

Abhandlung

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“The just judgements that Ḥammu-rāpi, a former king, rendered”: A New Royal Inscription in the Istanbul Archaeological Museums

<https://doi.org/10.1515/za-2021-2004>

Abstract: This article publishes a royal inscription preserved on a clay tablet housed in the Istanbul Archaeological Museums. The inscription, which was intended for display on a stele, commemorates a royal grant of tax exemptions to nine Babylonian cities and presents the royal protagonist as a second Ḥammu-rāpi. The name and titulary of the king in question are not preserved, and the attribution of the inscription is accordingly uncertain. Following Jean-Vincent Scheil’s attribution of the text already in 1902, the study that accompanies an edition of the text argues that it should be attributed to Nabonidus, king of Babylon 556–539 BC, and explores its historical significance in this context.

Article Note: Si. 4+5 is published with the kind permission of the Directorate of the Istanbul Archaeological Museums. The assistance of Museum Director Mr Rahmi Asal and his colleagues during research visits to the Istanbul Archaeological Museums is gratefully acknowledged. Scans of photos taken by Luise Ehelolf in the 1930s and now kept in the archives of the Vorderasiatisches Museum (Ph. K. 382–383) were kindly provided by Ms Alrun Gutow and are published here (Figures 1 and 3) with the permission of the Istanbul Archaeological Museums. Many thanks are owed to Antoine Cavigneaux, Zsombor Földi, Sarah Schlüter, and anonymous reviewers for their detailed criticism, corrections, and suggestions on an earlier version of the manuscript. We are also grateful to Alexa Bartelmus, Aino Häتينen, and Enrique Jiménez for helpful discussions of specific problems, and Jamie Novotny for informing us of the contents of forthcoming RINAP and RINBE volumes. Abbreviations follow the Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie (RIA) apart from: **RINAP 2** = Frame, G. (2020): The royal inscriptions of Sargon II, king of Assyria (721–705 BC). University Park PA; **RINAP 5/1** = Novotny, J./J. Jeffers (2018): The royal inscriptions of Ashurbanipal (668–631 BC), Aššur-etel-ilāni (630–627 BC), and Sîn-šarra-iškun (626–612 BC), kings of Assyria, Part 1. Winona Lake IN; **RINAP 5/3** = Novotny, J./J. Jeffers/G. Frame (forthcoming): The royal inscriptions of Ashurbanipal (668–631 BC), Aššur-etel-ilāni (630–627 BC) and Sîn-šarra-iškun (626–612 BC), kings of Assyria, Part 3; **RINBE 1/1–2** = Weiershäuser, F./J. Novotny (forthcoming): The royal inscriptions of Nabopolassar (625–605 BC) and Nebuchadnezzar II (604–562 BC), kings of Babylon, Parts 1 and 2; and **RINBE 2** = Weiershäuser, F./J. Novotny (2020): The royal inscriptions of Amēl-Marduk (561–560 BC), Neriglissar

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I Introduction

A clay tablet housed in the Sippar collection of the Istanbul Archaeological Museums, Si(ppar) 4+5, contains a previously unpublished royal inscription. The tablet comprises two fragments that were found at the northern Babylonian site of Tell Abū Ḥabbah (ancient Sippar-Yaḥrurum) during the 1894 campaign led by Jean-Vincent Scheil.¹ In his report on the season’s finds Scheil notes that both may be “texte de Nabonid.” His description of them is as follows:

(559–556 BC), and Nabonidus (555–539 BC), kings of Babylon. University Park PA; **SA A 1** = Parpola, S. (1987): The correspondence of Sargon II, Part I: Letters from Assyria and the west. Helsinki; **SA A 5** = G.B. Lanfranchi/ Parpola, S. (1990): The correspondence of Sargon II, Part II: Letters from the northern and northeastern provinces. Helsinki; **SA A 10** = Parpola, S. (1993): Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian scholars. Helsinki; **SA A 17** = Dietrich M. (2003): The Babylonian correspondence of Sargon and Sennacherib. Helsinki; **SA A 18** = Reynolds, F. (2003): The Babylonian correspondence of Esarhaddon and letters to Assurbanipal and Sîn-šarra-iškun from northern and central Babylonia. Helsinki; **SA A 21** = Parpola, S. (2018): The correspondence of Assurbanipal, Part I. Letters from Assyria, central Babylonia, and vassal states. Helsinki; **WAI, I** = Rawlinson, H.C./E. Norris (1861): The cuneiform inscriptions of Western Asia I.

