

VIII Other Neo-Babylonian Royal Inscriptions

A. R. GEORGE

Apart from the Tower of Babel stele, the collection holds ten Babylonian royal inscriptions of the first millennium. They consist of five duplicates of well-known inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar II (Nos. 79–83) and one of Nabonidus (No. 86), but also some more interesting objects: two new eyestones dedicated by Nebuchadnezzar II (Nos. 84–85) and, more

importantly, two fragments of eighth-century commemorative inscriptions on cylinders. One of the latter is the first attested text of King Eriša-Marduk (No. 77), the other is a second exemplar of a previously known building inscription of the Assyrian king Sargon II from the Diyala region (No. 78).

Eriša-Marduk

No. 77

MS 1846/4

Pls. LXVIII–LXIX

This is the right-hand part of a solid clay cylinder; more of it is missing than is preserved. It is inscribed with thirty-five lines of beautiful early Neo-Babylonian cuneiform. Thirty-four occur in sequence; a further line is set apart from them, being inscribed in the vacant space between the end of the text and its beginning. This line is a colophon that attributes the inscription to “Eriša-Marduk, king of Babylon,” whose name recurs at intervals in the text itself (ll. 2, 15, 22, 32). Apart from two duck-weights endorsed by Eriša-Marduk’s palace administration (Frame 1995: 115–16), no formal inscriptions of this king have surfaced hitherto. This fact gives the present fragment an importance out of proportion to its contents.

Eriša-Marduk sat on the throne of Babylon for several years in the first half of the eighth century (see in general Brinkman 1968: 221–24, 354–55; Frame 1995: 114). This is a period characterized by a dearth of contemporaneous records, and its history is reconstructed only skeletally from later documents. According to the Babylonian king list, where Eriša-Mar-

duk’s name is abbreviated as ^mri-ba¹-[^dmarduk], his reign fell immediately before the accession of Nabû-šuma-iškun (Grayson 1980: 92), whose own reign is known to have ended in 748 BC. Legal documents survive dated to the ninth year of Eriša-Marduk and to the thirteenth year of his successor (Brinkman and Kennedy 1983: 63), showing that Eriša-Marduk must have ascended the throne by 770 at the latest. According to the dynastic chronicle, Eriša-Marduk was the sole representative of a dynasty of the Sealand (kur a-ab-ba) and succeeded Marduk-apla-ušur (Grayson 1975: 144 vi 3–8). As has been noted before, the Sealand connection marks Eriša-Marduk as a southerner (or south-easterner) – clearly he was not from Babylon. The sequence of these three kings – Marduk-apla-ušur, Eriša-Marduk, Nabû-šuma-iškun – is confirmed by a fragment of an Assyrian synchronistic king list (*KAV* 13, ed. Grayson 1980: 123 ii 3’–5’).

Native historical tradition adds a few details to this bare roll-call of names. A section of the Late Babylonian chronicle records that Eriša-

Marduk was the son of a certain Marduk-šakin-šumi, gained control of Babylon in his second year, drove Aramean settlers by force of arms from arable land around Babylon and Borsippa, and patronized the cults of the major temples of both cities (Grayson 1975: 182–83 ll. 9–16). The restoration of fields and date-groves to their rightful owners was an event, maybe not the only one, that sealed Erība-Marduk's reputation as a king who brought order to Babylonia, prompting king Marduk-apla-iddina (721–710, 703) to cite him routinely as his ancestor *mu-kin išdī(suḥuṣ) māti(kur)* “who established stability in the land” (Seux 1960: 207). By these accounts Erība-Marduk was a pious and dutiful ruler.

Another Babylonian king paints a very different picture of his reign. According to the Harran stele of Nabonidus (555–539), the reign of Erība-Marduk witnessed a sacrilegious reform of the cult of Ištar, Lady of Uruk, when the people of Uruk replaced her statue with an unsuitable one (passage quoted by Beaulieu 2003: 131). This wrong was put right by an unnamed ruler, certainly to be identified as Nebuchadnezzar II (604–562), whose own inscriptions record his reform of the cult of the Lady of Uruk without mentioning its prior history. This would make for an interval of some two hundred years during which Ištar was unsuitably represented. For a somewhat shorter period, modern historians attributed this sacrilege not to the people of Uruk but to Erība-Marduk himself, despite the fact that Nabonidus refers to him only in the temporal phrase that introduces the report of sacrilege, and uses plural verbs that lay the blame explicitly on the townsmen not on the king. This oversight was encouraged by a desire to identify Erība-Marduk with one of the bad kings in the Late Babylonian political tract known as the Uruk prophecy (Hunger and Kaufman 1975, Beaulieu 1993). Another piece of Late Babylonian pseudo-historical writing has since emerged that accuses Erība-Marduk's successor, Nabû-šuma-iškun, of many terrible impieties and vicious tyrannies, among them interference in Ištar's cults, expressed in words that are close to Nabonidus' stele (Frame 1995: 118–22, Cole

1994). In the light of this text Paul-Alain Beaulieu made a new study of the evidence for the sacrilege at Uruk and found reason to exonerate Erība-Marduk (2001, also 2003: 132–34).

Much nearer to Erība-Marduk's lifetime, an inscription of King Esarhaddon of Assyria (680–669), that records his work on Ištar's temple at Uruk, mentions how part of the temple – the cult-room of the goddess Nanāy built by Nazi-Maruttaš in the thirteenth century – had been restored by Erība-Marduk but had since fallen into disrepair (Frame 1995: 189 ll. 11–14). Erība-Marduk's patronage of this venerable shrine stands in apparent opposition to what Nabonidus reports, but fits what we know of him as a pious and dutiful ruler in the rest of the textual record. His interest in the cult-centre of Uruk is visible also in the fragment presented here, to which I now turn.

The subject of the fragmentary text of MS 1846/4 is the renewal or repair of some object or building whose identity is not preserved. Following lines that introduce the king by name (ll. 1–2), the inscription describes the work done (3–8); the task required the use of precious metals. The next passage describes a ritual in which someone, presumably the king, moved a plurality of persons or objects from a boat into a garden setting, seated them in a ritual bathhouse, and had them purified by incantation (9–14). The king's name recurs, followed by further narrative in which something (or someone) is loaded onto rivercraft, taken upstream on the river Euphrates to its place of residence, and settled on its seat (15–20).

Purification in a garden followed by installation on a seat immediately calls to mind the rituals that accompanied the consecration of divine statues after renewal or repair (*mīs pī*, ed. Walker and Dick 2001). The rituals describe how such statues were inducted in the Garden of Apsû at Babylon and then escorted in procession to their cult-centres. It is proposed here that Erība-Marduk's inscription commemorated the restoration of at least three such statues, naturally using the most costly materials, and their subsequent return by barge and raft to their sanctuaries. The identity of these statues is perhaps revealed by the conclusion of the

inscription, which is given over to prayers in request of blessings for the king.

The first part of the inscription's conclusion is somewhat routine: a plurality of deities is invoked to bless the king with political power and long life (ll. 21–29). Then the god Nabû appears, identified not by name, which is lost, but by his divine functions (30). It seems that the prayer calls on him to instruct other deities, including two prominent goddesses of Uruk, to look after Erība-Marduk so that the good king's life is fittingly pleasant in reward for his pious deeds.

