

Šalmu

I. Introduction. *Mesopotamian god.* Š. is the name of an Akkadian god when it occurs with the divine determinative. As a common noun Š. means “statue, image.” It is attested as a divine name preceded by the divine determinative in various cuneiform texts of the Late Bronze Age, notably from Ugarit and Alalakh, and from Neo-Assyrian texts of the Iron Age. Several pieces of evidence associate Š. closely with the sun god (→Solar deities) and with the concept of the king as the →sun of his people. The divine name Š.–sharri “image of the king” may therefore be an extension or hypostasis of Š. The term cannot be confused with statues of a particular king, which are described differently by giving the personal name of the king who is represented, for example, “statue of Tiglath–pileser.” If a royal funerary ritual from Ugarit, RS 34.126, refers to Š. (the vowelless word is open to other interpretations), it supports evidence from the Alalakh text AT 366 that Š. was personified or was closely associated with the principle of kingship. Unambiguous texts show that Š. was involved in the coronation and the death of kings. As Š.–sharri, the god was invoked in promissory oaths with the sun god in Neo-Assyrian legal contracts including treaties. Š. or Š.–sharri as the →winged disk may have been the sacred object on which oaths of loyalty to the king and his appointed heirs were sworn.

II. Iconographic discussion. The main iconographic evidence combined with an Aramaic inscription comes from a stela and a pedestal cube of the Neo-Babylonian or Achaemenid Persian period found at Teima in Northwestern Arabia (1*–2*). Through the matching of motif with inscription, the inscribed and sculptured stela and pedestal cube present the possibility that Š. is a name for the →winged disk as a solar symbol applicable to the king and to the national god (DALLEY 1986). Both king and national god vary according to time and place, for instance →Assur in Assyrian art (shown above individual kings on various monuments), and →Auramazda in Achaemenid art. As a decorative motif the winged disk is probably represented by the word Š. in lists of jewelry and metal vessels, sometimes written with the divine determinative.

III. Catalogue

1* Stela, sandstone, 75 x 26 x 16 cm, Teima, 450. Paris, Louvre, AO 1509. *ANWAR RASHID 1974: pl. 20:3; BÖRKER-KLÄHN 1982: no. 265; DALLEY 1986: fig. 1 2* Pedestal cube, sandstone, 37 x 37 cm, Teima, 450. **Place, institution, inv. no.**

*BAWDEN et al. 1980: pl. 69; LIVINGSTONE et al. 1983: 108–111; DALLEY 1986: fig. 2;

IV. Selected bibliography

DALLEY, 1986

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