

The Term Ensi

Thorkild Jacobsen

Harvard University

For the Akkadian word *iššakku* the dictionaries give two distinct meanings: (1) territorial ruler (of cities, countries etc.)” resp. “*Stadtfürst*”, and (2) “member of a class of privileged farmers” resp. “*mit Land belehneter Kolone*”¹.

Since *iššakku*, older *iššiakkum*, is a loan from Sumerian *ensí(k)*, older *enšiak*, it must seem a reasonable assumption that these meanings will have been present also in the parent word; yet only the first of them seems to be recognized by Sumerologists.

Actually, though, there are not a few cases in which the second of the two meanings will suit the context of *ensí(k)* more readily than will the generally accepted first one. An example of this offers the much debated term *ensí(k)-gal* which occurs, for one, in the title written PA-TE^{si}-gal-^dEn-lil used by *Iš-₇-gi-Mari*² and *I-ku₃(-un)-^dŠamaš*³ of Mari, as well as by Lugalzagesi of Uruk⁴ and Sargon of Akkadē⁵. Here a translation “great city ruler of Enlil” will seem odd since the domains of these rulers were vastly larger than that of a city ruler, and since their cities were respectively Mari, Uruk and Akkadē, not Enlil’s city Nippur.

If one applies the second meaning, “farmer”, however, things fall into place. The king was traditionally charged with the economic maintenance of Enlil’s temple and as such he had the title of farmer of

1. See *CAD I/J* p. 202f.; *AHW* p. 398.

2. Thureau-Dangin, *RA* 31 (1934) p. 140.

The Mari inscriptions are in Akkadian and it is not clear how PA-TÉ-SI-GAL was read. If it stands for a loan-word, perhaps *iššiak-kál*; if it is merely a Sumerogram, we have no clue to the reading.

3. *CT V* pl. 3 BM 12146. For clarity we have adjusted the writing to later, more explicit orthography in parentheses. We use hyphens to connect signs written in correct order, period for signs in corrected order, and colon for signs in the order in which they are written.

4. *SAKI* p. 154 i 15-16. In both Akkadian and Sumerian inscriptions earlier than Ur III the title is written in archaic, highly elliptic, orthography without explicit rendering of the genitive element, a sign of great age. In texts dating to Ur III such as the date formula for Šulgi’s 21st year (Goetze, *Iraq* 22 [1960], p. 151) the genitive is written ^dEn-lil-lá, with following adessive as ^dEn-lil-lá-ke. See, besides the yeardate quoted above the brick quoted by Goetze, *loc. cit.* note 3, and Astrolabe B (*KAV* 218) i 18.

5. *PBS V* 34 i 10f. The Akkadian version *ibid* ii. 10 is content with a simple *iššiak(PA-TE-SI)^dEn-lil*.

Enlil⁶. In Ur III and later periods the word used for “farmer” was *engar*, while older texts of the time of Akkadē and earlier use *ensî(k)*. The change in terminology may be seen as an early instance of the trend to replace *ensî(k)* with *engar* noted for later times in *CAD* I 33f.⁷

The title here discussed is not the only case in which the term *ensî(k)-gal* causes difficulties. As noted by de Genouillac in 1908, people with the designation *ensî(k)-gal* appear as contemporaries of reigning city rulers called simply *ensî(k)*. De Genouillac therefore suggested that the term be interpreted as referring to former *ensî(k)s*. Since the *ensî(k)-gal's* of the texts receive donkeys for ploughing, serve as overseers (*ugula*) of groups of workers called A-IGI-*du*⁸, or are allotted barley as fodder for ten kids, these former *ensî(k)s* would have to be still alive, but in retirement as it were.

De Genouillac's interpretation seems to be fairly generally accepted although Deimel in *Or.* 2 p. 49 had some understandable doubts about whether Presargonian *ensî(k)s* would be likely to survive their removal from office, and although a translation “retired city ruler” would hardly do in the title *ensî(k)-gal-Enlil(ak)* just discussed. If, on the other hand, one takes *ensî(k)* to mean “farmer” and *gal* “elder”, “chief”, the term will designate a foreman of a group of farmers⁹. Such a person would not be in competition with the city ruler and might well plough his own fief, keep goats, and serve as overseer. A text from Fara suggests that he could be attached to a temple or other large estate¹⁰.