The various deities who figure in the text are (a) Marduk, the king of the gods and ruler of the universe, to whose bidding Erība-Marduk twice asserts his devotion (ll. 1, 5); (b) Asalluḫe, a god of exorcism at home in a ritual context, very often as one of the triad of purification, Ea, Šamaš, and Asalluḫe (13); (c) Kusu and Ningirimma, who are other deities of purification and exorcism, equally expected in magic ritual (14); (d) Nabû, who has in his keeping the Tablet of Destinies and can accordingly wield executive power on Marduk's behalf (30); and (e) Ningišzida (if correctly restored), the Lady of Uruk, and Nanay (31). The latter two are local hypostases of the great goddess Ištar of Uruk; both had shrines in her temple, E-anna, as did Ningišzida. In l. 31 these three deities are chosen as agents of Erība-Marduk's desired good fortune. Their selection for this duty is probably because they benefited most from the deed commemorated by the inscription. It then seems reasonable to suppose that the deed in question was the renewal or repair of the cult-statues of some of the divine residents of Uruk's cult-centre and their progress home by barge.

Such an act of royal patronage meshes very well with Esarhaddon's report, already mentioned, that Erība-Marduk repaired Nanāy's

cult-room at Uruk. The restoration of the sacred chamber and the refurbishment of the cult-statue would go hand in hand, for in the Babylonian ideal a new statue would not be suited to dilapidated surroundings, nor would a shabby statue be proper in a gleaming new cult-room.

The elucidation of the inscription put forward here, that it commemorates the renewal of cult-statues of Uruk, thus adds new evidence for the date of the reform of Ištar's cult in the E-anna at Uruk that Nabonidus alleged to be sacrilegious. His dating of the event to the reign of Erība-Marduk seems to have a greater base in fact, even if his account was a perversion of history in other respects.

The new inscription's use of the name *Bēltu ša Uruk* "Lady of Uruk" is interesting. This name does not occur again in the extant sources until the time of Sennacherib, who carried off her statue in 693 BC (Beaulieu 2003: 120–21). It becomes common in the time of Nebuchadnezzar II and his successors, when it signifies the chief deity of Uruk, i.e. Ištar of E-anna (Beaulieu 2003: 123–28). Beaulieu notes that the replacement in the temple archives of the simple divine name Ištar with the extended forms Ištar of Uruk and Lady of Uruk was a gradual innovation beginning in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. He proposes that the change in nomenclature occurs in conjunction with Nebuchadnezzar's reform of Ištar's cult and the return of the "authentic manifestation of the patron goddess of Uruk" (2001: 32).¹ On this hypothesis, Lady of Uruk would be an old name for Ištar, remaining current in Assyria but abandoned in Babylonia by those who disapproved of the reform that changed the appearance of her cult-statue, only to be reintroduced with the further reform that restored the earlier status quo (cf. Beaulieu 2001: 39). However, the name's appearance in Erība-Marduk's

1. Beaulieu's argument for the return of Ištar to E-anna as a consequence of Nebuchadnezzar's reform of her cult is based in part on Nbn 8 iii 30, where it is customary to read ^d15 *ú-sal-lim* "he brought Ištar back safely" (CAD Š/1: 223; Beau-

lieu 2001: 33; 2003: 131; Schaudig 2001: 517). I would prefer to read ^d15 *ú-sal-lim* "he reconciled Ištar (to her city)," which is more in keeping with the topic of an angry deity.

inscription is no help in determining whether or not the text bears witness to the allegedly sacrilegious reform undone by Nebuchadnezzar and deplored by Nabonidus.

Supposing that the inscription is correctly identified as commemorating the inauguration of divine statues, one point remains to be explored. The statues returned to Uruk by river, travelling upstream. Eriša-Marduk thus did not follow exactly the rituals that we know from Nineveh and Babylon, which prescribe that divine statues be renewed in the temple workshops at Babylon. Maybe Eriša-Marduk did not yet have Babylon in his possession. Maybe the divine statues of Uruk would not have been repaired in Babylon anyway. However that may be, we have to look downstream for the site of Eriša-Marduk's workshop.

In the first millennium, Babylon was considered the cosmic counterpart of Eridu, the old cult-centre of Ea, god of the Apsû, just as Marduk was the new Ea (George 1997: 129–30). That is how the garden of Marduk's temple complex came to be called the Garden of Apsû. Statues were renovated in the Apsû because Ea, as craft-god, controlled the necessary technology and shared his residence there with the divine craftsmen who presided over

the work. Downstream of Uruk was the old Eridu, the historical site only of the ancient sanctuary of Ea. His cult-centre, E-abzu or "House, Apsû," was the earthly counterpart of the cosmic Apsû. By the eighth century the site was long-abandoned, but it is conceivable that Eriša-Marduk's advisers knew enough to pretend that repairs to cult-statues were made there. Such a claim may even be explicit in l. 13 of this inscription, where the ritual is located "in the midst of the Apsû."

In language and spelling the inscription displays some noteworthy features. *ultekmis* (ll. 1, 5) is reminiscent of Middle Babylonian dialect. *pa-la-ga* (11, for *palag*), *ri-mi-ki* (12, for *rimki*), *aš-ri-ši* (20, for *ašriš*) and *da-ri-ši* (29, for *dāriš*) all exhibit CV-signs where VC-signs are expected. Consonants can be doubled at the morpheme boundary, even where the preceding vowel bears no stress: *li-šá-á*]š-kin-nu-ma, *li-iš-šir-ru-ma* (33, for *lišaškinūma* and *lišširūma*). These two orthographic features find parallels in other eighth-century commemorative inscriptions from Babylonia (Frame 1995: 128–29 ll. 9 *iš-kun-nu-ma* for *iškunūma*, 17 *li-ir-ri-ki* for *lirrik*, Nabû-nāšir; 158 l. 10' *i-mur-ru-ma* for *imurūma*, Bēl-ibni).

- 1 . . . ana ma-ḥar a]gê([a]ga)² šá^d marduk(šú)
ul-tek-mi[s]
2 . . . eri-ba]-rd marduk(amar.utu) šār
bābili(tin.tir)^{ki} šār kīnāti(gin)^{me}[š]
3 . . . a-na DNN ṣa-lam² ilu-ti]-šú-nu
rabi(gal)-ti ud-diš-[ma]
4 . . . -šú-n]u ú-ban-ni-[ma]
5 . . . ana ma-ḥar a]gê([ag]a)² šá^d marduk(šú)
ul-tek-mis ip-ti-[iq]
6 . . .]x ḥurāši(kù.sig₁₇) ṣa-ri-ri ú-šá-aš-b[i-it]
7 . . . sa-m]u <ru>-uš-ši-i ú-lab-b[iš-ma]
8 . . . ú-šah²-n]i-i-b-ma eli(ugu) šá pa-an ú-š[á-
tir]
9 . . . ù]z.ga.mah¹² ul-tu bīti(é) ú-ma-x[x x]
10 . . . bār]a² i-na ah(gú) ^{id}idiqlat(idigna) ù
^{id}[puratti²]
11 . . . a-n]a pa-la-ga ^{gis}kiri(kiri₆) elli(kù) ú-še-

- šú-šú-nu-t[i]
12 . . .]x ina bīt(é) ri-mi-^rki¹ ú-še-šib-šú-nu-ti
13 . . . ma-ḥar² ^{dé}-a ^dšamaš(utu)] ^rù¹ ^dasal-lú-ḥé
i-na qé-reb ap-si-i
14 . . .] ^rú¹-še-piš-su-nu-ti-ma ^dkù-sù ^dnin-girim
15 . . .]x eri-ba-^dmarduk(amar.utu) šār
bābili(tin.tir)^{ki} šār kīnāti(gin)^{mes}
16 . . . ^{gis}rukūb]i([má.u]₅)² ù ma-al-le-e rabi(gal)-
ti ik-mis-ma
17 . . . a-na lib-bi ru-k]u-bu ù ma-al-le-e ú-še-li-
ma
18 . . . ḥar-ra-an ⁱ]puratti(buranun^{ki}) ú-šá-aš-
bi-it-ma
19 . . .] a-na šub-ti-šú ú-še-li-m[a]
20 . . .]-^rš¹ ^{aš}-ri-ši ú-še-ši-i[b]
21 [a-na šat-ti]x ^rsi² na¹ x ù māt(kur)
šú-mi-[rī]