¹ On Scheil’s excavations at Sippar see Scheil (1902), De Meyer/Gasche (1980), and Jiménez (2020, 255 f.).

“4. Fragment. **Fin d’un texte de Nabonid, vraisemblablement** [emphasis authors’ own], avec les souhaits habituels de bénédictions divines: *ina Esaggil êkal ilâni lalie balaṭi lišbî ... lirappiṣu papallum.*”²

“5. Fragment. **Texte de Nabonid, probablement** [emphasis authors’ own], avec, à la fin, des souhaits de bénédictions: *Nabu dubsar Esaggil umê ina duppi lištur!* Sur le recto il est question de Ḥammu-rāpi, à propos d’une construction. Cf. WAI, I, 69, col. 2, 8.” (Scheil 1902, 96)

The fragments physically join each other and were recognized as a join and glued together at some point before they were photographed by Luise Ehelolf in the 1930s. Together they represent a tablet of portrait orientation inscribed with four columns of ruled text written in Neo-Babylonian script. Columns i and ii originally contained between 35 and 40 lines of text each, whereas columns iii and iv on the reverse of the tablet contained slightly fewer, between 25 and 30 lines of text each. The tablet’s upper edge is partially preserved, and only a few signs are missing from the start of the lines in columns i and iii. Long sections of both columns can be read in their entirety.

The text opens with a short historical narrative. Ḥammu-rāpi, a “former king,” is said to have written the “just [judgement]s that he rendered” on a stele (i 1–3); this seems a clear reference to the famous diorite stele of Ḥammu-rāpi (r. 1792–1750 BC) discovered at Susa in 1901–1902 and now on display in the Musée du Louvre.⁴ According to the new text, Ḥammu-rāpi made the stele available so that the people could use it to maintain justice for themselves (i 4–5), but it subsequently disappeared in unclear circumstances “at the fury of the gods” (i 8–9), which could well refer to the removal of the Louvre stele from Babylo-

nia during an invasion led by the Middle Elamite king Šutruk-Nahhunte I in the first half of the eleventh century.⁵ As a result of its disappearance, the Babylonian population “lost direction” and “roamed constantly in chaos and confusion” (i 10–12). At this point the royal narrator enters the narrative in the first person. He relates how he carefully listened to and observed the crimes being committed and, in a manner reminiscent of the god Enlil in Atrahasis, how he could not rest as a result (i 13–16).⁶ He then prays to the gods Marduk, Shamash, Nergal, and Ninurta (i 17–20) before commanding “[with] one intention” four of his officials to action (i 21–23). At this point in the column the text becomes fragmentary but the royal narrator refers to Ehursagtila, the temple of Ninurta in Babylon (i 24–25), and states that he made “them” (presumably his officials) swear an oath by the gods (i 27). He then claims to have strengthened the weak (i 28), and appears to list specific results of this action pertaining to inheritance and property (i 30–31). Further general achievements relating to the establishment of “truth” and “justice” appear to be claimed (i 32–33).