The title *ensî(k)-gal* is not the only case in which a translation of *ensî(k)* as “city ruler” makes difficulty. One may cite the designation of a witness to a lawsuit of Ur III date as *ab-ba-uru ensî(k)*. If this is translated as “city father and city ruler” one cannot but wonder why the more important title, *ensî(k)*, is put after the lesser, “city father”, and, in fact, why the latter needed mention at all. If, on the other hand,

6. See the great Enlil Hymn (Falkenstein, *SGL* I p. 14) line 60: *engar-mah-bi siba-zî-kalam-ma* “its (i.e. Ekur's) august farmer is the good shepherd of the country (i.e. the king)”. Note also *Fara Wi* p. 40 *Lugal-engar-zi* “The king is an effective farmer”: the Ur III field name *A-šâ-dAmar-dSu-en engar-zi dEn-lil-lâ* “Field (named) Amar-Suen, the effective farmer of Enlil ...” (Legrain *TRU* 324.8); Zambia I (Kärki *St. O* 49.34) 1-6 ^d[Z]a-am-bi-ia siba-nî.tuk Nibruki *engar-gu-mah-ús še-mah-ús èš Dur-an-ki-šè* “Zambia, shepherd venerating Nippur, farmer who brings huge quantities of vine fruits, brings huge quantities of grain to the Temple complex Duranki”; Urdukuga (*ibid.* p. 34f.) 7-8 *engar-mah An dEn-lil-lâ* “august farmer of An and Enlil”. Parallel titles are *engar-zi Uri^{ki}-ma* “able farmer of Ur” used by Lipit-Eštar (*ibid.* pp. 15ff.), *engar-kala-ga Uri^{ki}-ma* “mighty farmer of Ur” used by Bur-Suen (*ibid.* p. 26), *engar-še-mah Uri^{ki}-ma* “august grain farmer” used by Enlil-bani (*ibid.* pp. 28, 30, 31, and 33), and referring to Ninisina's temple, *engar niš-tum-tum guru, gi²-gur-gur-re ú-a-zi èš É-gal-mah-a* “farmer bringing things, heaping up piles of grain, able supporter of the Temple complex Egalmah” used by Damiq-ili-šu (*ibid.* p. 37 and 38).

7. See the passages quoted above in notes 2-5 for pre-Ur III, and in note 6 for Ur III and later. An exception is the title of Ninurta/Ningirsu which says *ensî-gal dEn-lil-lâ* from Ur III till quite late. Cf. the date for Šulgi 21 ^dNin-urta *ensî-gal dEn-lil-lâ-ke₄*, the hymn *STVC* 35 rev. 41 ^d[Nin-ur]ta *ensî-gal dEn-lil-lâ*, and Astrolabe B (*KAV* 218) i 17-18 *iti dNin-gir-su ur-sağ ensî-gal dEn-lil-lâ-ke₄*. The reason is clearly the conservatism characteristic of religious language and cult. Even here, though, an occasional change to *engar* can be found. The Farmer's Almanach 109 has ^dNin-urta *engar-zi dEn-lil-lâ*.

8. Presumably to be read *a igi-du₃* “water watcher” and denoting inspectors of the water supply and its allocation to farmers. *CAD* M/2 p. 266 s.v. *mušēpišu* A renders it as “canal engineers”.

9. The basic meaning of *gal* is “big” contrasting with *tur* “little”. In its use for younger members of the family, connotations of size and age coalesce: *šeš-gal* “big brother” means also “older brother”, and the same with *nin_g-gal* “big sister”, “older sister”. In this usage it contrasts, with *banda* “little”, “younger”.

Since age was the recognized principle of authority in the family, *gal* came to be used generally for the leader of a group of equals, *primus inter pares*. Thus the squad of rangers (*gal₃-lâ*) that captures Dumuzi and Ningišzida is led by a *gal₃-lâ-gal* (see *UET* VI.1 and 47-48; *VS* II 35 ii 5-8). Similarly, designations such as *šâ-tam-gal*, *a-zu-gal*, *nar-gal*, *išib-gal* etc., indicate leadership within a group of professionals. Akkadian apparently had no separate word for this type of authority. It either disregarded *gal* as in the rendering of *ensî-gal* as simple *iššîak*(PA-TE-SI) in Sargon's inscriptions (Hirsch, *AJO* 20 p. 34, 10-11) and in the rendering of *šatam-gal* as simple *šâ-tam-mu* (*MSL* 12 p. 98 137a), or it borrowed the Sumerian term as in *nâr-gal-lu* (*MSL* 12 pp. 135-213, *išibgallu* (*MSL* 12 p. 130 45 *išib-gal* = ŠU), etc.

