Note on Akkad

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Akkad (Hebr. אָכָד; Greek versions: Ἀκκαδ, Ἀκκαδ) is mentioned only once in the Old Testament, Gen. 10:10, as one of the four chief cities, Akkad, Babel, Erech, and Calneh, which constituted the nucleus of the "kingdom of Nimrod" in the land of Shinar, or Babylonia. This Biblical city, Akkad, was probably identical with the northern Babylonian city known to us as Agade (not Agane, as formerly read), which was the principal seat of the early Babylonian king Sargon I (Sarganišar-ali). The date of this king is given by Nabonidus, the last Semitic king of Babylonia (555–537 B.C.), as 3800 B.C., but this is perhaps too high by 700 or 1000 years.¹ The probably non-semitic name Agade occurs in a number of inscriptions,² and is now well attested as the name of an important ancient capital. The later Assyro-Babylonian form Akkaddu 'of or belonging to Akkad' is, in all likelihood, a Semitic loanform from the non-Semitic name Agade, and seems to be an additional demonstration of the identity of Agade and Akkad. The usual signs denoting Akkaddu were 𒂗𒉊, which in the non-Semitic Sumerian were read uru-ki or ur-ki 'city-land' or 'land of the city' par excellence, meaning the city of Agade of Sargon I, as this for a long period remained the leading city of Babylonia.³ The sign 𒂗𒉊, which is really a doubled BUR-sign,

¹ Prince, Nabonidus, p. v.
² In the Sargon inscriptions: OBI, i. pl. 1, no. 1, line 6; pl. 2, no. 2, line 5; pl. 3, no. 3, line 8. Also in OBI, xl. pl. 49, no. 119, Neb. col. ii. line 60 (Hilprecht, Freibrief Neb.), and Cun. Texts from Bab. Tablets, pl. 1, no. 91146, line 3.
seems to me to be a phonetic writing of bur ‘water, river’ (cf. Prince, *Materials for a Sumerian Lexicon*, p. 63), so that the signs actually really mean ‘the land of the two rivers,’ i.e., of the Tigris and Euphrates, or perhaps of two important canals (?).

It is quite possible that the name *Agade* may consist of two Sumerian words *aga* ‘crown’ or ‘headdress’ and *de* ‘fire,’ i.e., *Aga-de* = ‘crown of fire,’ and this may be an allusion to Ištar ‘the brilliant goddess,’ the tutelary deity of the morning and evening star, and the goddess of war and love, for her cult was observed in very early times in Agade, a fact attested by Nabonidus.6 His record mentions that the Ištar-worship of Agade was later superseded by that of the goddess Anunit, and Anunit was another personification of the Ištar-idea with a shrine at Sippar, which was practically identical with Agade.⁷ Now there were two cities named Sippar, one under the protection of Šamaš, the sun-god, and one under this Anunit = Ištar, a fact which points strongly to the probable proximity, if not actual identity, of Sippar and Agade. It has been thought that Agade-Akkad was situated opposite Sippar on the left bank of the Euphrates, and even that Agade was possibly the oldest part of Sippar. The double character of Sippar seems significant in connection with the double writing of the BUR-sign to denote *Akkadā*.

In the Assyro-Babylonian literature, the name *Akkadā* appears as part of the royal title in connection with Sumer;

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6 Prince, *Materials for a Sumerian Lexicon*, pp. 28, 73. That *aga* = MIR = ‘crown, headdress’ is well known. The Sem. *agā* ‘crown’ seems to be a loanword from this *aga*. It is important to note that we find the MIR-sign also = *agāgu* ‘be angry,’ which is an evident paronomasia on the original value *aga*. The BIL or NE-sign = ‘fire,’ and can also have the value *de*. This is clear from Prince, op. cit. 73. The Sumerian combination *de-tal* = Sem. *ṭalitu* ‘torch, flame,’ the latter word being not necessarily a loanword from *ṭal*, but possibly a paronomastic mnemonic association. *De-tal* in Sumerian can mean ‘the flame (de) which glows’ (*tal* = Rl).

⁷ *IR*, 69, li. 48; iii. 28.

viz., non-semitic: \textit{lugal Kengi(ki)} \textit{Uru(ki)} = \textit{šar mat Šumeri in Akkadi} 'king of Sumer and Akkad,' which appears to have been equivalent simply to 'king of Babylonia.' It is not likely, as some scholars have thought, that Akkad was ever used geographically as a distinctive appellation for northern Babylonia, or that the name Sumer denoted the southern part of the land, for kings who ruled only over southern Babylonia used the double title 'king of Sumer and Akkad,' and it was also employed by northern rulers who never established their sway farther south than Nippur, notably the great Assyrian conqueror Tiglath-pileser III (745–727 B.C.).

Professor McCurdy\footnote{\textit{History, Prophecy, and the Monuments}, I \S 110.} has very reasonably suggested that the title 'king of Sumer and Akkad' indicated merely a claim to the ancient territory and city of Akkad, together with certain additional territory, but not necessarily all Babylonia, as was formerly believed.