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TWO INSCRIPTIONS OF MESILIM, KING OF KISH

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In the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. XXXIII, Part 3 (November, 1913), pp. 295 f., Professor Barton has a note on "The Names of Two Kings of Adab." Professor Barton's discussion is based upon copies of inscriptions from Bismya published by Dr. Edgar J. Banks in his *Bismya or the Lost City of Adab*. Through the kindness of Professor Robert Francis Harper the writer is able to give scholars more accurate copies of these inscriptions which will help in correcting a number of misapprehensions.

A glance at Plate I¹ will show that the name of the king given by Dr. Banks (p. 201) as Barki, and by Professor Barton as Mêki, is undoubtedly Mesilim. Professor Barton reads line 4, IL-IL, "brought," but this reading seems doubtful. The second part of the IL-sign is usually very elaborate. The writer offers, with reserve, the reading GA-NA-GÍ or, perhaps, GA-MU-GÍ. The name of the patesi is doubtful; only the middle sign is really cut into the stone. All the signs of the inscription were first lightly scratched upon the stone, and then cut in by running the engraving instrument back and forth over the faint lines of the first sketch. The latter process seems to have been applied only to the middle sign of the name of the patesi. The last sign is scratched upon a porous section of the stone, but the lines, although very faint, are as given. Of the first sign only the vertical and horizontal lines are certain.² The inscription reads:

¹ME-SILIM ²LUGAL KIŠ ³E-SAR ⁴GA-NA(?) -GÍ ⁵SAL(?) -KISAL-SI GAR PA-
TE-SI UD-NUN-KI

Mesilim, king of Kish, to Esar has returned [this bowl], Salkisalsi being patesi of Adab.

¹ The inscription is found on a fragment of a limestone bowl whose diameter was about fourteen inches.

² There are a number of scratches upon the stone, both inside and outside the area of the inscription. This makes it all the more difficult to determine the first and last signs of the name of the patesi.

Was the patesi of Adab a woman? According to the kings' list published by Scheil, the founder of a dynasty of Kish was a woman named Azag(or Ku)-Bau.

Another inscription of Mesilim is given on Plate II (=Banks, p. 266):

¹ME-SILIM ²LUGAL KIŠ ³DUMU KI-AG ⁴(DINGIR)NIN-HAR-SAG (remainder broken away).

Mesilim, king of Kish, beloved son of Ninharsag. . . .

A fragment of what is probably an inscription of Mesilim is given on Plate II, No. 2.

In none of these inscriptions is the determinative ki added to Kish, nevertheless the writer does not hesitate to translate LUGAL KIŠ by "king of Kish." That Mesilim of Kish calls himself "beloved son of Ninharsag" seems to weaken the argument in favor of a South-Babylonian (Sumerian) Kesh; see Meyer, *Sitzungsberichte d. könig. preuss. Akad. d. Wiss.*, XLVII (1912), 1096 f., and King, *History of Sumer and Akkad*, p. 128. From *Rev. d'Assyr.*, IX (1912), 37, it would seem that Thureau-Dangin has abandoned the view put forward in *Jour. Asiat.*, sér. X, Vol. XI (1908), 131, n. 2.

If there remained any doubt as to Esar's being the name of a temple and not that of a king it would be removed by some of the other votive inscriptions. Two of these are given on Plate III.

No. 1: ¹E-SAR ²AD- . . . -DA ³(SAL) DAR- . . . ⁴DAM ⁵A-MU-RU.

To Esar, Ad . . . da, for Dar . . . [his] wife, dedicated.

No. 2: ¹E-SAR ²ENGUR-A-NA-AG ³DAM ⁴KA-UD-ZID ⁵[A-MU-R]U.

To Esar, for Enguranag, [his] wife, Kaudzid dedicated.

Professor Barton suggests that the name of the king called Da-udu by Dr. Banks should be read Lugal-da-udu. He compares this name with such names as Lugal-ušum-gal, Lugal-šag-ga, etc. Perhaps the name should be read Lugal-da-lu, which would be a phonetic rendering of the name Lugal-dalla; cf. Huber, *Personennamen*, p. 131. The writer would also prefer to read E-igi-nim-pa-è instead of Barton's E-ši-nim-pa-ud-du. The name read Me-ši-tug by Professor Barton is to be read Me-ba- The curved line of the last sign, as given on p. 264 of *Bismya*, is not part of the sign at all, but indicates the break in the vase. No restoration can be offered.

