḫīy' assur son of  
Šermōt before Serū his lady for good and for favour for  
eternity!’

dkyr ḥn'

‘Remembered be Ḫannā!’

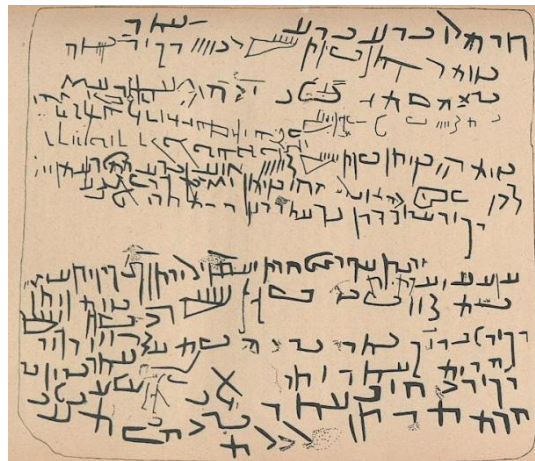
**A 27**<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> . B. Aggoula : 'bd' ( ?)

<sup>37</sup> . W. Andrae & P. Jensen, MDOG 60 (Andrae, 8-9; Jensen, 12-5) ; B.  
Aggoula, 50-53 ; K. Beyer, 19-20.

Eleven inscriptions.



Andrae 13

srmly br 'bd' [bwhy w-]b'sr<sup>38</sup>

‘Srūmallī son of 'Ēbādēbūh and B'assur.’

1 b-ywm x b-nysn b-šnt ccccxviii dkyr bsr[w]  
br 'qšm' b-ṭb w-'qyb'sr 'ḥh

‘On the 10<sup>th</sup> day of Nīsān in the year 519 (208 A. D.). May be remembered Basrū son of 'Aqaššmā in good and 'Aqīb'assur his brother!’

b-[yw]m xxiiii b-š[b]ṭ b-šnt cccc[c ...]

‘On the 24<sup>th</sup> day of [the month] Šebāṭ in the year 500 + ...’

1 dkyr w-bryk mlbl br 'bdbwhy  
qdm 'sr w-srw 'štr' l-ṭb w-l-špyr

‘Remembered and blessed be Mlābēl son of 'Ēbādēbūh before 'Assur and Serū for good and for favour!’

1 b-ywm xii b-nysn b-šnt ccccxv hw' ngr<sup>39</sup> d-mṭr'  
mn ywm  
xxvi b-šbṭ 'd m' l-ywm xii b-nysn w-hl[y]k d-šb''

‘On the 12<sup>th</sup> day of Nīsān in the year 525 (214 A. D.). There was a period of rain from the 26<sup>th</sup> day of [the month] Šebāṭ to the 12<sup>th</sup> day of Nīsān, and this made [the soil] fully saturated with water<sup>40</sup>.’

<sup>38</sup> . B. Aggoula : 'bd'[w'qj]b'sr

<sup>39</sup> . P. Jensen : nbr/(d)

<sup>40</sup> . P. Jensen : Sättigung (Überfluß, š-b-'-')



dkyr 'srdyn br 'srdyn qdm srw l-ṭb

'Remembered be 'Assurdayyān son of 'Assurdayyān before Serū for good!'

dkyr bt 'prhṭ qrtṭy 'mṭl wrtnṭṭ krnyt' w-hw

'May be remembered the house (/ family) of Afrahāt<sup>41</sup> of the district, 'Amṭal, Vardanbad<sup>42</sup> the krnyt<sup>43</sup>, and his own!'

'n' 'z' ktbt

'I, Āzā, have written.'

1 b-ywm xxii b-šnt cccccc  
dkyr w-bryk bsrw br 'qbšm'  
qdm 'sr w-sr[w] l-ṭb

'On the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of [the month] Šebāt in the year 515 (205 A. D.). Remembered and blessed be Basrū son of 'Qabšmā before 'Assur and Serū for good!'

1 b-ywm <1 b->nysn  
b-šnt ccccc  
xxxiii dkyr  
'srbdyn br  
'z' b-ṭb

'On [the first] day of Nīsān (= New Year's Day) in the year 533 (222 A. D.). Remembered be 'Assurbēdayyān son of Āzā for good!'

1 dkyr 'qyb'sr br 'qbšm'  
qdm mrtn l-'lm

'Remembered br 'Qīb' assur son of 'Qabšmā before Mārtan (Our Lady)<sup>44</sup> for eternity!'

**A 29**<sup>45</sup>

Twelve inscriptions.

dkyr b-ywm [...] <sup>46</sup> b-nysn b-šnt ccccc[ ] <sup>47</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> . Pers. Frahād.

