



BĪT HAMBAN

BĪT HAMBAN (also Bīt Habban), a district on the Iranian-Iraqi frontier which first appears in Akkadian cuneiform sources after the fall of the Kassite dynasty (1157 B.C.) and which disappears from the records with the fall of the Assyrian empire in 612 B.C. No material has ever been scientifically excavated from Bīt Hamban, but in the cuneiform records it is closely linked with Namri, an area on the upper Dīāla between the Jabal Ḥamrīn and the Darband-e Kān, and has often been placed in the vicinity of the modern Sar Pol-e Zohāb.

In the records from the post-Kassite period Bīt Hamban is under Babylonian control. During this period Hamban, or Habban, is also used as a patronymic. Indeed, *bīt* is a standard Kassite/post-Kassite tribal designation, so the name refers to a group as well as an area. Three members of the group are identified as Babylonian functionaries and are connected with deeds of land on the Euphrates, far from Bīt Hamban.

In the first millennium Assyria exhibited an interest in Bīt Hamban. Some time after 835 B.C., Shalmaneser III placed Yanzu of Hamban on the throne of Namri, which he had conquered in 842 B.C., and by the time of Tiglath-Pileser III, Hamban was incorporated into the neo-Assyrian empire. It surfaces again during the general revolt in the east in 715 B.C., when at least one of its settlements, Kimirra, was captured and the population deported. The name appears in the reigns of Esarhaddon, Ashurbanipal, and perhaps Ashur-etil-ilani, but in all cases the contexts are broken. The name is apparently of Kassite origin.



It was long thought that Bīt Hamban was identical with the Kampada of the Old Persian Bīsotūn inscription (DB 2.27; Kent, *Old Persian*, p. 121) and the Gambadene of Isidore of Charax (Schoff, p. 7), an area near modern Bīsotūn. The most recent edition of the Akkadian version of the Bīsotūn inscription now demonstrates that the reading of the first syllable in the name is not *ha*, but probably *ka*, thus laying to rest this parallel and the geographical problems it raised (Voigtlander, p. 24; see also campadene).

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