- 22 [ù ak-ka-di-i . . . eri-ba-
^dmar]duk([ama]r.utu) šàr bābili(tin.tir)^{ki} šá[r
kīnāti(gin)^{meš}]
- 23 . . .]x lik-ru-bu-m[a]
- 24 . . . -t]i šá ul-tu u₄-mu pa-a[n]
- 25 . . .] {erasures}
- 26 . . .]x ka-li-ši-na kip-pat ^rkib¹-[rat]
- 27 . . .] ^rki¹-ni-iš šal-mat qaqqadi(sag.du) ma-la
ba-š[u-ú (sic)]
- 28 . . . puḫu]r([ukki]n)[?] ì-lí e téz-zi-ir-ma lib-
luṭ-m[a]
- 29 . . . lí]-lab-bir a-na da-ri-ši
- 30 [^dnabû (. . .) na-ás ṭup]-^rpi^{d1} šim-ti
ilī(dingir)^{meš} lú.d^{lú.d} sîn(30)-ma-gír ^dbēlu(en)
rabû(gal)^ú ^dmarduk(amar.utu)
- 31 . . . ^dnin-giš-z]i-da ^dbēltu(gašan) šá
uruk(unug)^{ki} u ^dna-na-a bēlet(gašan) ši-ma-ti
- 32 . . . eri-ba]-^rd¹marduk(amar.utu) šàr
bābili(tin.tir)^{ki} šàr kīnāti(gin)^{meš} líp-qí-du-šú-
ma
- 33 . . . li-šá-á]š-kin-nu-ma ši-i-ti pi-i-šú li-iš-šir-
ru-ma
- 34 . . . li-d]am-me-eq ma-ni-ti ^rna¹-mir-ti u šèr-
ti li-mur¹
- colophon
[^{musarē}] ^reri¹-ba-^dmarduk(amar.utu) šàr
bābili(tin.tir)^{ki}

¹ [. . . before the] crown(?) of Marduk he knelt himself down. ² [. . . Eriḫa]-Marduk, king of Babylon, king of righteousness, ³ [. . . statues of] their great [divine personages] he renewed [for the gods . . . and ⁴ . . .] fashioned their [. . . ⁵ . . . before the crown] of Marduk he knelt himself down. He moulded ⁶ [. . .] of brightest gold, he set in position ⁷ [. . .] he coated (it/them) in reddish (gold) [and ⁸ . . . he made] luxuriant and [larger] than before. ⁹ [. . .] . . . from

the house . . . [. . . ¹⁰ . . . a throne]-dais on the banks of the Tigris and [Euphrates ¹¹ . . . to] the canal of the Holy Garden he took them out, ¹² [. . .] he had them sit in the ritual bath-house. ¹³ [. . . Before Ea, Šamaš] and Asalluḫe in the midst of the Apsû ¹⁴ [. . .] he had them made. Kusu and Ningirimma ¹⁵ [. . .] Eriḫa-Marduk, king of Babylon, king of righteousness, ¹⁶ [. . .] gathered together [. . . on a barge(?)] and a big raft, and ¹⁷ [. . . on to the barge] and raft he had (them) embark and ¹⁸ [. . .] had (them) make [the journey on the] river Euphrates and ¹⁹ [. . .] he sent up to his seat and ²⁰ [. . .] humbly he made sit.

²¹ [On this account may Marduk(?) and the gods of . . .] . . . and the land of Sumer ²²⁻²³ [and Akkad . . .] bless Eriḫa]-Marduk, king of Babylon, king [of righteousness . . .] and ²⁴ [may they . . .] from former times ²⁶ [. . .] the whole extent of the world ²⁷ [. . . grant him to rule] steadfastly the black-headed race, all that are. ²⁸ [O . . .] . . . may you not curse [(him) in] the gods' [assembly(?)] but may he stay in good health ²⁹ [. . . may he] live long and for ever!

³⁰ [May Nabû, who holds the tablet] of destiny of the gods, *simmagir*-official of the great lord Marduk, ³¹ [so charge (. . .) Ningiš]zida, the Lady of Uruk and Nanāy, lady of destinies, ³² that they entrust into [. . . 's] care [Eriḫa]-Marduk, king of Babylon, king of righteousness, and ³³ [that they] set in place [his . . .] and realize (*lit.* depict) the utterance of his lips, ³⁴ [. . . so that he] makes well favoured [his name(?)] and experiences a breeze of dawn and morn.

^{col.} [Inscription(?) of] Eriḫa-Marduk, king of Babylon.

- 1, 5. The first sign can also be $\text{[}u$.
2. As a royal epithet *šar kīnāti* elsewhere occurs only outside the genre of royal inscriptions: of Esarhaddon in a letter from an official, Bēlnāšir (*SAA XVI 121: 1*, ed. Luukko and Van Buylaere 2002: 104), and of Ashurbanipal in a literary eulogy (Lambert 1957–58: 384 iii 24).
6. The precious variety of gold called *šarīru* is a typical embellishment of divine statues, e.g. in Esarhaddon’s report of the renewal of statues of gods of Babylon (Borger 1956: 84 §53 l. 86: *ša-ri-ri ru-uš-še-e*).
7. The expression *sāmu ruššū* occurs otherwise as a precious metal in the account of booty taken from Mušāšir in Sargon’s eighth campaign, 714 BC (*TCL III 371*, ed. Mayer 1983: 106). With reference to the decoration of newly made divine statues by the application of “red gold,” see Nabû-apla-iddina’s stone tablet from Sippar (*BBSSt 36 iv 18*, ed. Woods 2004: 85: $\text{kù.sig}_{17} \text{ru-uš-ši-i}$).
9. The first word, evidently in Sumerian, might be the incipit of a cultic liturgical text sung in procession, or a shrine name é-ùz-ga-maš “Sublime goat-milking shed.”
10. The reference to the rivers Tigris and Euphrates is not geographical but symbolic, for they appear deified as a pair in Babylonian sanctuaries. At E-sangil in Babylon they shared a shrine in the temple’s well or cistern (*Tintir II 33*, ed. George 1992: 46–47; 1999: 72 fn. 16) and their water was used in rituals of the sanctuary (George 1992: 278). Ritual use of their water also occurs elsewhere, for example in the preparations for extispicy, according to the Old Babylonian *ikribum*-prayer in Yale, where it is used to cleanse the symbol of the sun-god (YOS XI 22: 19, ed. Goetze 1968: 26: $\text{dutu na-ši-ku-um me-e}^{\text{id}}$ $\text{idigna}^{\text{id}}$ ù^{id} bura[nun] . . . *mu-ti-sí* “O Šamaš, I am offering you water of Tigris and Euphrates, . . . wash yourself!”).
- 10–11. For *mīs pī*-rituals performed on a river bank and the adjacent garden, see Walker and Dick 2001: 58–60, 70–81. At Babylon the garden in question was in the grounds of Ea’s temple, E-kar-zagina on the Euphrates, as reported by Nabû-apla-iddina, Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal (Woods 2004: 86 iv 25–26; Borger 1956: 89 §57 ll. 21–22; George 1992: 302–3). In a cultic-topographical list the gate of Ea’s temple leading to the location where the “gods’ mouths are opened” is specifically called the Gate of the Garden of Apsû (George 1992: 94–95 ll. 26–27).
12. Rituals of washing (*rimku*) are usually associated with the royal washing ceremonies described in the *bīt rimki* ritual tablets, but Esarhaddon reports them as part of the procedure for renewing divine statues (Borger 1956: 89 §57 l. 23). The purpose is the same in both contexts, to banish impurity by cleansing in water.
13. Purification before Ea, Šamaš and Asalluḫe was an essential part of the *mīs pī* rituals, as recorded in the ritual tablets themselves (Walker and Dick 2001: 131–35 ll. 6–41; Shibata 2008: 193–95) and by Nabû-apla-iddina and Esarhaddon (Woods 2004: 86 iv 22–24; Borger 1956: 89 §57 l. 23).
14. Kusu and Ningirimmā are two minor deities of magic and exorcism who were presented with offerings in the *mīs pī* ritual and evidently played a symbolic part in the transfer of life to the statues (Walker and Dick 2001: 37 l. 11, 71 l. 27; Borger 1956: 89 §57 l. 24).
17. For *ana libbi rukūbi šūlū* see a Neo-Assyrian oracular query, whose topic is the proposed return of Marduk’s statue from Aššur to Babylon, a journey by barge (*SAA IV 265 rev. 8*, ed. Starr 1990: 240): *a-na š[āst]má.u₃ ú-še-lu-ú-ma* “should they have [the statue] embark on the barge?”
21. Before *u māt Šumeri* a reading $\text{ki}p\text{-}^{\text{f}}\text{pat kib-rat}$ “the whole] extent of the world” is excluded, despite the occurrence of this expression in l. 26.
28. *téz-zi-ir* is parsed from *ezēru*, with closure of the stressed syllable, $\text{tēzir} > \text{tezzir}$.
30. The *simmagir* was an officer of the Neo-Babylonian court (von Soden 1972). Here it is uniquely applied figuratively to a member of the divine court of Marduk, whose name is lost. In view of the connection with destinies,