<sup>42</sup> . From OPers. \*vardana-pati-. Pers. vālanbed.

<sup>43</sup> . A title. The reading kārānyātā (Beyer : 'des Heerführers') from Old Iranian \*kāra-naitā is uncertain. B. Aggoula : ṭkrpt'hw.

<sup>44</sup> . According to K. Beyer, she is indeed Nannay.

<sup>45</sup> . W. Andrae & P. Jensen, MDOG 60 (Andrae, 8-9; Jensen, 15-6) ; B. Aggoula, 54-7 ; K. Beyer, 22-4.

dkyr bsrw b-ṭb

‘Remembered be! On the day ... of Nīsān in the year 500[+ ...]. May be remembered Basrū for good!’

1 b-ywm x b-nysn b-šnt ccccc[ ]<sup>48</sup> dkyr  
ḥyn’ br ’ḥy’sr l-ṭb w-dkyr mlbl w-bsrw  
w-’ḥy’sr br ḥyn’

‘On the 10<sup>th</sup> day of Nīsān in the year 500[+ ...]. May be remembered Ḥayyānā son of ’Ḫī’assur for good! And remembered be Mlābēl and Basrū and ’Ḫī’assur son of Ḥayyānā!’

dkyr mly br ddlty qdm ’sr w-srw ’štr’

‘Remembered be Mallay son of Dādallātay<sup>49</sup> before ’Assur and Serū the goddess!’

dkyr bsrw w-mlbl l-ṭb

‘Remembered be Basrū and Mlābēl for good!’

1 dkyr ’srdyn br  
’srtrṣ  
l-ṭb

‘Remembered be ’Assurdayyān son of ’Assurtāreṣ for good!’

dkyr

dkyr ’srdyn br ’srtrṣ w-bsrw l-ṭb

‘Remembered be. Remembered be ’Assurdayyān son of ’Assurtāreṣ and Basrū for good!’

1 b-ywm x b-nysn šnt cccccxi dkyr ’z’ br ’srd[y]n l-ṭb  
qdm mrtn l-’lm

‘On the 10<sup>th</sup> day of Nīsān in the year 511 (200 A. D.). Remembered be Āzā son of ’Assurdayyān for good before Mārtan (Our Lady) for eternity!’

1 b-ywm ix b-nysn dkyr ’srdyn  
’srtrṣ l-ṭb

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<sup>46</sup> . P. Jensen : 7 ; B. Aggoula : xx + i(ii ou iii).

<sup>47</sup> . P. Jensen : 512 ; B. Aggoula : ccccc + v + i.

<sup>48</sup> . P. Jensen : 522 ; B. Aggoula : ccccc + [xx].

<sup>49</sup> . K. Beyer : Dārallātāy ‘Mann-aus-Anwesen-der-Allāt’.

‘On the 9<sup>th</sup> day of Nīsan [in the same year]. Remembered be  
’Assurdayyān son of ’Assurtāreṣ for good!’

3 qdm ’sr mlk’ w-srw ’štr’ l-’lm

‘...<sup>50</sup> before ’Assur the king and Serū the goddess for  
eternity!’

1 b-ywm viii b-nysn b-šnt cccccxxvi dkyr bsrw l-ṭb  
w-ḥn<’> br ’ḥy’ sr l-ṭb qdm srw ’štr’

‘On the 8<sup>th</sup> day of Nīsān in the year 526 (215 A. D.).  
Remembered be Basrū for good, and Ḥannā son of ’Ḥḥī’ assur  
for good before Serū the goddess!’

1 dkyr ’srdyn br  
’srtrṣ l-ṭb

### A 32<sup>51</sup>

It contains ten different inscriptions. The tenth inscription is  
as follows:

1 dkyr ṭby  
br ’bdm<r>tn  
qdm  
mrtn l-ṭb  
w-lšnpyr l-ymt ’lmyn

‘Remembered be ’Bedmārtan before Mārtan for good and for  
favour for the days of eternity!’

Raham Asha

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<sup>50</sup> . P. Jensen : Am Tage von m( ?)-l-ī (u)-n ... im Jahre 512 [sei] ins  
Gedächtnis gerufen [und ?] geseg[n]et B-s-r(d)[ī (ū)], Sohn des ’Aḳa[b]-  
Ša( ?)mā. B. Aggoula : [bjw]m x lšrj bšnt ccccc + x (ou xx) dkjr bsr[j/w] br  
’[q]bšm’.

<sup>51</sup> . W. Andrae & P. Jensen, MDOG 60 (Andrae, 9; Jensen, 18-9) ; B.  
Aggoula, 58-9 ; K. Beyer, 24.