PLATE I

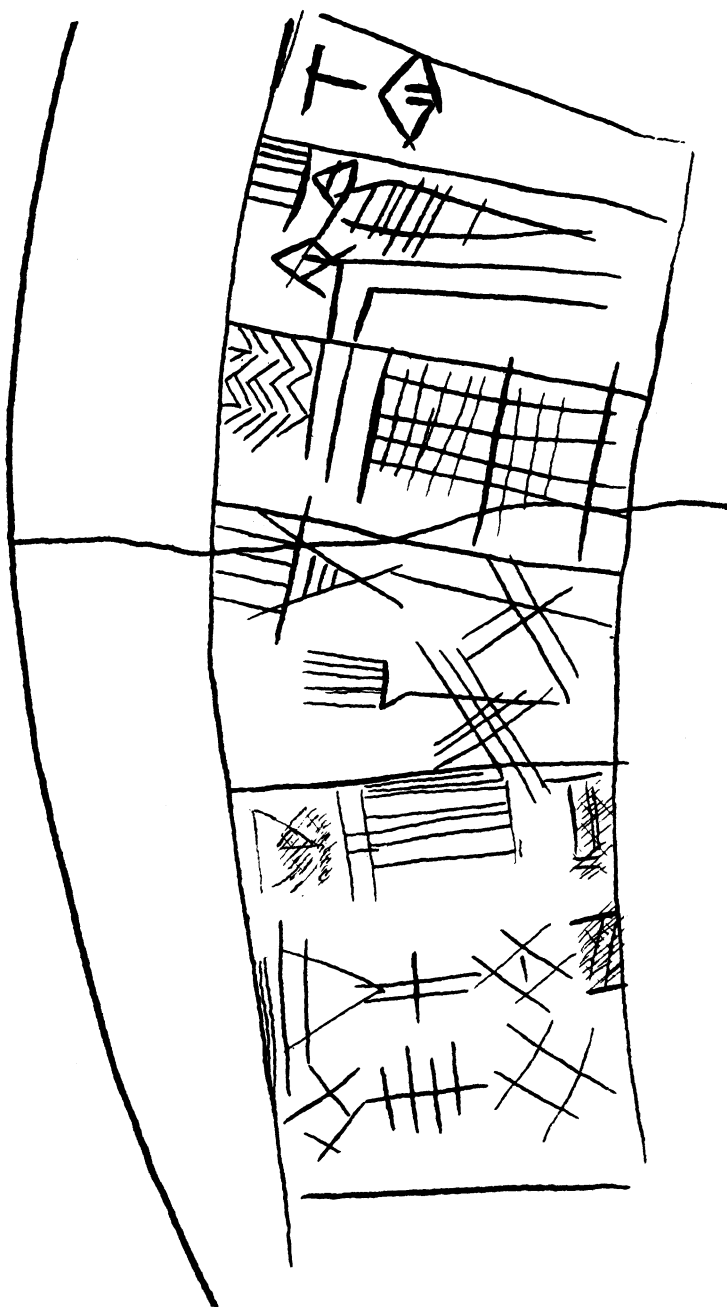


PLATE II

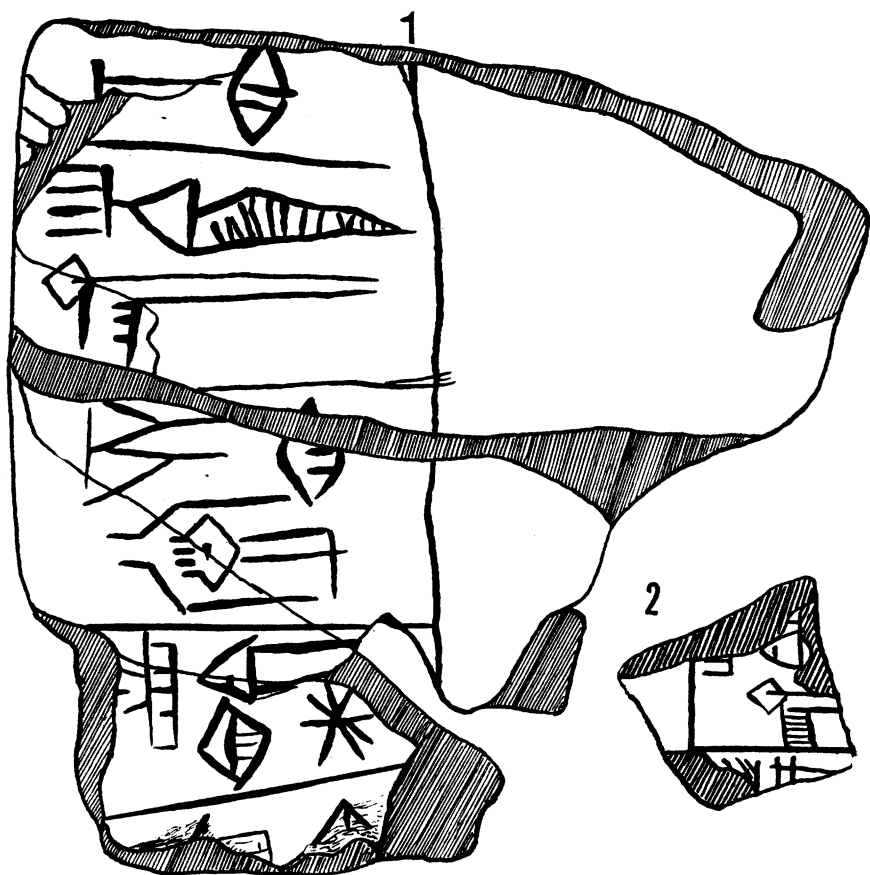


PLATE III