Nabû is suspected. As Marduk's secretary (bzw. son, minister), Nabû looked after the tablet of destinies for his father. The phrase *nāš tuppi šimāt ilī* is a stock epithet of Nabû, occurring in eighth and seventh-century monumental and commemorative inscriptions (Bēl-ḥarrān-bēla-ušur: Grayson 1996: 241 l. 3; Tiglath-pileser III: Levine 1972: 16 l. 4; Ashurbanipal or Šamaš-šuma-ukīn: Lambert 1957–58: 387 l. 26), and in many other genres of text that contain praise of this deity (e.g. *LKA* 16: 12, Mayer 1976: 473 l. 3, George 2010a: 275 ll. 2–3, Köcher 1959: 238 l. 13).

31. For the cult of *Bēltu ša Uruk* “the Lady of Uruk” and Nanāy in Neo-Babylonian Uruk, see Paul-Alain Beaulieu's exhaustive study (2003). Nanāy (or Nanāya), a hypostasis of Inanna as daughter of Anu, has a much longer history at Uruk, where she always plays second fiddle to Ištar (Beaulieu 2003: 187–89).

The restoration of Ningišzida alongside these goddesses is prompted by two considerations: (a) to account for the masculine-plural pronouns and verbs in ll. 11–12 and 32–33 the group of deities central to this inscription must have included at least one masculine god, and (b) Ningišzida was a significant resident of E-anna in the eighth cen-

tury: Marduk-apla-iddina II (721–710 BC) left an inscription that commemorates his repair of Ningišzida's chapel (Frame 1995: 136–38). He is absent from the archival records of E-anna from the sixth century and later (Beaulieu 2003: 345), so it seems his cult was not maintained in the mid-first millennium. However, there is an alternative solution: to restore *é.z]i.da* as part of a further epithet of Nabû, who resided in E-zida in Borsippa, and to look for the missing masculine deity in the lacuna at the beginning of l. 32.

33. The second verb is parsed as II/1 precative of *ešēru* “to depict” in the sense of establish as fixed, an activity associated with gods, not men, and thus appropriate in this context, where the subject is reconstructed as the grateful deities of E-anna.

34. The “breeze of dawn and morn” is an obvious figure for relief from physical discomfort. Marduk's healing breath is similarly held to refresh *kī(ma) manīt šērēti* “like morning breeze” in *Ludlul* I 6 (MSS Si and KK, ed. Horowitz and Lambert 2002: 238). A kindred phrase, *namirta amāru*, lit. “to see brightness,” occurs in a prayer to Gula from seventh-century Aššur in which a supplicant pleads for a recovery from illness (*LKA* 19 rev. 5): *na-mirtú lu-mur* “may I see the dawn.”

Sargon II and Nabû-bēlu-ka''in

No. 78

MS 4720

Pls. LXX–LXXI

MS 4720 is a fragment of a barrel-shaped clay prism inscribed with twelve lines of elegant Neo-Babylonian script. The preserved surface represents about two-fifths of the prism's original circumference. The text is already partly known from another prism fragment discovered by Iraqi archaeologists on the surface of Tell Baradan in the Diyala region, during a season of excavations conducted in 1977–78 as part of the Hamrin basin rescue-archaeology project (Anon. 1981: 170–71). That piece, now in the Iraq Museum, was published by Karlheinz Kessler (2003–4) and is hereinafter referred to as IM. The inscription commemorates the restoration of the city wall of Mê-Turnat, a settlement that comprised, at various times, Tell Haddad and Tell as-Sib (al-Seib) as well as Tell Baradan (Hanoon 1982).

The work dates to the reign of Sargon II of Assyria (721–705 BC), and was carried out on the king's behalf by Nabû-bēlu-ka''in. This individual is well documented in Assyrian sources and his career as an imperial servant in the Zagros piedmont, from the Hamrin to Elam, has been much discussed (e.g. Mattila 2001, Fuchs and Parpola 2001: xxxviii–xxxix, Kessler 2003–4, Postgate and Mattila 2004: 251–53). In the present inscription he is styled “governor of Arrapha,” a title not given him elsewhere. A detail that emerges from MS 4720 is that this post gave him control over labour conscription all the way to the frontier with Elam (l. 17). A previous governor of Arrapha was Ištar-dūrī, who reported in a letter to the king that work on the city wall of Mê-Turnat was well under way (SAA XV 1 rev. 16'–21', ed. Fuchs and Parpola 2001: 5). Nabû-bēlu-ka''in must have finished what Ištar-dūrī had begun, and not surprisingly takes sole credit for it.

MS 4720 overlaps with IM, and adds parts of a further seven lines of text. It allows a better understanding of the inscription's structure. The first part of the text records how Marduk, the king of the gods, chose the pious and dutiful Sargon to rebuild the wall of Sirara (1–14). This Sirara is not the Sumerian cult-centre of Nanše in Nimin (NINA^{ki}), on the shores of the Persian Gulf, but a name of Mê-Turnat found in literary and religious contexts (Röllig 1993). Sargon's patronage of building operations at Mê-Turnat is attested also by the discovery at Tell Haddad and Tell Baradan of copies of at least two of his standard prism inscriptions (Al-Rawi 1994: 36–38 no. 3; IM 85067, on which see Frame 2009: 82 sub m and his introduction above to text No. 72).

The present inscription's opening is characterized by a long succession of epithets of Marduk, and a shorter list of titles of the Assyrian king, some of which are unparalleled. The text goes on to record how Nabû-bēlu-ka''in gladly took charge of the task and successfully completed it in the space of a single year (15–19). The last-preserved lines seek in return the blessing of the gods of Mê-Turnat (20–22). No doubt the beneficiary was specified as the king, not the governor, but damage prevents complete certainty in this respect.

In his edition of the Iraq Museum prism, Kessler drew attention to language that is paralleled in other Neo-Babylonian royal inscriptions. It may be added that there are also strong resonances with some of the great poetic compositions of the scribal tradition, *Enūma eliš*, *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* and the poem of Erra and Išum.² The composer of the inscription was a man steeped in scribal learning and adept in literary Standard Babylonian.

