

Human-headed winged bull ("Aladlammu")

I. Introduction. *Hybrid Mesopotamian demon.* The terms "Aladlammu," "Lamassu," "Shedu," and "Apsasu" have been conventionally used to designate composite creatures conceived of as monumental stone colossi of winged →bulls with a bearded human head, known primarily as protective and apotropaic gateway guardians that flank the gates and doorways of royal palaces (BORGER 1956: 62ff; BRINKMAN 1964: 286f; DANREY 2004: 135).

The designation "Aladlammu," if that is the correct reading of the cuneiform signs ^dALAD.^dLAMMA.MEŠ, occurs exclusively on contemporary Neo-Assyrian building inscriptions and describes the above-mentioned gateway guardians.

The connection between ^dALAD.^dLAMMA.MEŠ and *lamassu*, and the connection between iconographical and literary sources is not as direct as the commonly interchangeable use of Aladlammu and Lamassu might suggest. According to LIEBERMAN (1977: 373ff), Akkadian *lamassu* derives from Sumerian LAM(M)A (VON SODEN [1964: 149ff] reconstructs a Semitic origin), the latter originally referring to an anonymous, beneficent, protective, anthropomorphic female deity. The corresponding male deity to LAMA, called ALAD in Sumerian, and *šēdu* in Akkadian (VON SODEN 1964: 148ff; BLACK/GREEN 1992: 115), is used for anonymous male deities (LANDSBERGER/BAUER 1927: 218f). The combination of both terms is probably used to denote the bull colossi in Assyrian palaces. It is therefore rather problematic to equate Aladlammu with Lamassu.

On the iconography level, a one-to-one relationship between Lamassu and Aladlammu cannot be established. Two Kassite stone stelae inscribed with the name of LAMA and many cylinder seals from Neo-Sumerian times onward (ORTHMANN 1975: no. 305; BOEHMER 1987: pls. 106–109; HERLES 2006: 231f, pls. 307–315; PARROT 1948: 202, fig. 48) depict LAMA as an anthropomorphic goddess in standing or striding posture, with a horned cap, often appearing accompanied by a worshipper. This stands in clear contrast to the 1st mill. representations of human-headed winged bulls, which are designated as ^dALAD.^dLAMMA.MEŠ.

In regard to the term "Apsasu," Neo-Assyrian inscriptions perhaps indicate that it was used to designate female stone colossi

or colossal →lions (BLACK/GREEN 1992: 115; BRINKMAN 1968: 193; GALTER/LEVINE/READE 1968: 27, 32). But iconographically it is not possible to distinguish female and male types; considering the lack of clear textual evidence the designation of the human-headed winged bull with A. should be regarded as hypothesis.

In the Northwest Palace at Nimrud and less frequently in the Southwest Palace at Nineveh, human-headed winged quadrupeds occur alternately as bulls and lions (KOLBE 1981: 3; PALEY/SOBOLEWSKI 1992: pl. 3; GALTER/LEVINE/READE 1986: 14). At Nimrud some of them show a human form above the waist, reminiscent of the iconography of →centaurs (PALEY/SOBOLEWSKI 1992: figs. 1–5). These figures and the more common lion colossi will not be discussed here because of their close iconographic relation to male →sphinxes and centaurs, although in most publications both bulls and lions are called Aladlammu (COLLON 2001a: 54).

II. Typology

II.1. Phenotypes

1. STANDING (1–33) 2. STRIDING (34–36, →Apkallu 8) 3. REARING UP (37–48) 4. KNEELING DOWN (49–51)

GENERAL REMARKS. The main iconographic characteristics of the h. are all based on the 1st mill. Assyrian stone colossi; they virtually did not change down to the end of the Achaemenid Period. Hence they form the basis for the typological discussion below. Changes of details, like the shape of the wings or the headdress, depend on object types or different stylistic traditions, but do not correlate with changing contexts or meaning of the h.