When, several lines into the second column, a coherent text resumes, the narrator is describing how he sought out “difficult judgements” and something ancient (the critical word is badly damaged, ii 5–6), and did something (both the verb and the object are broken away) “with” his(?) “royal *šalmu*” (ii 6–7).⁷ He then had inscribed on a stele “the judgements that I rendered, the deeds that I d[id, (and)] the roads that I roamed” (ii 8–11). After expressing the wish that a future ruler read the stele and follow him in giving true and just judgements (ii 11–13), the narrator turns his attention to the citizens of nine Babylonian cities. He records that he wrote a tablet recording the tax-exempt status of the citizens of Babylon, Borsippa, Sippar, Kutha, Kish, Dilbat, Ur, Uruk, and Larsa. He further states that he established their *kidinnu*-status and did not impose on them “*ilku*-tax, *tupšikku*-tax (or) the digging of canal[s (and ...)] at the herald’s proclamation” (ii 14–27). Of the subsequent lines in the column only a few signs have survived, but they suggest that the king marked his award of tax exemptions and *kidinnu*-status by holding a banquet (or banquets) for the citizens of the cities concerned (ii 28–33). The following lines (ca. 5 completely missing lines followed by iii 1’–13’) are, unfortunately, largely lost.

² Scheil cited the same passage some eight years earlier, in a publication from the year of the tablet’s excavation (see further Philological Commentary below, ad iv 11–13), which led to the inclusion of Si. 4 in HKL 1, 458 (also 463), where it is described as “nach Scheil ... wahrscheinlich Nabonid.” Si. 5 is cited twice in early volumes of the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary, under the designations “Istanbul Sippar 5” and “Sippar 5” (CAD H 160b and CAD Z 33a), which indicates that a transliteration of more lines of the text than the three published by Scheil was available to staff members of the CAD.

³ I.e., the passage of BM 91124, the best-preserved exemplar of Nabonidus’ *Sammelinschrift* (RINBE 2, Nabonidus 27 ii 7), in which Nabonidus records the discovery of an inscription of Ḥammu-rāpi during restoration work on the Ebabbar temple at Larsa.

⁴ Or, possibly, to a different stele containing a similar text. Ḥammu-rāpi may have commissioned several steles inscribed with different versions of the same text, of which the stele on display at the Louvre might only be the best preserved. See Nougayrol (1957; 1958) for fragments of two or three more steles of (probably) Ḥammu-rāpi found at Susa, and Borger (1979, 7f.) on a version of the inscription that emphasized Nippur at the expense of Babylon.

⁵ For further discussion see below, p. 256 with n. 64.

⁶ See Philological Commentary ad i 13–16.

⁷ A depiction of the king either in the form of a statue or bas-relief. See Philological Commentary ad ii 6–7.

At iii 14' begins a series of invocations of the most important deities of the Babylonian pantheon, who are requested to bless – presumably – any future ruler who follows the royal narrator's example in his promotion of truth and justice. Next to be invoked is any future king who sits on the Babylonian throne: he is requested to read the stele, to anoint it with oil, pour a libation, inscribe the name of the narrator alongside his own, and to praise repeatedly the narrator's deeds (iv 16'–21'). The inscrip-

tion concludes with two invocations on the future king's behalf of “[the god]s, all whose names I have invoked on this stele,” and the wish that the future king will in turn “act [according to] their [c]ommand” (iv 22'–25').

As is clear from this summary of its content, the inscription written on Si. 4+5 raises several issues, not least the identity of the king who commissioned it. Before addressing this and related questions, we present an edition of the text.