2. The epithet *ilu muštālu* (l. 3) is applied to Marduk most prominently in *Ludlul I* 1 and 3; *nādin isqī nindabē* (l. 6) may be a quotation of *Enūma eliš* VII 85; *āhiz riddi* (l. 8) is written, probably of Marduk,

also in the praise poem *STT* 70 rev. 10', ed. Lambert 1959: 133; see also the notes below on ll. 14 and 17.

The prism is distinctive as an archaeological object. The lines are not ruled, but are very widely spaced. Two fragments of physically similar barrel-shaped prisms are known to me from the same period: YOS IX 80 (Stephens 1937: 19, ed. Borger 1961: 100–2) and an unpublished fragment in the Iraq Museum that duplicates it (identified from a photograph kindly shown to me by Dr. Nawala Al-Mutawalli in 1998). Their inscription, also composed in highly literary language, commemorates work on the temple of Nergal in Sirara, particularly its precinct wall, but the name of the king who commissioned the work

is broken. Borger restored it as the twelfth-century Assyrian ruler Ninurta-tukulti-Aššur but the Neo-Babylonian ductus makes that improbable. Another candidate is Šin-šarru-iškun, but there is reason to be uncertain (Grayson 1972a: 143).

The ceremonial name of Nergal's temple, restored in the present text (l. 21), is known from inscribed paving bricks, found *in situ* during the excavation of Tell Haddad, that record the enlarging of its courtyard by Ashurbanipal (668–ca 627) for Nergal, “lord of Sirara” (Frame 1995: 229; George 1993: 144 no. 1020).

1–10 see IM

- 11 [šarru(lugal)-kīn(gi.na) šār māt(kur) a]š-
 ʿšur^{ki} šār kiššati(šú) rubû(nun)^u ʿti-r¹-[iṣ
 qāti(šú)-šú]
- 12 [šukkallu(sukkal) KA KU mu]t-ⁱⁿnen-nu-ú pa-
 li-iḫ ilu(dingir)-ú-ti-šú šir-ti
 šakkanak(GĪR.NÍTA) ʿen¹-[líl šār x x x]
- 13 [rubû(nun)^u pa-liḫ-šú] ʿdūr(bàd)¹ sírara^{ki} šá
 ul-tú-me pa-ni ep-šu-ma i[l-lik-u la-ba-riš]
- 14 [a-na e-peš dūr]i([bà]d) šu-a-ti šá
 šarru(lugal)-kīn(gi.na) šār māt(kur) aš-šur^{ki}
 šār kiššati(šú) libba(šà)-šú ʿi¹-[ri-šu-šú²]
- 15 [ú-ma-ʿer-šú^{md} nabû(muati)-bēlu(en)]-
 kaʿʿin(gi.na) ^{lu}šakin(gar) māt(kur) ^{umu}ár-rap-
 ḫi e-peš dūri(bàd) šu-[a-ti]
- 16 [x x x x lib-ba-šú¹] i-li-iṣ im-me-ri pa-nu-šú
 id-ka-ma ti[l-la-ti-šú]
- 17 [iṣ-tu x x x x] a-di mi-šir elamti(NIM.ma)^{ki} it-
 ru-uk-ma ^{gis}allu(al) [^{gi}tupšikku(dusu) iṣ-ší]
- 18 [x x x x x i-n]a šatti(mu.an.na)-šú-ma
 dūru(bàd) i-pu-uš ú-šar-ší-da [x x x x]
- 19 [x x x x x x] mun-daḫ-ši eli šá pa-ni ú-šá-[ter
 (x x)]
- 20 [x x x x x x]-ʿr¹ li-me-ti dūri(bàd)-šú^d nē-
 eri₁₁-gal šit-ra-ḫ[u x x x]
- 21 [x x x x x x x] x^d šu-bu-lá^d mār(a)-ʿbiti(é)¹
 ili(dingir)^{mes} a-šib ʿé¹-[šà-ḫúl-la]
- 22 [x x x x x x x x] x-na lim-ḫur-ma [a-rak]
 u₄-me-šú x [x x x]

remainder lost

¹ When(?) [. . . , then] ² he who fashioned [all] creation [. . . ,] ³ the compassionate god, whose [word] cannot [be gainsaid,] ⁴ Marduk, supreme one whose command [cannot be undone,] ⁵ who hears supplications, renders verdicts and takes [. . . ,] ⁶ who provides the gods of [heaven and earth] with shares in the bread-offerings, ⁷ monarch of the black-headed (race), who ensures [forever(?)] the stability of the king's staff, ⁸ ingenious intellect, who keeps to the proper way, highest of [the gods,] ⁹ (whose) vast lordly person instills reverence in heaven and on earth, ¹⁰ expert sage, counsellor of the Igigi gods, merciful god whose glance [is . . . ,] ¹¹ commissioned ¹² Sargon, king of Assyria, king of the world, picked by his hand, minister . . . , prayerful one who reveres his sublime divine personage, viceroy of Enlil, king [. . .] ¹³ the prince who fears him – ¹⁴ the wall of Sirara, which had existed since days of yore but had grown [old] – ¹⁵ to build that wall, (a thing) which the heart of Sargon, king of Assyria, king of the world, [craved.] ¹⁶ Nabû-bēlu-kaʿʿin, governor of the province of Arrapha ¹⁷ [undertook(?)] ¹⁸ the construction of that wall. ¹⁹ [His mood] grew elated, his countenance shone. He mobilized [his forces and,] ²⁰ from . . .] to the frontier with Elam, [his workforce] wielded the mattock and [bore the hod-basket.] ²¹ . . .] in only a year of his time he constructed the wall,

grounded [it . . . ¹⁹ in order to repel] attacking troops he made it larger than before. ²⁰ [. . .] around his wall, [may] Nergal, majestic [. . . ²¹ . . . with(?)] Šubula, Mār-

bīti, the gods who reside in E-[šaḥulla, ²² . . .] May he accept [. . . , may he grant the lengthening] of his life [. . .]

12. The first three signs of IM were read *sùk-ka-lu*² by Kessler (2003–4: 105). However, on his cuneiform copy the first sign is not *sùk* (GIŠGAL) but *sukkal*, leaving the next two signs, KA and KU, to be interpreted as some other attribute: perhaps *qābi*(*dug₄*) *tēmi*(*umuš*) “who speaks intelligently.”

13. IM at end: *il-li[k-*

14. At end, hardly *u[b-lu*. For *libbu erēšu* see Erra I 6: *i-ris-su-ma lib-ba-šú e-peš ta-ḫa-zi* “his heart craved for him to wage war.”

15. *uma*’’*eršu*: the traces of this verb on IM were read *ú-’ba²-lam²*¹ by Kessler, who did not have the advantage of knowing how the text continues.

16. [*libbašu*] *ilišma immerū pānūšu* is constructed as a classic chiasmic line of poetry. But for the members of each half of the line being transposed, it is the same as the line of Old Babylonian Gilgameš that describes Enkidu’s reaction to his first taste of beer (OB II 104–5): *iliš libbašūma pānūšu ittamrū*. This line and

its variants were standard in the Babylonian literary repertoire. Some variants employ synonymous nouns; note in another commemorative inscription for Nergal of Mêt-Turnat (YOS IX 80: 14): *šur-ru-uš i-li-iš-ma im-me-ru zi-mu-šu*, describing the god’s pleasure in reoccupying his cult-centre.

17. *itrukma allu* is perhaps a deliberate evocation of the identical expression in *Enūma eliš* VI 59.

21. According to the god-list *An* VI 14, Šubula is Nergal’s son; he appears also in association with Nergal in the Weidner god-list (Cavigneaux 1981: 88 l. 91), the Canonical Temple List (George 1993: 20 l. 572) and *Šurpu* VIII 29. The generic name Mār-bīti “Son of the House” is given to divine sons who reside with their father, in the first millennium typically at Dēr, Babylon, and Borsippa (Krebernik 1989). Here it no doubt refers to another son of Nergal at Mêt-Turnat.

