

საინტერესოა ტექსტებში დაფიქსირებული ტერმინი – *nag-ku(d)*, რომელიც მოგრძო აუზის კონსტრუქციად მიიჩნევა. სიტყვის პირველი მარცვალი *nag* შუმერული ზმნაა, რომელიც – დაღევას, *სმას* აღნიშნავს, უკავშირდება სამელ წყალს და წყურვილის მოკვლას.¹ სიტყვის სემანტიკა ხომ არ გვაძლევს ვარაუდის უფლებას, რომ ენმერქარის რიტუალის 310-ე სტრიქონის სიტყვები – მეფემ *შეუერთა ევფრათი ტიგროსს* – ამ რეზერვუარიდან წყლის გაშვებად მივიჩნიოთ, რომლის მართვაშიც ღვთაება ნისაბას წყალობით, ენმერქარი კარგად უნდა ყოფილიყო დახელოვებული.

რიტუალის ტექსტში ორი უცნობი ტერმინი რჩება. ესენია: *eš-da* (წმინდა თასი) – ჭურჭელი, რომლის მნიშვნელობა უცნობია და *li d g a* საზომი, სავარაუდოდ მინის.

ერთი კი ცხადია, ორივე სიტყვა საირიგაციო საქმიანობას უნდა უკავშირდებოდეს. შესაძლოა – სადრენაჟო სისტემასაც, რადგან ამ სისტემის აღწერილობაზე და მოხმარების წესზე ყველა პერიოდის ლურსმული ტექსტი დუმს. სავარაუდოდ, *eš-da* და *lidga* მეფის საკრალური იარაღები იყო. როგორც ტექსტში მკაფიოდ იკითხება, მეფე თავად დგამს ჭურჭლებს შორის *e š-da-s*, რომელიც ოქროსია და თვითონვე ამაგრებს *lidga-s* მიწაზე, რომელთა მოხმარების საიღუმლოც, სავარაუდოდ, მეფე-ქურუმთან რჩებოდა.

Nino Samsonia

For the Interpretation of the Mesopotamian Ritual of Gaining the Abundant Harvest of Wheat

All ancient civilizations are a gift of a fertile land and, consequently, the result of an irrigation system assembled at a high level.

According to the texts of the III millennium B.C., the irrigation system in the southern Mesopotamia was arranged at a fairly high level, which used to be quite a difficult, responsible and time-consuming task. The laying of the canal, the completion and management of the irrigation system, was traditionally in the hands of the supreme ruler, the king.

The two affluent rivers of Mesopotamia, the Tigris and the Euphrates, flowed long before they appeared in the cuneiform Texts. Archaeological and geological studies have shown that these rivers have undergone some changes, branched over the time – which is also observed in the cuneiform texts; later they reconnected. The quality and the scale of the currents had also changed with time.

¹ **nag** (ზმ.) სმა, სასმელი I 167, 175, 177, 188, 190; III 95, 105, 306, 318, 378; IV 24, 25, 237, 241, 249, 398;

ბ. სამსონია, *შუმერ მეფეთა ეპოსები, ლექსიკონი* (თბილისი, 2009).

The existing changes must also have been caused by rising sea levels. However, in the period of our interest (IV-II millennium B.C) the changes of the rivers could not be drastically significant.

In the article, before discussing the irrigation ritual performed by Enmerkar, the king of the first dynasty of Uruk (from the Sumerian epic "Enmerkar and Lord of Aratta"), we address the knowledge and tradition of water management in the Mesopotamia.

Agricultural texts tell us that the ruler of canal was the king, and that the mismanaged water could have turned into a flood. We consider the inscription of King Larsa, Rim-sin I (1758-1699 B.C), on how he dug a royal canal. We read in Rim-sin's text that he, like Enmerkar, performs an irrigation ritual, although the text tells us nothing about the description of the ritual. In the Enmerkar text, the irrigation ritual is presented in detail, although it remains obscure due to the metaphorical language of the text.

In the article we refer to the inscription of Lagash Ensi, Entemena brick, which tells us how the inhabitants of the Southern Mesopotamia managed to create a water supply, the text mentions bitumen and burnt brick, which is usually a waterproof material for hydroprojects.

