

AN ANGRY GODDESS

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A new edition of the prophetic text K. 2401 will appear shortly as vol. IX of the Series *State Archives of Assyria* by Simo Parpola. This article will treat special features of lines Rev. I, 31'-34'¹.

This section starts in l. 15' with an *abat Ištar ša Arba'il* addressed to king Esarhad-don. In lines 17'-23' the goddess tells the king of all she has done for him before reproaching him angrily: "And you, what have you given me?" (l. 24'). Lines 25'-30' show that the king has neglected her. Lines 31'-34' read:

Transliteration

31'. *ma-a ket-tu-ma* 1BÁN *a-kal a-ṣu-di*

32'. 1BÁN DUG.*ma-si-tú ša* KAŠ.DU₁₀.GA

33'. *ki-in ú-ur-qé a-ku-su*

34'. *la-áš-ši a-na <pi>-ia la-áš-kun*

Translation

"Really, prepare 1 *sūtu* of *aṣūdu*-dish, one *sūtu* of sweet beer in a *massītu* vessel. Vegetables and soup I shall take and place in my mouth."

kettu, "really, truly", occurs very frequently in letters of the NA period, but always without the particle *-ma*, a form which is characteristic of the OB period. Transcription of the lines reveals the reason why the particle is used in this context:

¹⁾ I would like to thank Prof. S. Parpola for his permission to publish this article in SAAB before his book appears, Dorothy Miller, Frankfurt/Main, who kindly translated it into English and Dr. A. Livingstone who kindly checked the final version.

31'. *mā kettumma sūtu akal asūdi*

32'. *sūtu massītu ša šikari tābi*

This gives the following series of sounds:

31'. *mā kettumMa SūTu akaL aŠūDi*

32'. 0' *sūtu MaSSīTu ša šikari tābi*

The sequence of consonants **LSD** (Liquid-Sibilant-Dental) is framed by the sequence **MST** (Labial-Sibilant-Dental). In addition, each line includes the sequence **TMST**, and **SD** is followed immediately by **ST**².

a-kal is the only occurrence of the construct form of *aklu* (cf. K. Deller, Or 34 [1965]), p. 268). But this case has no paradigmatic value, since here it was only important to have a *consonant* before *a(šūdu)* that permitted a play on sounds³ and was at the same time a bisyllabic word in order to maintain the symmetry of the two halves of the line (each half has five syllables), as well as the symmetry between food and drinking. It is therefore not possible to conclude from this construct that *ašūdu* refers to an *edible* offering, but the occurrence of **KÙ.BABBAR** in construct with *ašūdu* in other texts makes it clear that it not necessarily refers to food.

Most of the vowels in ll. 31' and 32'a are dark. The sequence in l. 32'b is light, with *i* predominating: *a i a i a i*. It is therefore surprising that the form *ki-in* is used for *ka'in* (imperative D-stem), thus breaking the vowel sequence. It is to be assumed that it is intended to mark the end of the sentence with a pause and to convey an irritated and commanding tone of voice.

ú-ur-qé: apart from one occurrence in Sargon's "Letter to the God" (MDOG 115, 104, l. 355), where it is perhaps due to an error, K. 2401 is the only known case where *NA urqu* is written with a prefixed *ú*. It serves a dual purpose here. The previous sentence ends with a sharp *i* sound, the new sentence begins with a dark *u*, which is repeated until the end of the line and expresses the anger of the goddess. The author emphasizes the opposition *i—u* graphically by determining the colour (and not the length) of *u* through adding *ú-* before *-ur*. At the same time this *ú-* means that the new sentence starts with a consonant (*w-*), thereby stressing the break after the previous sentence which ended with *-n*. There is a blank on the tablet at this point—for a good

²) This part of the text shows clearly that *mā* was not read aloud. That also applies to r. I, 6'-8', even though the particle has a definite semantic function in both cases.

³) For the same reason **NINDA.MEŠ** in r. I, 9', must be read *aklu*, and not *kusāpu*.

reason. Line 35 should therefore be read: *kīn // wurqe akussu*. *ú-* is hence in both cases an aid to reading. But it can also be understood, graphically, as a determinative (standing for the usual *ú.SAR*) before *urqe*. The ending *-qé* raises syntactical problems, since any connection between the two nouns would be reflected in *akussu*. But *qu-* before the *a-* of *akussu* would call for a second *w-* reading (**Wurq Wakussu*) and interrupt the flow of speech. But this line clearly has only two main emphases: *wu-* and *-ku-*. The ending *-qé* therefore has no syntactic function and appears to be a mute vowel.

On the photo line 34' reads: LA ÁŠ ŠI A NA AŠ IA *la-áš-kun*. *lašši* is one of five precative forms⁴ found in lines 34' to 36'. CAD N/2, p. 82b, transcribes as follows: *laššia ina pija laškun*, i.e. the sign NA is emended to *ina* and AŠ to PI. The reading *laššiA* is not logical, as the last precative form is otherwise the only one with a ventive. While there is no reason to query the addition of PI, another emendation seems probable. The scribe, having just written the similar sign NA, wrote —by mistake— only the horizontal wedge of PI. This error could have been triggered by the fact that the preposition *ana* used here is indeed unusual: the phrase found elsewhere is *ina pí šakānu*. But if *lašši* was followed here by the preposition *ina*, the two *i*-sounds would weaken the break between the sentences, whereas here a *staccato* tone is intended to convey angry words. There must therefore be a break after *lašši* to enable the person reading aloud to make a new start with the next word, i.e. *ana*. The author achieves this goal with this little graphical trick. The reader can choose to read *laššia*: in this case NA follows alone, and he has to start again with this syllable (possibly twisting it into *ina*); if he reads *ana pí šakānu* he naturally raises his voice at the desired part. Since the scribe was evidently also irritated here, this shows that he was not [PN]rLÚ.ra⁷-gi-mu whose name appears in r. II, 30'-33'.

⁴) The reading *la ašši* (as in CAD K, p. 472b) is not plausible because of the clear precatives in line 35' (*lu-mal-li*) and 36' (*lu-tir-ra*), cf. already Strong, BA 2 (1894), 633: "if we regard them as negatives, the whole structure becomes absolutely incoherent".