Nebuchadnezzar II

Nos. 79–81

MS 1815/1–3

Pls. LXVIII, LXX

The collection holds three bricks of Nebuchadnezzar II, each stamped with a standard seven-line inscription identifying the brick's maker by name, title, and patronym. Two hold an identical text (Nos. 79–80); the third displays variant spellings (No. 81). Only the last is illustrated.

Langdon's edition of Nebuchadnezzar's inscriptions presents the text in three versions, according to variant spellings of the proper nouns (1912: 202–3 Nbk nos. 39–41). A comprehensive description and bibliography of bricks bearing the inscription is presented in P.-R. Berger's catalogue, where they are assembled as Backstein A (Berger 1973: 179–202; see also Da Riva 2008: 117; Walker 1981: 80–86 nos. 100–4; Schrakamp 2010). Berger's system organizes the bricks by content and line-number, rather than by spelling variants. Accordingly, all three bricks in the Schøyen Collection can be added to the 52 exemplars of

Backstein Ap(b'')⁷ already located in 1973. More exactly, Nos. 79 and 80 exhibit spellings identical to Ziegelstempel C and D respectively in Robert Koldewey's drawing of four variants of the inscription from Babylon (Koldewey 1990: 86). No. 81 is an exact duplicate of VA 75, drawn by Ungnad and published as *VAS I* 49 (Messerschmidt and Ungnad 1907: 44).

Nebuchadnezzar's Backstein A is the most ubiquitous of Neo-Babylonian inscribed artefacts, for his stamped bricks were used wherever he ordered construction work. There was a time when Babylon was littered with them, especially the mound Homera, where the dismantled superstructure of the ziqqurat was dumped in antiquity. Ever since Pietro della Valle sent one back to Italy in 1625 (Berger 1973: 19–21), travellers, adventurers, and archaeologists have removed more than one hundred exemplars from Babylon and at least eleven other sites.

No. 79. MS 1815/1

- 1 ^dnabû(nà)-ku-du-úr-ri-ušur(ùru)
- 2 šār bābili(ká.dingir.ra)^{ki}
- 3 za-nin é-sag-íl
- 4 ù é-zi-da
- 5 aplu(ibila) a-ša-re-du
- 6 ša ^dnabû(nà)-apla(ibila)-ušur(ùru)
- 7 šār bābili(ká.dingir.ra)^{ki}

No. 80. MS 1815/2

- 1 ^dnabû(nà)-ku-dúr-ri-ušur(ùru)
- 2 šār bābili(ká.dingir.ra)^{ki}
- 3 za-nin é-sag-íl
- 4 ù é-zi-da
- 5 aplu(ibila) a-ša-re-du
- 6 ša ^dnabû(nà)-apla(ibila)-ušur(ùru)
- 7 šār bābili(ká.dingir.ra)^{ki}

No. 81. MS 1815/3

- 1 ^dnabû(nà)-ku-dúr-ri-ú-šur
- 2 šār ba-bi-i-lu^{ki}
- 3 za-nin é-sag-íl
- 4 ù é-zi-da
- 5 aplu(ibila) a-ša-re-du
- 6 ša ^dnabû(nà)-apla(ibila)-ušur(ùru)
- 7 šār ba-bi-i-lu^{ki}

¹ Nebuchadnezzar, ² king of Babylon, ³ provisioner of E-sangil ⁴ and E-zida, ⁵ foremost heir ⁶ of Nabopolassar, ⁷ king of Babylon.

N.B. MS 1815/2 is on long-term exhibition at the Bibelmuseum Münster, Germany.

Nos. 82–83

MS 2870/1–2

Pls. LXX–LXXI

These are two exemplars of bricks inscribed by hand on one edge with a well-known text of Nebuchadnezzar. The inscription commemorates his rebuilding of the temple of Šamaš at Larsa. It occurs on nine two-column cylinders as well as on bricks. The inscription was edited by Langdon from the cylinders as Nebuchadnezzar no. 10 (1912: 96–97) and catalogued by Berger as Backstein B, U1 (1973: 225, Da Riva

2008: 117 B26) and Zyl. II, 4 (1973: 249–51, Da Riva 2008: 119 C24). Three exemplars on bricks reside in the British Museum, two of which were found at Larsa by W. K. Loftus in 1854 (all ed. Walker 1981: 72–73 no. 90). Two further bricks bearing this inscription were excavated by the French archaeological expedition to Larsa in 1967 (Birot 1968: 243 n. 1).

No. 82. MS 2870/1

- 1 ^dnabû(nà)¹-ku-dúr-ri-ú-šur šâr
bābili(ká.dingir.ra)^{ki}
- 2 [áš-r]i ka-an-šu mu-ut-né-en-nu-ú
- 3 [pa-li]-iḫ bēl(en) bēli(en.en)
- 4 ʾza-nin¹ é-sag-íl ù é-zi-da
- 5 ʾaplu(ibila)¹ [kí]-i-ni šá^dnabû(nà)-
apla(ibila)-ú-šur
- 6 šâr bābili(ká.dingir.ra)^{ki} a-na-ku
- 7 e-nu-um^dmarduk(amar.utu) bēlu(en) ra-bu-
ú
- 8 igigal(igi.gál) ilī(dingir)^{mes} mu-uš-ta-ar-ḫa
- 9 ma-a-ti ù ni-ši
- 10 a-na re-ʾ-ú-ti id-di-na
- 11 i-na u₄-mi-šu é-babbar-ra
- 12 bīt(é)^dšamaš(utu) šá qé-re-eb larsam^{ki}
- 13 šá iš-tu u₄-mu ru-qu-ú-tum
- 14 i-mu-ú ti-la-ni-iš
- 15 qé-er-bu-uš-šu ba-aš-ša iš-šap-ku-ma
- 16 la ú-ud-da-a ú-šu-ra-a-ti
- 17 i-na pa-le-e-a bēlu(en) ra-bu-ú
^dmarduk(amar.utu)
- 18 a-na bīti(é) šu-a-ti ir-ta-šu sa-li-mu
- 19 šār(im) erbetti(límmu.ba) ú-ša-at-ba-am-ma
- 20 eperī(saḫar)^{há} qé-er-bi-šu is-su-uḫ-ma
- 21 in-nam-ra ú-šu-ra-a-ti
- 22 ia-a-ti^{md}nabû(nà)-ku-dúr-ri-ušur(ùru) šâr
bābili(ká.dingir.ra)^{ki}
- 23 re-e-šu pa-li-iḫ-šu
- 24 a-na e-pé-šu bīti(é) šu-a-ti
- 25 ra-bi-iš ú-ma-ʾ-ir-an-ni
- 26 te-me-en-šu la-bi-ri a-ḫi-iṭ ab-re-e-ma
- 27 e-li te-me-en-ni-šu la-bi-ri
- 28 eperī(saḫar)^{há} el-lu-ti am-ku-uk-ma

- 29 ú-ki-in li-ib-na-as-sa
- 30 é-babbar-ra bītu(é) ki-i-nu šu-bat
^dšamaš(utu) bēli(en)-ia
- 31 a-na^dšamaš(utu) a-ši-ib é-babbar-ra
- 32 šá qé-re-eb larsam^{ki}
- 33 bēli(en) ra-bu-ú bēli(en)-ia lu-ú e-pu-uš
- 34^dšamaš(utu) bēlu(en) ra-bu-ú a-na é-babbar-
ra
- 35 šu-bat be-lu-ti-ka ina ḫi-da-a-tú u ri-šá-a-tú
- 36 i-na e-re-bi-ka
- 37 li-pi-it qá-ti-ia dam-qá-a-tú
- 38 ḫa-di-iš na-ap-li-is-ma
- 39 ba-la-aṭ ūmī(ud)^{mes} ru-qu-ú-ti
- 40 ku-un-nu^{gis}kussī(gu.za) la-ba-ar pa-le-e-a
- 41 li-iš-šá-kin šap-tuk-ka
- 42 si-ip-pi ši-ga-ri mi-di-lu^{gis}dalāti(ig)^{mes}
- 43 [ša] ʾé¹-babbar-ra dam-qá-tu-ú-a la na-par-
ka-a
- 44 [li]-iz-ku-ru ma-ḫar-ka

