THE STATUE OF KING DAVID, AND WHAT IT TEACHES.

BY EDGAR JAMES BANKS, PH. D.
Field Director of the Recent Babylonian Expedition of the University of Chicago.

THE extensive group of the low mounds of Bismya, in Central Babylonia, are divided by the bed of an ancient canal, into two parts. Near the north-eastern edge of the city, from the center of the bed of this ancient canal, there rises a square shaped mound about thirty-five feet in height; in it were discovered the ruins of

MOUND OF BISMYA WHERE THE STATUE WAS FOUND. 4453

the temple of the ancient city of Adab. The temple therefore stood upon an island in the canal.

Early in the year 1904, after clearing the summit and the sides of the mound, a deep passage way about four feet wide and ten feet deep was discovered leading along the north-west side of the temple platform. While removing the dirt at the west corner there appeared the trunk of a large, headless, marble statue projecting from the clay of the platform in which it had been imbedded. The statue
was lying upon its back where it had fallen evidently during a sack of the city. The toes of its feet which were broken during the fall lay in fragments at its side. Search at the time failed to reveal the head; however, a month later, it was found at the opposite end of the trench about thirty yards away.
With the exception of places where an incrustation of saltpeter had formed, especially upon the head, the statue was perfectly preserved. It stands seventy-eight centimeters high; the measurement about the shoulders is sixty-four, and around the bottom of the skirt eighty-one centimeters. The feet are imbedded in the pedestal for strength. The lower half of the body is covered with an embroidered skirt of six folds, held together by a strap fastened behind; the upper part is nude. The arms are free from the body at the elbows, and the hands are clasped in front. Upon the right upper arm is an inscription of three lines. The head and the face are both shaved; the almond-shaped eyes are represented by holes or sockets into which eyeballs of another material, probably of ivory, were inserted, and the nose forms nearly a straight line with the forehead. In general the statue, if proportionately short and stout, is well formed; the shoulders and back, and especially the feet, are remarkably well shaped.

The three lines of writing upon the right upper arm are of so
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antiquated a form that when the statue was first discovered I was unable to recognize the characters, especially of the third line, in which, as sometimes happens in the very earliest inscriptions, the signs run together as if forming a single character. However, the discovery of other inscriptions of a later date soon led to its decipherment. The three lines are pronounced in the Sumerian language and are translated as follows:

E-mach, (The temple) Emach.
Lugal Da-udu, King David.
Lugal Ud-nun-ki, King of Adab (Bismya).

The inscription, as brief as it is, contains a mass of information for which we were seeking. The first line mentions the name of the temple in whose ruins we were digging, and that name, with the exception of its appearance in the stele of Hammurabi, was until then unknown. Thus another and an important temple which we later learned was dedicated to the goddess, Ninharsag, was recovered. The second line contains information of a still more startling character. The statue is not that of a god, but of a king, and the name of the king was Da-udu, a name still perhaps as common as any other in the modern Orient, and which with the exception of the final vowel is still pronounced the same. Daud is the Oriental pronunciation of David. The long controversies and the theories as to the derivation of the name of the Biblical king David were now settled forever, for it is an old Sumerian name which was adopted by the later Semites. In the third line of the inscription is an equal
amount of valuable material, for it gave us the name of the city in which we were excavating. The signs *Ud-nun-ki* are explained by an Assyrian inscription as standing for a city called Adab which was also mentioned upon the stele of Hammurabi. The curiosity of archaeologists as to its location was satisfied; the identification
of Bismya with Ud-nun-ki was confirmed dozens of times in the subsequent excavations. The appearance of the inscribed statue therefore not only restored to history the long lost temple of Emach and the important city of Adab, but it added another name to the small list of early Babylonian kings, and settled the controversy as to the derivation of the Biblical name David.

It would at first seem difficult to fix the date of the statue of David, yet the difficulty was not so great as it might appear. The general archaic appearance of the inscription, the linear characters employed before the wedges of later times had developed, the signs which were joined together, and the separation of the words by dividing lines, all indicated an extreme age.

Early during the excavations there was discovered in an upper stratum of the temple a short inscription of Naram Sin upon gold;
his date is given as 3750 B.C. At the bottom of the stratum in which the gold was found were bricks measuring nearly half a meter square; these bricks are peculiar to Sargon, the father of Naram Sin, of 3800 B.C. Beneath them we came upon various strata containing long thin bricks marked with grooves varying in number from one to five. These grooves I discovered to be the markings of the royal builders previous to the time of Sargon. The names of the rulers are entirely lost, nor do we even know their number; we can only distinguish the work of each king by the number and direction of the grooves upon the bricks. At Bismya were traces of at least fifteen kings who used the long thin bricks previous to the time of Sargon. Below the strata of grooved bricks of this long line of kings we discovered the foundation of a temple constructed of small bricks plano-convex in shape, or flat upon the bottom and
rounded upon the top. Similar bricks discovered in the lowest strata
of Nippur and Telloh by other explorers have been assigned by them
to the date of 4500 B. C. Therefore, since between the age of the
plano-convex brick temple and Sargon of 3800 B. C. at least fifteen
kings ruled at Bismya, one may be justified in placing the date of
the temple not far from 4500 B. C. It was to adorn this temple
that the statue of David was sculptured, and in its ruins it was found.

The art represented by the statue is still another indication of
its great antiquity. The almond-shaped eyes, the nose on a line with
the forehead, the short pleated skirt suspended from the waist, are
all peculiarities of the earliest Babylonian art. In the Louvre is
a fragment of a bas relief from Telloh representing a number of
small figures with the same peculiarities. When the relief was found
several years ago it was assigned to the very earliest Babylonian
period, and has since been regarded as one of the rarest of the treas-
ures of antiquity.

The statue of David, therefore, not only presented in its short
inscription the mass of information given above; it has the distinc-
tion of being the oldest statue in the world. It is the only perfect
Babylonian statue and the only one in the round with the arms free
from the body. Its execution testifies to the advance of civilization
during the fifth millennium B. C.; the art of that age in Babylonia
seems to have equaled the art of any other. It shows that the cos-
tume of the time was little more than a rag about the loins, yet the
art of braiding or weaving was known, and a highly developed written
language existed. The civilization of 4500 B. C. was never
surpassed in Babylonia unless perhaps during the very last days of
the empire.