10. *Fara Wi*. no. 117 i ^dEn-lil-unkin(?)*-a NIĜ-PA-TE.SI-gal É-ME-LI* and iii *Utū-ur-sağ NĪĜ-PA-TE.SI-gal É-PA*, where É-ME-LI and É-PA appear to refer to temples or other large households. É-ME-LI is perhaps to be read *é.èn.sĭ₃(ME) = bît šā'ili*, “house of the necromancer”, assuming that EN of the later writing of *ensî*, EN-ME-LI, is a phonetic complement to *èn*. For É-PA, see *SAKI* index p. 250 s.v.

ensí(k) states a mere civilian occupation, a type of farmer, while *ab-ba-uru* stands for a prestigious public office, the order makes complete sense.

Lastly one may mention the singular title of an enemy notable captured by Ur-Nanše, *ensí^{si}-mā-gur₈(-ra)* (*JNES* 29 [1977] p. 107 xii' 4'), a title also held by the god ^d*Nimgir-sig₇*, (EWO 111), who belongs in the circle around Enki. Here again "city ruler of the barge" does not make convincing sense. We shall return to it presently.

Structure

The grammatical structure of the word *ensí(k)* seems reasonably clear, it consists of a genitive phrase in which a noun, *en*, is followed by another, *si*, in the genitive. As is normal in Sumerian, the /a/ of the genitive mark *-ak* is assimilated to the preceding vowel and the final /k/ is not written when final. Akkadian borrowed the term early as *iššiakkum*¹¹, before the vowel of the genitive *-ak* had been assimilated to the preceding /i/ of *si*. Unlike Sumerian, it assimilated the /n/ of *en* to the following /s/, or more precisely /š/, of *si* which from OBa on was rendered as /š/.

Meaning: The Component *si*

As to the meaning of *en.si.ak*, we shall discuss the element *en* in some detail later on and render it here provisionally as "manager". For the other element, *si*, two meanings may be considered: *si* = *imēru* "donkey"¹² and *si* = *mērešu*¹³ "plowable land", but since in early times plowing was done with donkeys¹⁴, the person in charge of the donkeys of a town or estate would be in charge of the plowing. A basic meaning for *ensí(k)* of "manager of the donkeys" would thus imply also "manager of the plowing". Such a basic meaning explains why Ningirsu's divine donkey herdsman is named *En-si₁₅-nun* "Princely manager of the donkeys"¹⁵, and why the deity ^d*Ensi^{si}-gal-abzu* is equated with ^d*Il-Mar-dū* and ^d*Ensi^{si}-mah* with *Mar-dū* in *An=Anum* II 292-293 in the Enki section; for the god *Mar-dū* is in one of his forms *Šakan*, god of the wild donkeys (*CT* XXIV pl. 42 91-92). The curious *ensí^{si}-mā-gur₈-ra* also becomes clear, it refers to the person in charge of the donkeys that hauled the barge along the towpaths of the canals, the "manager of the donkeys of the barge".

As for the connection of the term with plowing one may point to the fact that the god of plowing, Ninurta/Ningirsu is *ensí-gal* of Enlil. He opens the plowing season with a plowing ceremony which, when completed, he reports to Enlil. His month is *gud-si-su*, the tasks of which are given as "opening the soil, the oxen are made to go straight, the wetlands are opened up, the seeding plows are washed". His responsibility for the operation of Ekur's holdings of land as a whole may be seen from the date-formula for Šulgi's 21st year: *mu^d Nin-urta ensi-gal^d En-lil-lá-ke₄ é^d En-lil^d Nin-lil-lá-ke₄ bā-bar-kiḡ ba-an-du₁₁-ga^d Šul-gi lugal-Uri^{ki}-ma-ke₄ ašag(GĀN) niḡ-ka₉-šā é^d En-lil^d Nin-lil-lá-ke₄ si bí-sá-a* "Year when Ninurta, *ensí(k)gal* of Enlil ordered an audit for the temples of Enlil and Ninlil, and Šulgi, king of Ur, straightened out the fields (forming) the core of the accounting for the temples of Enlil and Ninlil"¹⁶.