No. 83. MS 2870/2

- 1 ^dnabû(nà)-ku-dúr-ri-ú-šur šâr
bāb[ili(tin.[tir])^{ki}]
- 2 áš-ri ka-an-šu mu-ut-né-[en-nu-ú]
- 3 pa-li-iḫ bēl(en) bēli(en.[en])
- 4 za-nin é-sag-íl ù é-zi-[da]
- 5 aplu(ibila) ki-i-n[i]
- 6 šá^dnabû(nà)-apla(ibila)-ú-šur šâr
bābili(tin.tir)^{ki} ana-[ku]
- 7 i-nu^dmarduk(amar.utu) bēlu(en) ra-bu-ú
- 8 igigal(igi.gál) ilī(dingir)^{mes} muš-tar-ḫu
- 9 ʾma¹-a-ti ù nišī(ùg)^{mes}
- 10 ʾa¹-na re-ʾ-ú-ti id-di-na

11 *i-na u₄-mi-šu é-babbar-ra*
 12 *bīt(é) ^dšamaš(utu) šá qé-re-eb larsam^{ki}*
 13 *šá iš-tu u₄-mu ru-qu-ú-ti*
 14 *i-mu-ú ti-la-ni-iš*
 15 *^rqé-er-bu-uš-šu ba-aš¹-ša iš-šap-ku-ma*
 16 *la ^rú-ud-da-a ú-šu-ra-a¹-ti*
 17 *^ri-na pa-le-e-a bēlu(en) ra¹-bu-ú*
 ^dmarduk(amar.utu)
 18 *a-na bīti(é) šu-a-ti*
 19 *ir-ta-šu sa-li-mu*
 20 *šār(im) erbetti(límmu.ba) ú-šat-ba-am-ma*
 21 *eperī(saḥar)^{bá} qer-bi-šu is-su-uḫ-ma*
 22 *in-nam-ra ú-šu-ra-a-ti*
 23 *ia-a-ti ^{md}nabú(nà)-ku-dúr-ri-u-šur šār*
 bābili(tin.tir)^{ki}
 24 *re-e-šu pa-li-iḫ-šu*
 25 *a-na e-peš bīti(é) šu-a-ti*
 26 *ra-bi-iš ú-ma-'-ir-an-ni*
 27 *te-me-en-šu la-bi-ri*
 28 *a-ḫi-iṭ ab-re-e-ma*
 29 *e-li te-me-en-ni-šu la-bi-ri*
 30 *eperī(saḥar)^{bá} el-lu-ti am-ku-uk-ma*
 31 *ú-ki-in li-ib-na-as-sa*
 32 *é-babbar-ra bītu(é) ki-i-ni*
 33 *šu-bat ^dšamaš(utu) be-lí-ia*
 34 *a-na ^dšamaš(utu) a-ši-ib é-babbar-ra*
 35 *šá qé-re-eb larsam^{ki}*
 36 *bēli(en) ra-bu-ú bēli(en)-ia lu e-pu-uš*
 37 *^dšamaš(utu) bēlu(en) ra-bu-ú*
 38 *a-na é-babbar-ra šu-bat be-lu-ti-ka*
 39 *ina ḫi-da-a-ti ù ri-šá-a-ti*
 40 *i-na e-re-bi-ka*
 41 *li-pí-it qá-ti-ia dam-qá-a-ti*
 42 *ḫa-di-iš na-ap-li-is-ma*
 43 *ba-la-tu² u₄-mi ru-qu-ú-ti*
 44 *^rku¹-un-nu ^{gis}kussí(gu.za)*
 45 *[l]a-ba-ri pa-le-e-a*
 46 *li-iš-šá-kin šap-tuk-ka*
 47 *si-ip-pi ši-ga-ri mi-di-li ^{gis}dalāti(ig)^{meš}*
 48 *šá é-babbar-ra*
 49 *dam-qá-tu-ú-a la na-par-ka-a*
 50 *li-iz-ku-ru ma-ḫar-ka*

¹ Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, ² humble, submissive, prayerful, ³ who reveres the lord of lords, ⁴ provisioner of E-sangil and E-zida, ⁵ steadfast heir ⁶ of Nabopolassar, king of Babylon, am I.

⁷ When the great lord Marduk, ⁸ proud sage of the gods, ⁹⁻¹⁰ gave to me the land and people to care for as shepherd, ¹¹ at that time E-babbarra, ¹² the temple of Šamaš in Larsa, ¹³ which from days long past ¹⁴ had turned into a pile of ruins, ¹⁵ in which sand had accumulated in drifts ¹⁶ (so that) the groundplan was not exposed – ¹⁷ in my reign the great lord Marduk ¹⁸ felt compassion for that temple. ¹⁹ He summoned up the four winds and ²⁰ removed the earth debris from inside it so that ²¹ the groundplan could be seen. ²⁵ He solemnly charged me, ²² Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, ²³ the slave who reveres him, ²⁴ to construct that temple.

²⁶ I searched out and checked over its old foundation platform, ²⁷⁻²⁸ spread a layer of clean soil over its ancient foundation platform, and ²⁹ set firm its brickwork. ³⁰ E-babbarra, the true house, seat of my lord Šamaš, ³¹⁻³³ I did build for Šamaš who dwells in E-babbarra in Larsa, the great lord, my lord.

³⁴⁻³⁶ O great lord Šamaš, when with joy and delight you go into E-babbarra, the seat of your lordly person, ³⁸ look gladly on ³⁷ my fine handiwork and let ³⁹ a life of long days, ⁴⁰ security of throne and endurance of my reign ⁴¹ be articulated by your lips. ⁴² May the door-jambs, bolts, locks and doors ⁴³⁻⁴⁴ of E-babbarra declare before you my unceasing blessings.

No. 84

MS 2786/1

Pl. LXXII

This and the following piece join the extant eyestones of this king, which have been discussed by W. G. Lambert (1969: 69–70) and P.-R. Berger, who catalogued twenty-four examples exhibiting ten different votive inscriptions (1973: 13–15, 150–62; Da Riva 2008: 123 ES1–10).

MS 2786/1 is a round stone, pierced from side to side. The front face is white with a raised centre the colour of mature orange marmalade, giving the appearance of an eye. An inscription is carved around the centre, which records the dedication of the stone to Nergal by Nebuchadnezzar II.

ana ^d*nergal*(u.gur) *bēli*(umun)-šú ^d*nabû*(nà)-*kudurrî*(níg.du)-*ušur*(ùru) *šar*(20) *bābili*(ká.diš.diš)^{ki} *apil*(a) ^d*nabû*(nà)-*apla*(a)-*ušur*(ùru) *iqīš*(ba)^{es}

To Nergal, his lord, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, son of Nabopolassar, presented (this).

No. 85

MS 2786/2

Pl. LXXII

This second eyestone of Nebuchadnezzar is pierced from side to side, like the first, but its front face is more convex and not stepped. It is

not a perfect disc, being slightly malformed. The centre is dark brown. The inscription reports the stone's dedication to Marduk.

