

Aya

Mesopotamian goddess, →DDD. The only Western connection of A. with a deity is in a syncretistic text from Ugarit (→DDD), that gives as an equivalent for the Akkadian ^da-a the Hurrian version of the name of the Mesopotamian god →Ea and his Ugaritic counterpart, the craftsman god Kushara. DDD refers to the suggestion that occurrences of the male personal name and geographic name A. in the Old Testament could be “a hypocoristic form to be connected with the Ugaritic deity,” i.e., Kushara, presumably via Hurrian. Thus the name A. only occurs in the West through homophony with Ea. Mesopotamian A. (Sum. *Sherida*) was a goddess of light. Textual references indicate her popularity in Old Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian times (BLACK/GREEN 1992: 173). No depictions of A. are known. In sacred marriage rituals her statue and that of her consort, the sun-god →Shamash, were brought together, but no such statues have survived. In short inscriptions on seals from the earlier part of the Old Babylonian Period her name (^dAya) frequently occurs alongside that of her consort Shamash (^dUtu), often with a dog or lion beneath the inscription panel or alongside contest scenes. BRAUN-HOLZINGER examined the occurrences of this inscription in the hope of finding a relationship to the iconography. She recorded only one example that depicts Shamash together with a goddess (1996: 327 no. 900 = COLLON 1986: no. 96, but see also nos. 360, 363, 366, 367, 445), which is, however, only the suppliant goddess Lama. BRAUN-HOLZINGER also lists examples of this inscription alongside the god →Amurru, and with symbols normally associated with →Nergal or →Ninurta (1996: 300, nos. 469–475, 477–480, 482–483, and 316 nos. 746–750). Again, the only goddess on the seals is the suppliant goddess. However, the same inscription is also found on seals depicting →Ishtar and various male deities (COLLON 1986: nos. 397, 400, 412, 413, 462, 492). The only possible candidate for a depiction of A. is a frontal goddess in a flounced robe with clasped hands (COLLON 1986: nos. 402, 523), since the inscription on both seals mentions ^dAya. However, other depictions of this figure show no such correlation, even on seal impressions from Sippar, the city where she was especially revered. Indeed on one seal that goddess is associated with fish and goat-fish, and is clearly a water deity (AL-GAILANI WERR

1988: pls. XXVI:6–7; XXVII:1, 7; XXVII:3–4; XXIX:4).

Dominique Collon

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