The most important features of the h. are the body of a bull; the head of a bearded man; huge wings with rows of long feathers on the back of the body; feathers down the chest; curled hair down the middle of the chest; a panel of curls along the back, in some cases also along the legs, and another panel hanging over the haunches; and indications of ribs and genitalia (10*, 12*) (COLLON 2001a: 54). The physiognomy of the h. is always characterized by a human male face with a curly beard and moustache, shoulder-length hair, and an elaborate headdress. The ears may be anthropomorphic or theriomorphic, and are decorated primarily with spheric or elongated Assyrian jewelry (2–12*). A conical or cylindrical cap or crown adorned with two or three rows of horns indicates the divine or semidivine nature of the h. On the representations from Khorsabad and Nineveh, h.s wear the typical headdress

with three pairs of horns surmounted by feathers and encircled by a headband of rosettes (8, 10*–12*). On Achaemenid seals h.s often wear an indented crown similar to that of the Achaemenid kings (24, 31–32, 40*). The head of the h. is generally depicted in profile and only rarely *en face*, as on some sculptures from Khorsabad (8) and a scaraboid with a Hebrew inscription (→Apkallu 8*).

Some of the Assyrian stone colossi from Nimrud feature the body and the scaly tail of a →fish, with and wear a headdress decorated with a fish's head (3*–4) (DANREY 2004: 133), thus resembling the iconography of the fish-cloaked →Apkallu. Some h.s on Hebrew and Urartian seals wear a kind of knotted girth around the belly (35, 38) analogous to that surrounding the bodies of the male →lion colossi from Nimrud (COLLON: 2001b).

1. STANDING. Depictions of the standing h. are common from their first appearance in Assyrian to their last occurrence in Achaemenid palaces, and represent the standard phenotype (1–33). Monumental Assyrian h.s from the palaces of Ashurnasirpal II (883–859) at Nimrud and of Sargon II (721–705) at Khorsabad always have five legs, of which three are forelegs (2–11). Viewed from the front the creature stands firmly in place; from the side it appears to be striding forward (10*). From the time of Sennacherib (704–681) h.s occur in sculptures with slimmer proportions, with two legs in front in a standing position and two on the side in striding manner (FINCH 1948: 14ff; 12*–13, 17).

2. STRIDING. As mentioned above, monumental h.s combine the standing and striding posture. Other object types show h.s in a natural striding stance with four legs (14–16, 18–33). A related phenotype represents the striding h. with the left foreleg above the ground (34–36, →Apkallu 8*). This kind of posture occurs only on seals, and is not known from stone colossi.

3. REARING UP. On a number of seals the h. is shown in the position of rearing up against a human figure (37*–48). In the case of 40*, the head is turned backward. This phenotype appears almost exclusively on Mesopotamian compositions of religious and combat scenes or heroic encounters (39–48). Individual representations of a rearing-up h. are rare, and known only from a Hebrew (38) and an Ammonite scaraboid (37*) so far. On the back of the scaraboid from Amman a partly damaged four-winged anthropomorphic figure (→Four-winged god) in Assyrian garment is engraved; perhaps to be identified with the

Mesopotamian semidivine figure of →Apkallu. Otherwise, most of the seals with a rearing-up h. are preserved as sealings on Persepolis Fortification Tablets, and illustrate a wide range of heroic encounters (45–48; GARRISON/ROOT 2001).

4. KNEELING DOWN. A small number of Neo-Assyrian and Achaemenid objects show h.s in a kneeling position with all four legs folded on the ground, which stands in contrast to many depictions of sitting and crouching →sphinxes and other hybrid quadrupeds. On a Neo-Assyrian cylinder seal in a secondary scene, A. is kneeling below a →winged disc (49). The figurative column capitals from the Central Building in Persepolis also bear h.s in a kneeling position as protome (50*–51).

II.2. Associations

1. ASSOCIATED WITH DEITIES/DEMONS 1.1. Genii and demons (14, 16, 26, 37, 39, →Apkallu 8) 2.1. Hybrid quadrupeds (18–25) 2. ASSOCIATED WITH HUMANS: Kings and heroes (29–30, 40–48)

1. ASSOCIATED WITH DEITIES/DEMONS

1.1. Genii and demons. In most depictions the h. is an assisting figure. The rock sculptures at Bavian (14) show two h.s framing and protecting a genius, formerly designated as →Gilgamesh (BACHMANN 1927: 14f), who is holding a small lion in one arm and a lagobolon in the other. A Neo-Assyrian cylinder seal shows two kilted, bearded genii depicted *en face*, each standing on the back of a h. (26*), which flank a god and worshipper. On a Hebrew scaraboid a two-winged genius stands on the back of a h. In front of the latter is a stylized palmette tree, on which a four-winged genius steps forward to place its foot on the headdress of the h. (→Apkallu 8*). At Til Barsip a genius bearing a flower and basket stands behind a h. (16). On cylinder seal 39 the h. is associated with a four-winged genius in a combat scene, which may be alluded to on a scaraboid from Amman, which depicts a →four-winged god (37*) on the backside.