^d*nabû*(muati)-*kudurrî*(níg.du)-*ušur*(ùru) *šar*(20) *bābili*(eridu)^{ki} *apil*(a) ^d*nabû*(muati)-*apla*(a)-*ušur*(ùru) *šar*(20) *bābili*(eridu)^{ki} *ana* ^d*marduk*(amar.utu) *bēli*(umun)-šú *iqīš*(ba)

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, son of Nabopolassar, king of Babylon, presented (this) to Marduk, his lord.

Nabonidus

No. 86

MS 1846/3

Pl. LXXII

This beautiful little cylinder, inscribed in two columns of twenty-six lines, is a further exemplar of a well-known text of Nabonidus (555–539). The inscription commemorates Nabonidus' repair of E-lugal-galga-sisa, the ziqqurrat at Ur. It was edited by Langdon as Nabonidus no. 5 (1912: 250–53), catalogued by Berger as Zyl. II, 2 (1973: 355–59), and edited again by Hanspeter Schaudig, who knew eleven exemplars (2001: 350–53). Four such cylinders were found *in situ* on the ziqqurrat at Ur by J. E. Tay-

lor in 1854 and despatched to the British Museum, to be published by Edwin Norris as I R 68 no. 1 (Rawlinson and Norris 1861 pl. 68). A fifth was acquired by the collector Herbert Weld-Blundell, probably on a visit to Iraq in 1921, was later kept in the Bodleian Library, and is now in the Ashmolean Museum (Gurney 1977: 96 Bodl. AB 239). Other exemplars were recovered *in situ* during restoration work by the Iraqi antiquities' service in the early 1960s.

col. i

- 1 ^{md}nabû(nà)-na'id(ní.tuk) šâr bābili(tin.tir)^{ki}
- 2 za-ni-in é-sag-íl
- 3 ù é-zi-da
- 4 pa-liḫ ilī(dingir)^{mes} rabūti(gal)^{mes} a-na-ku
- 5 é-lugal-galga-si-sá
- 6 ziq-qur-rat é-giš-nu₁₁-gal
- 7 šá qé-reb úrim^{ki}
- 8 šá ^mur-^dnamma šâr šu-ut maḫ-ri
- 9 i-pu-šu-ma la ú-šak-li-lu-uš
- 10 ^{md}šul-gi māru(dumu)-šú ši-pir-šu ú-šak-lil
- 11 i-na mu-sa-re-e šá ^mur-^dnamma
- 12 ù ^{md}šul-gi mārī(dumu)-šú a-mu-ur-ma
- 13 šá ziq-qur-rat šu-a-ti ^mur-^dnamma
- 14 i-pu-šu-ma la ú-šak-li-lu-uš
- 15 ^{md}šul-gi māru(dumu)-šú ši-pir-šu ú-šak-lil
- 16 i-na-an-ni ziq-qur-rat šu-a-ti
- 17 la-ba-ri-iš il-li-ik-ma
- 18 e-li te-me-en-na la-bi-ri
- 19 šá ^mur-^dnamma ù ^{md}šul-gi mārū(dumu)-šú
- 20 i-pu-šu ziq-qur-rat šu-a-ti
- 21 ki-ma la-bi-ri-im-ma
- 22 i-na ku-up-ri u a-gur-ri ba-ta-aq-šu
- 23 aš-bat-ma a-na ^dsîn(30) bēl(en) ilī(dingir)^{mes} šá šamē(an)^c
- 24 u eršeti(ki)^{tim} šâr ilī(dingir)^{mes} ili(dingir.meš) šá ilī(dingir)^{mes}
- 25 a-ši-ib šamē(an)^c rabūti(gal)^{mes} bēl(en) é-giš-nu₁₁-gal
- 26 šá qé-reb úrim^{ki} bēli(en)-ia

col. ii

- 27 uš-ši-iš-ma
- 28 e-pu-uš
- 29 ^dsîn(30) be-lí ilī(dingir)^{mes}
- 30 šâr ilī(dingir)^{mes} šá šamē(an)^c u eršeti(ki)^{tim}
- 31 ili(dingir.meš) šá ilī(dingir)^{mes}
- 32 a-ši-ib šamē(an)^c rabūti(gal)^{mes}
- 33 a-na bīti(é) šu-a-ti
- 34 ḫa-dī-iš i-na e-re-bi-ka
- 35 damqāt(sig₇)^{mes} é-sag-íl
- 36 é-zi-da é-giš-nu₁₁-gal
- 37 bītāt(é)^{mes} ilu(dingir)-ú-ti-ka rabīti(gal)^{ti}
- 38 liš-šá-ki-in šap-tuk-ka
- 39 ù pu-luḫ-ti ilu(dingir)-ú-ti-ka
- 40 rabīti(gal)^{ti} lib-bi nišī(ùg)^{mes}-šú
- 41 šu-uš-kin-ma la i-ḫaṭ-ṭu-ú
- 42 a-na ilu(dingir)-ú-ti-ka rabīti(gal)^{ti}
- 43 ki-ma šamē(an)^c iš-da-šú-nu li-ku-nu
- 44 ia-a-ti ^{md}nabû(nà)-na'id(i) šâr bābili(tin.tir)^{ki}
- 45 i-na ḫi-ṭu ilu(dingir)-ú-ti-ka rabīti(gal)^{ti}
- 46 šu-zib-an-ni-ma
- 47 ba-la-ṭu u₄-mu ru-qu-t[i]
- 48 a-na ši-rik-ti šur-k[am]
- 49 ù šá ^{md}bēl(en)-šarra(lugal)-ušur(ùru) mārī(dumu) reš-t[u-ú]
- 50 ši-it lib-bi-ia pu-luḫ-ti ilu(dingir)-ú-[ti-ka]
- 51 rabīti(gal)^{ti} lib-bu-uš šu-uš-kin-[ma]
- 52 a-a ir-šá-a ḫi-ṭi-ti la-le-e balāṭi(tin) [liš-bi]

¹ Nabonidus, king of Babylon, ²provisioner of E-sangil ³ and E-zida, ⁴ who reveres the great gods, am I. ⁵ E-lugal-galga-sisa, ⁶ the ziqqurrat of E-gišnu-gal ⁷ in Ur, ⁸ which Ur-Namma, a king of bygone times, ⁹ built but did not finish, ¹⁰ his son Šulgi completed work on it – ^{11–12} I read on inscriptions of Ur-Namma and his son Šulgi ^{13–14} that Ur-Namma built that ziqqurrat but did not finish it, ¹⁵ his son Šulgi completed work on it – ¹⁶ now that ziqqurrat ¹⁷ had grown old, so ¹⁸ on the ancient foundation platform ¹⁹ that Ur-Namma and his son Šulgi ^{20–23} had built, I repaired that ziqqurrat's ruins, exactly as of old, with bitumen and baked brick and ^{23–28} built it anew for my lord Šîn, lord of the gods of heaven and earth, king of the gods, god of gods, who resides in the great heavens, lord of E-gišnu-gal in Ur.

²⁹ O Šîn, lord of the gods, ³⁰ king of the gods of heaven and earth, ³¹ god of gods, ³² who resides in the great heavens, ^{33–34} when you gladly enter that temple, ³⁵ may blessings for E-sangil, ³⁶ E-zida and E-gišnu-gal, ³⁷ the houses of your great divine person, ³⁸ be present on your lips, ^{39–41} and place reverence for your great divine person in the hearts of your(! tablet: his) people, so that they do not sin ⁴² against your great divine person. ⁴³ May their loyalty (lit. stance) be firm as the skies! ⁴⁴ Me, Nabonidus, king of Babylon, ^{45–46} save me from sinning against your great divine person and ^{47–48} grant me as a gift a life of long days. ^{49–51} And place reverence for [your] great divine person in the heart of Belshazzar, the firstborn son, offspring of my loins, [so that] ⁵² he does not fall into sinful ways. [May he enjoy] to the full a life of good health!