Existing agricultural texts and inscriptions of kings make us think that they had an irrigation system developed in the Mesopotamian city-states, with a perfect system of management. In Mesopotamia, the ditches of both rivers were rapidly filled with straw, the clearing of which was organized. The water level was also controlled, which had a certain supervisor, called *gugallu* in the cuneiform texts; Despite its important function, this title is seldom found in administrative texts, suggesting that intimidation of local, administrative units from the central government should have taken place.

As we have already mentioned in the article, water could have flooded entire fields. In the texts of the III millennium B.C we come across the word – *Nag-ku (d)*, which should indicate the construction of an elongated basin near the canals (90 meters long, 2 meters deep). Some scholars refer to this word as "reservoir".

The texts discussed in the article are from the later period of Enmerkar – Lagash, Ur III dynasty and the kings of Larsa City are centuries away from the reign of Enmerkar, while city-state Uruk and the kings of it's first dynasty were to be in possession of the secret of laying and managing the canal, as evidenced by the abundance of wheat of Uruk, which was handed down to posterity, by putting it on the board.

We will discuss verses 308-329 of the text of the Sumerian epic, "Enmerkar and Lord of Aratta" on an unknown irrigation ritual, where the king performs the most difficult task. Enmerkar should demonstrate the immense potential of Uruk for growing wheat, which is related to the perfect management of the irrigation system. The ritual performed by Enmerkar, like that Rin-sin I of Larsa, must be associated with the brilliant management of the irrigation system. The king manages to water (moisten) a fairly large amount of wheat. At the beginning of the ritual the king interconnected the Tigris to the Euphrates, to indicate the possibility of managing a large amount of water. The king appears as the supreme ruler of the

canal, thus fulfilling the function of a priest. However, due to the metaphorical language of this ritual, it remains unclear how Enmerkar achieves the goal. If we follow the mythological aspect of the text, we will see the knowledge that the deity Nisaba shared only with his chosen ones.

Based on the texts discussed, it can be assumed that Enmerkar used the water of the "reservoir" of canals – *ikum*, the Sumerian equivalent of which is recorded in the epics of the kings of Uruk. Akkadian *ikum* corresponds to the Sumerian *eg*, which translates as dam, and as mentioned above, many scholars translate it as a channel. This word is first recorded in the epic of Enmerkar, the heir to Lugalbanda, with the same meaning. That is, Enmerkar opened the water from the canal *ikum*, which, as we have seen above, was a 60/60 length-width construction of the same Sumerian texts – *eg*, he was able to water the harvest for the whole year, then the text tells us that the wheat sprouts grew, he filled the nets with wheat and sent to the Lord of Aratta. In this way he was able to complete the most difficult task. Enmerkar made the Lord of Aratta see the wealth and superiority of Uruk.

The term encountered in the texts – *nag-ku (d)*, is of interest. It is considered to be the construction of an elongated basin. The first syllable of the word is *nag* – Sumerian verb, which means -drink, drink, is associated with drinking water and quenching thirst. Is it possible that the word semantic may give us the right to assume that the words of verse 310 of the Enmerkar ritual, "The king interconnected the Euphrates and Tigris," means the launching of this reservoir, the management of which Enmerkar must have been well versed in?

Relying upon the texts discussed in the article, let us summarize the III-II millennium. B.C Irrigation terms recorded in cuneiform texts:

1. *ikum* (Akk.) (Sum. *Eg*) = 60/60 meter construction between dams and canals;

2. *nag-ku (d)* (Akk.) – construction of an elongated basin near the canals (90 meters long and 2 metres deep), reservoir.

3. *gugallum* – canal Supervisor;

Two unfamiliar terms remain in the Enmerkar ritual text: *eš- da* (sacred bowl) – a vessel meaning of which is unknown, and *li d g* a measurement, presumably of land. One thing is clear – both words should be related to irrigation activities.

Maybe the existing drainage system as well, however, the agricultural texts of all periods keep silence regarding the description of the drainage system and the method of use. Presumably *eš- da* and *lidga* were the sacral tools of the king – the king himself used to place golden *eš-da* between the vessels and attaches *lidga* to the land, the use of which remained a secret with the king-priest.