11. See *Toward the Image of Tammuz* (W. L. Moran ed.) p. 385 last paragraph. For the Šulgi passage there quoted, see *Sumer* 11, p. 110 no. 10 18f., and read *i-in-si* for *ni-in-si*, the writing with *i* serves to mark hiatus with the vowel of the preceding *hi-a*.

12. *MSL* 14 p. 341 173 (*si-i* [:SI: *si*]-*su-u*) ... *i-me-rum*.

13. *MSL* 14 p. 341 166 (*si-i* [:SI: *si*]-*su-u*) ... *mi-ri-šu*.

14. See, *Fara Wi.* p. 9f.

15. We cannot explain why the scribe preferred *si₁₅* to *si* in writing the name, unless he was unaware of the etymology of the name and rendered it purely phonetically so that we should read *en-sik* rather than *en-si₁₅*.

16. Goetze, *Iraq* 22 (1960) pp. 151-153. There seems to be no special reason for the traditional reading *eš-bar*, so we prefer to read *bā-bar-kiḡ* assuming that the literal meaning of the term is "seeking (*kiḡ*) a deciding (*bar* = *parāsu*) liveromen (*bā* = *amūtu*)" that is, seeking an omen for guidance. Here the omen is clearly intended as a check on the then current accounting for the main temple fields. Grammatically *šā* can hardly be other than a partitive apposition to *niḡ-ka₉*, which is in ordinary apposition to *ašag(GĀN)*. For the reading of GĀN as *ašag*, see Civil, *JCS* 25 (1973), p. 171f.

Meaning: The Component *en*

The word *en* with which *ensi(k)* is composed is probably contracted from older *em/wen*, as suggested by Poebel on the basis of its Emesal form *umun*¹⁷. Neither of these forms, however, suggests any obvious etymology.

(1) En and the Sacred Marriage

As for the meaning, Akkadian renders *en* in two ways, (1) by the loanword *enu* which denotes a high priest or priestess who was considered the human spouse of a deity, or (2) more generally, by the word *bêlu*, "lord". This latter rendering, however, can claim only partial correspondence in meaning, for *en* never implies ownership, which is an important constituent of the meaning of *bêlu*. What *en* and *bêlu* have in common would thus seem to be attribution of high social standing only. In looking for the basic sense of *en* one must thus take the more determinate meaning high priest or priestess, divine spouse, as point of departure and focus on the rôle of the *en* as bride or groom in the rite of the sacred marriage¹⁸. As we have shown elsewhere this rite could be a rite of spring in which the sexual congress of the human actors who incarnated divinities acted by sympathetic magic to cause fertility and productivity in all nature:

At its mighty rising, at its mighty rising,
did the shoots and buds rise up.
The king's loins! At its mighty rising
did the vines rise up, did the grains rise up
did it fill the desert (with verdure)
like a pleasurable garden¹⁹.

It can also, however, be a harvest rite such as is shown on the famous Uruk Vase where the *en* leads a procession bearing his wedding gifts to Inanna who awaits him at the temple door. They are the year's harvest and animal increase. The figure of the *en* himself is unfortunately lost in a break in the vase, but to judge by the variants of the scene on cylinder seals of the same date, he will have carried a stalk of barley to present to the goddess as a particularly valuable part of the harvest, everything else is brought in by his followers²⁰.

To explain the prominence given to this stalk of barley in the rite one may point to the numerous harvest rites from all over the world in which the last sheaf reaped is given special attention. It is considered an embodiment of the grain spirit who is sometimes incarnated in a human actor who is decked out in its stalks. This sheaf is often chosen from the best and most vigorous grain in the field and is held over to serve as seed-corn for the next year²¹.

In favor of seeing the Sumerian *en* and the stalk of barley he carries in this light, as embodiment of the last sheaf and the power in it to ensure next year's harvest, is the sign EN which symbolizes him or her in the writing. For EN is quite clearly the picture of a stalk of barley, as may be seen from Figure 1, which

17. Poebel, GSG par. 43.

18. "Religious Drama in Ancient Mesopotamia" in Goedicke and Roberts, *Unity and Diversity* (Baltimore, 1975), pp. 65-97.