2.1. Hybrid quadrupeds. On metallic objects of Urartian, Mannaeian, and Median provenance h.s are shown antithetically with other hybrid quadrupeds like →sphinxes, →centaurs, and →griffins, or in a kind of procession (18–25).

2. ASSOCIATED WITH HUMANS: Kings and heroes. On seals h.s may be depicted in combat and contest scenes with the royal Persian hero (40*–48), or together with an archer as prey (29–30) in Neo-Assyrian hunting scenes.

III. Sources

III.1. Chronological range. Since the beginning of the 2nd mill. human-headed winged quadrupeds were common in different regions of the ancient Near East. The first depiction of a h. comes from Ebla and dates to the first half of the 2nd mill. (MATTHIAE et al. 1995: fig. 236), but it is unlikely that this prototype has any connections to the meaning of the later Assyrian h. The iconography of the h. is also close to another hybrid figure, often called Bull of Heaven, who was killed by →Gilgamesh and →Enkidu as recounted on tablet VI of the Epic of →Gilgamesh, and is depicted on seals from at least the 14th cent. onward (COLLON 2001: no. 340; LAMBERT 1987: no. 23, pl. 11).

The appearance of the typical h. began in the early 1st mill. with a fragmentary sculpture found in the area of the Old Palace at Assur that dates to the reign of Tiglath-pileser I (967–935; 1). The vast majority of monumental h.s were excavated at the main palaces of Nimrud, Khorsabad, and Nineveh (2–10*, 12*). There they adorned the palaces of the more important Assyrian kings from Ashurnasirpal II (883–859) until Esarhaddon (680–669). Monumental colossi of h.s were absent in the reign of the last great Assyrian king Ashurbanipal (668–627). After the fall of the Assyrian empire in 612, the tradition of the colossal h. as a protective gateway guardian continued into the Achaemenid empire. Those from the first Achaemenid palace at Pasargadae have now disappeared, but in Persepolis a pair of huge h.s with a height of almost 11 meters is still visible at the so-called Gate of all Nations (17) erected by King Xerxes I (485–465). After the fall of the Achaemenid empire in 331, no further monumental stone colossi were produced. However, in Hellenistic Mesopotamia (LINDSTRÖM 2003: 17) and Sasanian Iran, stamp seals and sealings on clay bullae kept the iconography of the h. alive (RITTER 2010: 105ff; GYSELEN 1993: pl. 38).

III.2. Geographical distribution.

Representations of h.s have been preserved from many Near Eastern regions and beyond (KOLBE 1981: 5ff). Most provenanced h.s come from Nimrud (2–7), Khorsabad (8, 10*, 14), and Nineveh (12*, 15; GALTER/LEVINE/READE 1986) in the heartland of Assyria. Beyond the Assyrian centers the h. appears in the provincial residences Tell Ajaja (9; MAHMOUD 1992) and Til Barsip in Northern Syria (16; NUNN 1988: 102ff). In neighboring Armenia in the north and

Western Iran, the h. was adopted at the beginning of the 1st mill. and reproduced on many object types (18–25; GODARD 1950: 20, 26; AMANDRY 1996: 111–113; SEIDL 2004: 205f). Many depictions of h.s are known in Achaemenid Persia, mainly from the Southwestern Iranian province of Fars (17, 33, 45–48, 50–51). A golden finger ring from the Oxus treasure in Central Asia represents the most eastern provenance of a h. (32). From the Levant and Jordan only a few depictions of h.s are known (37*–38, →Apkallu 8*). The Mediterranean regions are represented by Graeco–Persian seals (31, 36); an Assyrian cylinder seal found in Greece at the Heraion of Samos illustrates the diffusion of the h. beyond the borders of the Near East (49).

