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A 'New' Kutir-Nahhunte II Text

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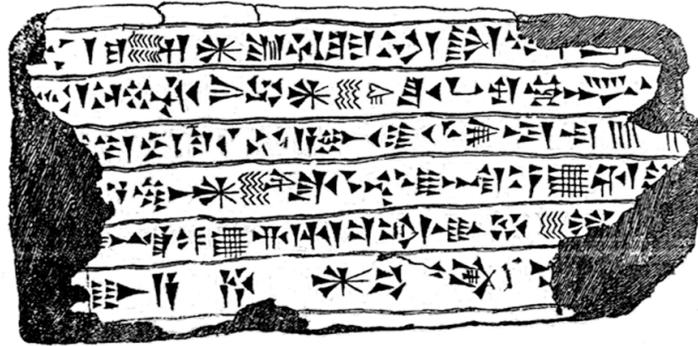
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104) A “new” Kutir-Nahhunte II brick from Susa – This Middle Elamite brick was reportedly found at the Tomb of the Mosque of the Prophet Daniel by the American entrepreneurial captain Henry Austin and exhibited with other specimens in New York City — in January 1817. Captain Austin, understanding the antiquarian value of cuneiform brick inscriptions collected at Hilleh, Susa and elsewhere, entrusted his findings to Dr. Samuel L. Mitchill (1764-1831), a prominent figure in early American arts, sciences and politics. Dr. Mitchill presented one of the bricks to the Literary and Philosophical Society of New-York, which excited considerable public curiosity. “Many are the witnesses of the impressions made in the cement by the straw which was mingled with it; and of the black hue and pungent smell of the bitumen, which is a component of the mortar.” The inscriptions were copied by a C. H. Smith, an “able antiquarian.” Engravings of two bricks were made by Alexander Anderson (1775-1870), the foremost American wood-cut engraver, and copies were promised to be distributed to the literati in the United States and elsewhere.¹ The illustration of the Kutir-Nahhunte II brick is one of two engravings by Anderson, the other being a Nebuchadnezzar II brick of a well-attested type.² Apart from correctly identifying the direction the ductus flowed, the engraver labored in perfect ignorance of the meaning of a single sign. These were undoubtedly the first cuneiform inscriptions brought to America, the first published in the American press as a visual *editio princeps*, and formed the animus of the first American periodical essay devoted to what would later be termed Assyriology.³ This fascinating story will be told elsewhere.



Transliteration :⁴

- 1) [ù¹ ku-tir-^dnaḥ-ḥu-un²-te ša-¹ak i¹šū-ut-ru¹-[uk-^dnaḥ-ḥu-un-te-ki-ik]
- 2) [li¹-ba-ak ḥa-ni-ik ^din-šū-ši-na-ak-ki-¹ik] [ku-um-pu-um ki-du-ú-ia]
- 3) [ú¹-¹pa¹-at-ma ku-ši-ik a-ak mi-ši-ir-ma-na¹ sa-ri¹-[iḥ a-ak e-ri-en-tum⁸-ia]
- 4) [ku-ši-iḥ] a-ak ^din-šū-ši-na-ak na-pír-ú-ri¹ i¹] [si-ma-ta-aḥ e ^din-šū-]
- 5) [ši-na¹-¹ak¹ na-pír-ú-ri ḥu-ut-ta-ak ḥa-li-[ik-ú-me li-ma nu te-la-ak-ni]
- 6) [a¹-ak a-ḥa-an ḥi-iḥ¹ si¹]-[tu⁴-uk-ti-ni]

The inscription, which recounts the construction of a temple dedicated to Inšušinak at Susa, belongs to other bricks of this king securely provenanced at the site of ancient Susa. That and the finding of the brick at the ancient Mosque of the Tomb of Daniel make the discovery of the object at Susa a near certainty. Although I have been unable to trace the modern whereabouts of this brick in American collections, its authenticity is not in doubt.

1. Anon., “Austin’s Asiatic Antiquities,” *The National Register, A Weekly Paper* 3, no. 5 (1817) 79.

2. The figure that accompanies this article was adapted from William B. Dinsmoor, “Early American Studies of Mediterranean Archaeology,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 87, no. 1 (1943). fig. 2, facing p. 74, a reproduction of the original Anderson engraving from the collection of the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia. I am indebted to Benjamin R. Foster for this reference.

3. Anon., “Ancient Persian Bricks,” *North American Review and Miscellaneous Journal* 4, no. 12 (1817) 328ff.

4. Restoration is based on König, *Die elamischen Königsinschriften*, no. 29 Kuter-Nahhunte II, p. 83, and Florence Malbran-Labat, *Les inscriptions royales de Suse. Briques de l’époque paléo-élamite à l’Empire néo-élamite*, Musée du Louvre, Département des Antiquités Orientales. Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1995, no. 35, Kutir-Nahhunte Br. 1641-1696, pp. 83-84. See also Walker, *Cuneiform Brick Inscriptions*, no. 202, p. 132. I am grateful to Matthew Stolper of the Oriental Institute for help with identifying this inscription.

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