19. *PAPS* 105 p. 520 Ni 9602 iii 7-11. We read:

mah-bi [zi-ga-bi]
[gî]š-bil pa-pa-al m[u-un-da-z]i
úr-lugal-la mah-zi-ga-bi
gu mu-un-da-zi še mu-un-da-zi
edin kiri₆(GIŠ-SAR)-kiri₇-zal-gim mu-un-da-ab-si

20. For the vase, see Heinrich, *Kleinfunde* pl. 38, and for the cylinder seals, *ibid.* pl. 18.

21. See J.G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough* 1 abridged edition (New York 1940) pp. 408-409, about the Oats-bride and Wheat-bride and confer generally, *op. cit.*, pp. 399-412.

juxtaposes fan barley with the representation of barley stalks in the bottom register of the Uruk Vase, and with an early form of the sign EN²².

It will be noted that the sign has a narrow rectangle at its lower end. That probably represents the head band of the *en* into which the barley stalk was stuck²³. This is suggested by the well-known plaque with *La figure aux plumes*²⁴. It shows the *en* with a headband into which are stuck two ears of barley. There the ears are shown in the same stylized form in which they are rendered in the sign for barley ŠE²⁵. They are also shown much enlarged. The wearing of the barley by the *en* serves by way of contagious magic to identify him with it in the rite²⁶.

(2) En and Productivity

As basic meaning of the word *en* one may thus assume reference to a human participant in the rite of the sacred marriage who in the rite became a deity and thereby, in one form or another, was magically able to produce growth and prosperity. A clear statement of that power as wielded by a god offers the paeon to Enlil at the end of the myth of Enlil and Ninlil²⁷. It reads:

An *en* carrying great weight,
en of the storehouse are you!
 An *en* making the barley sprout forth,
 an *en* making the vines sprout forth, are you!
En of heaven, *en* making yields be,
 and *en* of the earth are you!
En of earth, *en* making yields be,
 and *en* of heaven are you!

22. For the picture of fan-barley, see *Encyclopedia Britannica* 11th edition vol. 17 (M) p. 499. For the Uruk Vase, see note 20 above; for forms of EN, see Falkenstein, *Archaische Texte* nos. 321 and 383d. It is difficult to decide whether sign form 383d is a variant abbreviated rendering of a barley straw with its leaves, or rather represents a wisp of barley straws with their ears bunched together. The latter seems to us the more likely interpretation.

Very similar to this variant form, 383d, of EN is an object pictured on the Uruk Vase. It is there held in the hands of a figure posed on top of a two-tiered stand. On the lower tier is another figure and two "roller-blind" reed pylons. The whole is mounted on the back of two rams. The stand and its figures – the latter shown in less than half human size – formed clearly part of the temple furniture.

As for the meaning of the scene rendered on this two-tiered stand, it seems clear that it pictures the same rite that forms the main theme of the vase, the sacred marriage, but at a moment slightly later in time. The main scene on the vase, and variant representations of this rite on cylinder seals (Heinrich, *op. cit.* pl. 18) show the bridegroom approaching the storehouse gate with his gifts to be met by the bride, Inanna, standing in front of it. On the two-tiered stand she has already received it and holds it in her hands. The gift, if one may judge from the representation of it on the cylinder seals, was a gift of barley.

As for the identification of the figure on top of the two-tiered stand as Inanna, the bride, rather than as her groom one may point to the fact that the figure has long hair flowing down its back whereas the figure of the groom is always shown with shoulderlength hair whether so cut or so folded. Lastly, it is clear that she has come out of the gate behind her flanked by the Inanna symbol, the "roller-blind" reed pylon, just as has Inanna in the main scene.

23. The rectangle is filled with vertical lines and so is indistinguishable from the early form of the sign EŠE "rope", "band". That sign has also the value *gir*₉, "prince" (*rubū*), which may reflect the fact that wearing a head-band was characteristic of ruler figures in the Uruk period, as shown by its sculpture and glyptic, and so could have served to symbolize them. See Moortgat, *The Art of Ancient Mesopotamia* (London, 1969) pl. 14, and Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals* (London, 1939) pl. III a and c.

24. See Moortgat, *op. cit.* pl. 30.

25. See Falkenstein, *Archaische Texte*, no. 110.

26. The wearing of barley would seem to belong to the harvest version of the sacred marriage, for the spring version mentioned above on page 116 with note 19 may well have identified the *en* with vegetation generally by means of any kind of greenery in his or her head-band. Note here Enmerkar's words in "Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta" line 59: *nam-en-na men ad-bar-gim še*_x(IGI_{gumi})-ga-*ġu*₁₀-*dè* "when in *en*-function I have made the headband green like basalt".