III.3. Object types. More than one hundred sculptures of h.s have been identified among the remains of Assyrian palaces and temples (1–12*; KOLBE 1981: 4f; DANREY 2004: 133); a similar monumental sculpture survived at Persepolis (17). In general, the larger-than-life-size stone blocks of h.s were placed as pairs on either side of doorways and entrances. Apart from the vast majority of these stone sculptures, h.s also appeared on Neo-Assyrian palace reliefs (14–15; ALBENDA 1986; DANREY 2004: 136f). On such a scene from the palace at Khorsabad, the h. is placed in the middle of a composition that shows a maritime Phoenician convoy of cedars from Lebanon (14). Another scene from Nineveh illustrates laborers hauling a monumental h. from the quarries to the palace (15). At Bavian north of Mossul, at the head of one of the canals by which Sennacherib (704–681) brought water to Nineveh, a fallen and barely damaged Neo-Assyrian rock sculpture shows a pair of colossal h.s (13) supporting and framing an architectural structure, and guarding scenes of the king, who is flanked by gods on the side view and flanks one of them on the frontal view. Other large representations of h.s constitute a wall painting in the palace of Til Barsip (16) and column capitals from Persepolis (50*–51).

Smaller objects which bear representations of h.s are particularly cylinder seals (26*–30, 33, 34, 39–44, 49) or impressions thereof (33, 45–48), and stamp seals (31, 35–38, →Apkallu 8*). Metallic objects, such as bowls (18–19), breast-plates (22), pectorals (23–25), finger rings (32), and tondos (21) are of Urartian, Mannaeen, or Median provenance (AMANDRY 1966; GODARD 1950; SEIDL 2004).

IV. Conclusion. Depending on the context, two different role can be attributed

to the h.: as part of the architecture and decor and as assisting figures in scenes with deities, demons, and worshippers, the h. appears as a benevolent creature which defends the palace, the king, and the worshipper against hostile forces and guarantees the stability of the edifice. Apart from this apotropaic and prophylactic aspect, the h. can assume in scenes of combat or heroic encounter the role of the dangerous creature to be overcome by the royal Persian hero, similar to other hybrid beings like →lion dragons, →griffins, or →winged bulls (KEEL/UEHLINGER 1998: figs. 360a–b, 361a).

