



Freude hinein". Der akkadische Text liest jedenfalls anders; *in rēšātim ū hidiātim* (vgl. I 90) ist nicht zu erkennen. Die erhaltenen Spuren scheinen auf *in-na-an-tu-ra* zu weisen. Eine solche sumerische Form mitten in einem akkadischen Text ist indes sehr auffällig. — III 9: statt *hibit* hat der sumerische Text *DI.KA.GA.* (= *saduga*). — III 10 ff.: der Name der Mauer läßt sich aus den erhaltenen Spuren nicht mehr deutlich erkennen. — III 110: der sumerische Text bietet [*du-ri*]-*šu a(g)-da*, das wäre etwa *a-na da-ar e-pi-šá-am*. Die Zeichenreste in der Kopie passen indes kaum zu letzterem.

Traces of the Rhinoceros in Ancient Babylonia

By GEORGE A. BARTON, University of Pennsylvania

There was an animal in the Mesopotamian valley in ancient times that was in Sumerian called *am* and in Akkadian *rimu*. Concerning the nature of this animal scholars are not yet agreed. As late as the reign of Ashurnasirpal, king of Assyria, it was good royal sport to hunt these animals which were still wild. From the pictures of these left on the walls of the palace of this monarch¹ it appears that the creatures which he hunted were a species of *bos bonasus* still found wild in the Caucasus.

On many cylinder seals the myth of Enkidu fighting with the bull is pictured, and there the animal is uniformly represented as of the same species. The sign by which the Sumerians designated *am*  was explained by HOUGHTON² and DELITZSCH³ as the ordinary symbol of ox (an ox-head surmounted by two horns) in which the sign  *kūr*, "country" or "mountain" had been inserted. This led WARD⁴ to regard the *rimu* as the "wild ox of the mountains." Others, as the latest revisers of Gesenius' Lexicon, regard the *rimu* as an unknown animal.

Even if the *rimu* had become in the eyes of the Assyrians of Ashurnasirpal's time a kind of Caucasian ox, there is reason to believe that in the earliest period the *am* was a rhinoceros.

¹ Cf. OLNSTEAD, *History of Assyria*, p. 92.

² Cf. TSBA, VI, 293.

³ *Ursprung der Keilschriftzeichen*, p. 56.

⁴ *The Seal Cylinders of Western Asia*, ch. X, and p. 114.

A hitherto misunderstood passage in Gudea's Cylinder A points in this direction. It is col. xxv, 5—8 and reads as follows: *ka-ki-lugal-tur-bi-ta* *gu-ri-in am-siu igi-il-il-dam* *ti-ka-e-us-sa-bi* *nir-an-na an-ni us-sa-am*: "The gate through which the king entered like the horn⁵ of a wild ox which his face bears: the entablature of the gate's architrave rose to heaven like the ziggurat of Anu."

This passage, which occurs in the midst of a large number of similes which prove its author to have been a very accurate observer of nature, suggests at once the rhinoceros—the only animal whose "horn his face bears," or whose horn can be said to "rise like a ziggurat." This reference in Gudea does not stand quite alone. It is corroborated by the picture of a mythical creature, the *sirrush*, found by KOLDEWAY,⁶ pictured on the walls of the Ishtar Gate at Babylon. While this quadruped was partly mythical as its forked, snake-like tongue and the sting in the end of its tail prove, the general shape of the rump and the body resembles a rhinoceros, and the horn rising from the face is clearly that of a rhinoceros but slightly conventionalized. The neck has been thinned and elongated and, in the lapse of time, the folds of the skin of the pachyderm have been imagined as scales, but the shape of the body and the horn were doubtless originally suggested by the rhinoceros.

It is interesting in this connection to note that the references in the Gilgamesh Epic to the fight of Enkidu with the bull use the word *alu* "stag" for the creature⁷ (translated by JENSEN and UNGNAD, "Himmelsstier") rather than *rimu* or *lu*. This variation in the language applied to the creature would be natural, if the original story referred to an animal that became extinct in that region at an early date.

As is well known the rhinoceros originated in central Asia from whence he wandered westward and southward. Once he roamed over the whole of Europe, as well as southwestern Asia. He is now found in Africa, in Assam in India, and in islands of the

⁵ The word *gu-ri-in*, which has puzzled previous translators (THUREAU-DANGIN and WITZEL) is the Akkadian *qurnu*, Hebrew קרן "horn"—the *q* appearing as *g* in Sumerian.

⁶ *Das wiederentstehende Babylon*, p. 47.

⁷ Cf. KB, VI, p. 174, line 146 and p. 176, line 176.

Pacific to the southeast of India.⁸ The shape of the body of the sirrush and also his horn bear a general resemblance to pictures of those still found in Assam.

It would not be at all strange to have rhinoceroses surviving in Babylonia until the verge of the historical period, since, another pachyderm, the elephant survived in Upper Mesopotamia until after 1500 B.C. Thothmes II received elephants as a part of his tribute from that region, called by the Egyptians the land of Niy,⁹ and a few years later Thothmes III hunted¹⁰ in the same country 120 elephants for the sake of their tusks.

We conclude, then, that the Sumerian *am* originally represented a rhinoceros and that it is not a combination *gud* + *kur*, but that it represented a head surmounted by two ears, on the face of which two eyes and a horn were pictured. The oldest form so far observed is in the writing of Manistusu¹¹ and is much conventionalized.

In primitive traditions concerning the rhinoceros—traditions which assumed a semi-mythical character in regions where the animal became extinct—we probably have the origin of the fabled unicorn.

Additional Note.

Since this little article was sent to press the first Heft of ZDMG for 1925 has come to hand, containing Professor UNGNAD'S article "Die Paradiesbäume." Professor UNGNAD takes the *šišiti*, in the passage quoted above from Gudea to signify the "tree of life" and the *nir an-na* to be "der Baum des Anu-Tores," d. h. "der Baum der Wahrheit."

While *šišiti* might, of course, mean the "tree of life," its meaning here should, I think, be determined by the context, and the whole context, both before and after, speaks of features of the architecture. One of the Akkadian equivalents of *šišiti* is *igaru*, "wall" (K 4378, vi, 29). In the text *šišiti ka-e* is followed by *us-sa-bi* "its highest part." I believe the whole refers to the arched or pointed-topped gateway and not to the "tree of life." Gudea is, according to my understanding of the passage, saying that this

⁸ Cf. LYDENKER. *Encyc. Brit.* 11th ed., XXIII, 293 ff.

⁹ BREASTED, *Ancient Records Egypt*, II, § 125.

¹⁰ BREASTED, *Ibid.*, § 388.

¹¹ See the writer's *Origin and Development of Babylonian Writing*, no. 183.

~~Q 810 . c . 70 . 4~~

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Q 810 . c . 31 . 4

Journal of the Society of Oriental Research

EDITED BY

SAMUEL A. B. MERCER

VOLUME IX



THE SOCIETY OF ORIENTAL RESEARCH
TRINITY COLLEGE
TORONTO, CANADA

1925