27. H. Behrens, *Enlil und Ninlil* (Rome 1978) p. 44f. lines 146-149. We read *en-alim-ma en-erin*₃-*na* in line 146.

When used to characterize gods, *en* may be an integral part of a god's name as in the case of the god of irrigation waters that make the earth fruitful and productive, Enki. His name, *en-ki(.ak)* means "Fructifier (*en*) of the earth". More often, though, it seems to have been at first a descriptive title which came in time to be felt as part of the name. As example may serve the name *En-lil* "*en* wind" which stresses the aspect of *lil*, "wind", in which he was the moist winds heralding spring and growth.

(3) *En* as Ruler. Political Aspects

As far as one can judge, the earliest settlements in Southern Mesopotamia will have been in small scattered villages separated by vast tracts of open land. This separation will have minimized occasions for conflict so conditions were most likely generally peaceful.

The chief concern of these early villages was thus economic survival and each worshiped the power that kept them alive, the god or goddess thought to control the main economy of the village. Fishing in the south, herding and horticulture further north and agriculture further north still²⁸. In such villages the *en*, as consort of the village deity and thus most closely attuned to it would naturally be the guide in the economic activities of the community, organizing them, and serving as arbitrator to ensure order. Presumably not every village had an *en* so several villages of a district might look for guidance to a single *en*.

With time, and for a variety of reasons, war became a serious threat and to meet it the people of a region would assemble to elect a young man as war-leader, the king (*lugal*). The king was originally appointed for an emergency only, but as wars became more frequent the office became permanent and eventually the king in most regions became supreme and took on beside his military functions, also the economic, judiciary and religious functions of the *en*²⁹. Only in Uruk and in outlying areas such as Ebla and Elam did the original hegemony of the *en* survive into historical times³⁰.

If, as we believe, the historical development here sketched is correct, the political aspect of the *en* will thus be seen as secondary and rooted in the fertility one.

(4) *En* and Occupations

When *en* is used of gods, as well as with its original reference to the god-embodying human participant in the sacred marriage rite, the powers for productivity in the *en* are cosmic in nature, affect the universe. When, however, as also happens, the term is applied to ordinary humans this aspect disappears and the term expresses merely proficiency in a stated occupation such as characterizes a "good provider".

28. See "*Tammuz*" pp. 6-9, 136-137.

29. Conversely, where the *en* retained hegemony as in Uruk he did so by taking over the military functions of the king. Edzard in "Enmebaragisi von Kiš", *ZA* 53 (1959) p. 23, points out that Gilgamesh, *en* of Kullab, functions as military leader in the traditions about him, the war with Kishi and the expedition to the cedar mountains. To this may be added the traditions about Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta. In Kishi, as Edzard shows, Enmebaragesi, that is, the *en* Mebaragesi, could add the title "king" (*lugal*) to that of *en*. Aaron Shaffer raises in his article "Gilgamesh, the Cedar Forest and Mesopotamian History", *JAO* 65 (1989), pp. 311-312, the question whether Enmebaragesi may have been a woman, since Gilgamesh according to the story of Gilgamesh and Huwawa had a sister of that name. If so, as Shaffer point out, she could well, as Kubaba later on, have held the title "king" and been, accordingly, commander in chief.

30. The general question of the transition from rule by *en* to rule by king was treated by W. Heimpel at the Meeting of the AOS in Atlanta in March 1990. He called attention there to the survival of the rule by *en* in Ebla, Mari and Elam. This distribution agrees with the principle guiding linguistic geography, that changes happen more rapidly at the center, more slowly at the outskirts of a speech community. The same holds generally for cultural change also.

For Elam, see Kutscher, *Royal Inscriptions*, (Haifa, 1989) p. 75 ii 4, iii 22, p. 80, xiii 7.

An example of such usage is the passage dealing with Inanna's bridallers³¹ in the myth of Dumuzi's Wedding³²:

Inanna, your bridallers are *ens*
 Ama-ušumgal is in the first place,
 the farmer in the inundation is second,
 none other than the fowler is the third,
 the fisherman, the man in the midst of the cane-
 brake, is the fourth of them.

As was the case with the divine names so also here, *en* seems occasionally to have gone from laudatory title to inherent part of the name for a member of a profession. Such cases are *endib* and *engiz*, two different kinds of cook, *engar* "plowman", "farmer", *enkum* "wizard", "sage", and *ennuḡ* "guard", "watchman". In the term *guenna(k)* "plenum of the *ens*", *en* seems to refer to the chief administrators of the temple or estate, who met together to make administrative decisions³³.