V. Catalogue

1 Sculpture, gypseous stone, Assur, 1000–900. PREUSSER 1955: 27, pl. 23; PEDDE 2003: 125, figs. 7–8 **2** Sculpture, alabaster, Nimrud, 883–859. ORTHMANN 1975: no. 175 **3*** Sculpture, limestone, 4.94 x 4.8 m, Nimrud, in situ, 883–859. PALEY/SOBOLEWSKI 1992: fig. 6 **4** Sculpture, limestone, Nimrud, 883–859. PALEY/SOBOLEWSKI 1992: fig. 7 **5** Sculpture, limestone, Nimrud, 883–859. PALEY/SOBOLEWSKI 1992: pl. 5 **6** Sculpture, limestone, Nimrud, 883–859. PALEY/SOBOLEWSKI 1992: pl. 5 **7** Sculpture, limestone, Nimrud, 883–859. CRAWFORD et al. 1966: fig. 29 **8** Sculpture, alabaster, Khorsabad, 721–705. LOUD 1936: 49 fig. 56; ORTHMANN 1975: no. 176; MATTHIAE 1996: 25 **9** Sculpture, limestone, Tell Ajaja (Shadikanni), 870–840. MAHMOUD 1992 **10*** Sculpture, alabaster, 3.76 m, Khorsabad, 721–705. Baghdad, Iraq Museum, IM 72129. SETON–WILLIAMS 1981: no. 135 **11** Sculpture, alabaster, Khorsabad, 721–705. MATTHIAE 1996: 25 **12*** Sculpture, alabaster, 2.2 m, Nineveh, 704–681, in situ. MATTHIAE 1998: 22 **13** Rock sculpture (pair), limestone, Bavian, 689–681. BACHMANN 1927: 14f, pls. 15–17; BÖRKER–KLÄHN 1982: no. 188 **14** Relief, alabaster, Khorsabad, 800–700. MATTHIAE 1999: 24 **15** Relief, alabaster, Nineveh, 704–681. BARNETT/BLEIBTREU/TURNER 1998: no. 153b, pl. 115 **16** Wall painting, Til Barsip (Tell Achmar), 800–700. THUREAU–DANGIN/DUNAND 1936; PARROT 1961: no. 110; NUNN 1988: 102ff; DANREY 2004: 137 **17** Sculpture, stone, Persepolis, 500–400. SCHMIDT 1953: 65, pls. 9–14 **18** Knob bowl, bronze, Luristan, 940–900. MATTHIAE 1996: 198; CALMEYER 1973: no. L3 **19** Fragment Knob bowl (fragment), bronze, Luristan, 940–900. CALMEYER 1973: no. H2 **20** Knob bowl, bronze, Luristan, 940–900. CALMEYER 1973: no. H9 **21** Tondo, bronze, Luristan, 940–900. CALMEYER 1973: no. L5 **22** Breastplate, bronze, 900–800, SEIDL 2004: 116f fig. 90, pl. 35 **23** Pectoral, gold, Ziwiye (treasure), 620–600. MATTHIAE 1996: 204; GHIRSHMAN 1963: fig. 377 **24** Pectoral, gold, Ziwiye (treasure), 620–600. GHIRSHMAN 1963: fig. 137 **25** Pectoral, gold, Ziwiye (treasure), 620–600. GHIRSHMAN 1963: fig. 379 **26*** Cylinder seal, chalcedony, 34 x 10 mm, 800–700. London, British Museum, WA 132257. COLLON 2001: no. 277 **27** Cylinder seal, porphyre, Assur, 900–700. Berlin, Pergamon Museum, VA 7978. MOORTGAT 1966: no. 647 **28** Cylinder seal, serpentine, 900–600. PORADA 1948: no. 632 **29** Cylinder seal, frit, Babylon, 900–600, Berlin. MOORTGAT 1966: no. 706 **30** Cylinder seal, serpentine, Assur, 900–700. MOORTGAT 1966: no. 639 **31** Scarab, jasper, 500–300. BUCHANAN/MOOREY 1988: no. 465; BOARDMAN 2003: 204 fig. 5.35 **32** Finger ring, gold, 22 x 17 mm, Oxus (treasure), 500–300. CURTIS/TALLIS 2005: 192 no. 296 **33** Cylinder seal impression, fired clay, Persepolis, 500/499. GARRISON/ROOT 2001: no. 291, pl. 162a–d **34** Cylinder seal, serpentine, Mesopotamia, 900–600. COLLON 2001: no. 14 **35** Stamp seal, silver, Urartu, 800–600. ÖZDEM 2003: 152 **36** Scaraboid, chalcedony, 400–300. BOARDMAN 1980: fig. IV–23 **37*** Scarab, onyx, black and white banded, 24 x 14 mm, Amman, 700–600. Amman, Archaeological Museum, J. 1195. AVIGAD/SASS 1997: no. 973; EGGLEER/KEEL 2006: ‘Amman no. 6 **38** Stamp seal, chalcedony, 700–600. AVIGAD/SASS 1997: no. 34 **39** Cylinder seal, carnelian, 720–700. COLLON 2001: no. 378 **40*** Cylinder seal, chalcedony, 31 x 14 mm, 500–400. London, British Museum, ANE 89781. CURTIS/TALLIS 2005: no. 450; *MERRILLEES 2005: no. 62 **41** Cylinder seal, agate, 600–300. MOORTGAT 1966: no. 767 **42** Cylinder seal, calcite, 600–500. VON DER OSTEN 1934: no. 419 **43** Cylinder seal, serpentine, 800–650. COLLON 2001: no. 27 **44** Cylinder seal, chalcedony, 820–740. COLLON 2001: no. 302 **45** Cylinder seal

impression, fired clay, Persepolis, 501. GARRISON/ROOT 2001: no. 15, pl. 9c–d **46** Cylinder seal impression, fired clay, Persepolis, 501/500. GARRISON/ROOT 2001: no. 16, pl. 10a–b **47** Cylinder seal impression, fired clay, Persepolis, 495/494. GARRISON/ROOT 2001: no. 19, pl. 13a–d **48** Cylinder seal impression, fired clay, Persepolis, 506. GARRISON/ROOT 2001: no. 216, pl. 118d **49** Cylinder seal, steatite, Samos, 800–700. KLENGEL–BRANDT 1997: no. 158 **50*** Column capital (fragment), dark grey stone, 175 x 80 cm, Persepolis, 500–400. Teheran, National Museum, 2011. CURTIS/TALLIS 2005: no. 12 **51** Column capital (fragment), dark grey stone, Persepolis, 500–400. CURTIS/TALLIS 2005: no. 13

VI. Selected bibliography

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