With the use of *en* to designate proficient productive human members of professions we can finally turn to the question of the basic meaning of *ensí(k)* translating it as "productive manager of the donkeys". Since donkeys were used for plowing³⁴, the *ensí(k)* would be the organizer of the yearly plowing, and since the donkeys were also used for the city's chariotry, the core part of the city's army, he would hold chief military office³⁵.

Invested with such broad authority the *ensí(k)* would be a natural candidate for the leadership of the city generally, and the development of the meaning "city ruler" for the term is easy to understand³⁶.

Orthographics

It remains to consider briefly the standard rendering of *ensí(k)* as PA-TE-SI in younger, NÍG-PA-

31. The term *nimgir-si, susapinu*, denotes a friend of the bridegroom bringing additional gifts. The element *nimgir* denotes an official with police duties. Among these is that of attesting purchases, as in *RTC* 17, and of publicizing losses, as in the text edited by F. Ali in *Sumer* 20 (1964) p. 66f. In the latter case he gets attention by blowing a horn, *si*, so *nimgir-si* is presumably originally "nāgiru of the horn" i.e. as town crier, and one may assume that his original function at the wedding was to certify and publicly announce the marriage.

32. *STLN* 35 i 5; cf. "Harp" p. 20.

33. Cf. Gudea Cyl. A xxvii 14-15 *gú-en-bar-ra-bi ki di-kuru₅ dA-nun-ke₄-ne* "its (i.e. Eninnu's) outer administrative assembly, the Anunnaki's place of making decisions". *Gú-en* is short for later *gú-en-na* and means literally "totality of *ens*" with *en* treated as collective. The *ens* here, as clear from line 15, are the various minor gods who supervised the many temple activities. They are described in Cyl. B vi 11-xii 25. In later time the term became a title for the governor of Nippur, the *guennakku*, apparently given him originally as spokesman for such an assembly.

34. See *Fara Wi.* p. 9f.

35. Confer the development of the parallel term *šakanak*(ANŠE-NITAḪ) "he of the jackasses" i.e. "donkey tender", to denote "general". On the reading of ANŠE-NITAḪ, see Goetze's study "Šakkanakkus of the Ur III Empire", *JCS* 17 (1963), pp. 1ff. See also Kutscher, *Royal Inscriptions* (Haifa 1989) p. 45f.

36. The arable lands served by an *ensí(k)* will normally have been those of a major temple, in the case of an *ensí(k)* likely to gain political power most likely those of the main temple of a city. The city and its dependent villages will then have formed the normal limit to his influence. Actually the sway of *ensí(k)s* seem to have been typically a city state. In contrast both *en* and king imply hegemony of larger areas including several city states and their *ensí(k)s*. Thus Mesalim, king of Kishi, built a temple for Ningirsu in Girsu which was then ruled by an *ensí(k)* *Lugal-ša-engur* (*SAKI* p. 160 VIII 2), clearly indicating Mesalim's overlordship, which is also implied in Mesalim's adjudication of the boundary between Umma and Lagash (*op. cit.* p. 36). The fact that Inanna gave Eannatum the kingship of Kish from out the *ensíship* of Lagash out of love for him (*op. cit.* p. 21 v 26-vi 5) also shows that kingship must have rated higher than *ensíship*, and lastly, a passage like Sargon b.4 obv vii x + 1-6: *ù 50 iššakkī(ENSÍ) ù šarram(LUGAL) su₄-ma ŠU.DU₈.A* "and 50 *iššakkī* and the king himself he captured" (Hirsch *AOF* 20 p. 39f.), also points to preeminence of the king as do in fact the inscriptions of the Akkadé dynasty generally. We therefore hesitate to assume that *ensí* was a title on the same level with *en* and *lugal* as suggested by Edzard in *La Palais et la Royauté* (Paris, 1971).

TE-SI in older texts; significant here is the fact that the ancients included PA-TE-SI in the series *Diri*³⁷. This series lists writings, of words that became obsolete and were replaced by new terms. The old writings, however, were not changed, only given the value of the new word, much as the writing "etc." is retained in English, although its original reading "et cetera" has become obsolete and is replaced by "and so forth". PA-TE-SI and NÍG-PA-TE-SI are thus likely to render an earlier lost word that was replaced by *ensí(k)*.

As to what that earlier word may have been, a partial clue is furnished by occurrences of the combination NÍG-PA elsewhere with translation *ḥatṭu* "stick", "staff", "scepter" and with gloss *ni-in-gi-da-ar* indicating a reading *niḡ-ḡidar(PA)*³⁷. As for the precise meaning of the combination, the component *niḡ-ḡidar* is followed by the signs TE and SI, and since the word thus written was replaced by *ensí(k)*, which must have had much the same meaning, it must seem likely that *si* in both words stands for the same thing, donkeys. The preceding *niḡ-ḡidar-TE* should then similarly render a word comparable in meaning to *en* which replaced it such as "tender" or "overseer". One may therefore, perhaps, take TE to stand for *te* "simtu" and read *niḡ-ḡidar-te* "one fit for the staff" that is, "fit... overseer", a concept for which Hammurabi's description of himself as *be-lum si-ma-at ḥa-at-ṭi-im ù a-gi-im*³⁹ "a lord fit for staff and crown" may be cited. Altogether, then, and with due stress on its tentative character, the original term rendered by NÍG-PA-TE-SI may be read as *niḡ-ḡidar-te-si* and rendered "fit overseer of donkeys".

Conclusion

To sum up we would thus argue that the original meaning of the term *ensí(k)* is "efficient manager of donkeys". That this implied organization of the yearly ploughing of temple or town, and that the broad authority this involved made the step to city ruler an easy and common one, thereby giving rise to a secondary meaning "city ruler". Akkadian and Sumerian employed the word in both meanings, depending on context to keep them distinct.

37. *Diri* V 25.

38. *MSL* 6 p. 72221 ḡi⁵NÍG-PA^{ni-in-gi-da-ar} *ḥar mušen-na = ḥat-ṭi* (i.e. *ḥu-ḥa-ru*). The writing NÍG.PA for *ḥatṭu* occurs also in *TCL VI 53:7F* ḡi⁵gu-za ḡi⁵NÍG.PA. Since *ḡidar*, or better *ḡi(š)d(a)ra*, by itself means "cut off sapling", "cut off tree", that is to say only the raw material for making a walking stick or a scepter, the addition of *niḡ* to form *niḡ-ḡidra* "cut off sapling thing" may indicate a thing made out of the sapling, indicate that it has been worked on and turned into an implement.

39. CH iii 24-26.

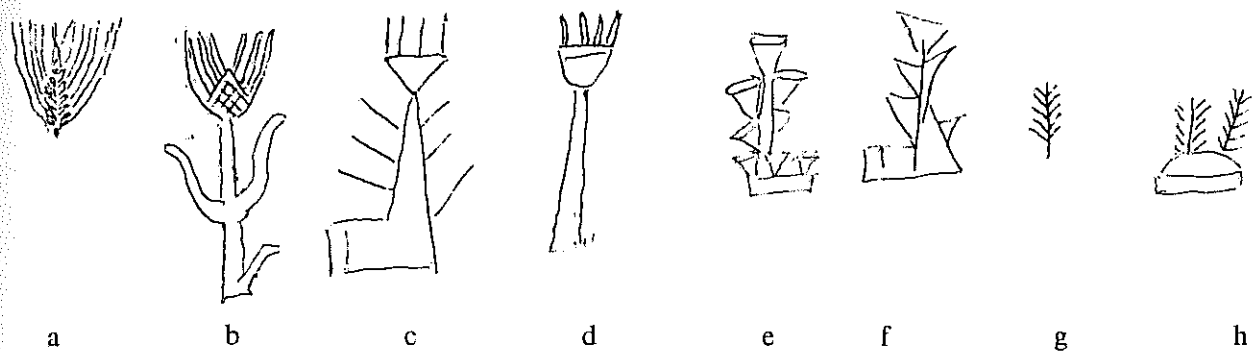


Fig. 1:

- a) Fan Barley (after *Enc. Brit.* 11th ed. vol. 17, p. 499)
- b) Barley as pictured on the Uruk Vase
- c) Sign EN (Falkenstein, *Arch. Texte* no. 321)
- d) Barley stalk carried by *en* on cylinder seal W 14806 (Heinrich, *Kleinfunde* pl. 18)
- e) Wisp of barley(?) held by figure on stand on the Uruk Vase
- f) Sign EN (Falkenstein, *Arch. Texte* no. 383d)
- g) Sign ŠE "barley" (Falkenstein, *Arch. Texte* no. 111)
- h) Headband of "La figure aux plumes"