II Edition

Transliteration

Column i

1. [dī]-¹nat mi¹-šá-ri šá ḥa-am-mu-¹ra¹-pí
2. šarru([LUG]AL) maḥ-ri-i i-di-nu
3. [ina ⁿna-re-e iš-ṭur-ma iš-tak-kan
4. [ši]-¹bu-ut-su ú-šal-lim a-na¹ qātī(ŠU^{min}) nišī(UN^{meš}) ú-še-ši⁰-ma⁰⁸
5. [ud-da]-kam a-ḥa-meš i-dī⁰-nu⁰⁹
6. [šá gul-lul-t]i u ḥi-bil-ti la i-šu-ú ina zu-um-ri-šú-un
7. [uš-zi]-zu ki-na-a-ti
8. [^{na}na-r]u-¹ú šu¹-a-ti ina ug-gat lib-bi ili(DINGIR^{me}) us-saḥ-ḥi-ma
9. [i-n]a māti(KUR) u nišī(UN^{meš}) ¹in¹-na-siḥ-ma la in-na-¹mir¹ a-šar-šú⁰
10. nišū([U]N^{meš}) ina la di-i-ni su-um-mu-ma i-dar-ri-su a-¹ḥa-meš¹
11. [gi²-n]a²-¹ma²¹ ina e-šá-a-ti u dal-ḥa-a-¹ti¹
12. [it-t]a-na-al-la-ka-ma re-ši ¹la i¹-šá-a
13. ¹a¹-na-ku rig-mu ḥu-bur nišī(UN^{meš}) ši-¹tu¹ ḥa-ba-lu
14. [eš-te-n]em-mé-e-ma ul ú-šar-¹ba-ab¹ sur-riš
15. [da-a-k]u šá-ga-ši tá-bak da-¹mu ḥa-laq¹ napšāti(ZI^{meš})
16. [at-t]a-na-aṭ-ṭal-ma ul ú-¹qāt-ti¹ [š]it-ti
17. [áš-ši q]á-ti ú-sap-pa-a bēl(¹EN¹) bābili(T[IN.TI]R^{ki}) šar(LUGAL) ili(DINGIR^{me}) marduk(^dAMAR.UTU)
18. ¹ú²¹ šamaš(^{d1}UTU) bēl(EN) di-in kit-ti ¹u¹ m[i-šá]-ri a-ba-lu ka-a-a-man
19. šar([LUG]AL²) dayyāni(DI.KUD^{meš}) nergal([^d]U¹.GUR) ^dnin-urta
20. [d]a-¹in di-i-ni ḥa-¹[i]ṭ kul-la-tì
21. bēl piḥāti([^{lú}]EN.NAM) šakin ṭēmi(^{lú}GAR.UMUŠ) ^{lú}za-zak-ku ^{lú}qab-la-né-e
22. [man-z]a-¹az¹ ēkalli(É.¹GAL¹)-ia ša-bit ¹mar¹-de-e kit-ti a-lik i-di en-ši
23. [ki]-¹i¹¹⁰ pi-i iš-te-niš ú-ma-¹ir-šú-nu-ti-ma
24. [(ina) bīt(É) (?)] ¹d²¹nin-urta é²¹-[ḥur²]-sag-ti-la
25. [ul-tú ši-pir-šú (?)] ¹ú²-qat²¹-tu-ú
26. [ina é-ḥur-sag-ti-la] bīt(¹É²¹) ¹ba¹-la-ṭu

8 A small flake that was still attached to Si. 5 when the older photograph was taken contained the lower parts of the ši- and MA-signs. The flake has since become detached from the tablet and is missing.

9 The flake mentioned in n. 8 also contained the last wedge of the DI-sign and the entire NU-sign.

10 Marks visible on the tablet could represent either damage or the ends of the wedges of an I-sign.

27. [x x x (x)-m]a niš ili(¹DINGIR^{meš}) ¹ú¹-[šá]-¹az-kir-šú-nu-ti¹
 28. [x x x ú-da]n-nin en-ši dan-n[u a-na en-ši]
 29. [a-na (x x)] la sa-ka^o-¹pi^o¹
 30. [x x aḫu(ŠEŠ²) rabû(GA)L²] a-na aḫi(ŠEŠ) ša-aḫ-ru la šá-ra-ku
 31. [pu-ut bitī(¹É¹)] ¹ù kirī(^{giš}KIRI₆)¹ šá a-ḫa-meš na-šu-ú šu-lu-ú ina māti(KUR)
 32. [x x-t]i ¹muš-šur¹-um-¹ma¹ [k]it-ti ša-ba-tu
 33. x [x x] x ¹nu-uk¹-kur-um-ma mi-šá-ri šá-ka-ni
 34. [...] ¹a² x-¹a²-ti na-šu-¹ú¹
 35. [...] x x(-)[i]m-ma di-nim sa-¹na²-[x]
 36. [... ...] x x x [x x x (x x)]

Lacuna (ca. 2 lines)

Column ii

1. ¹LUGAL²¹ [...]
 2. niš ilāni(DINGIR^{meš}) [ušazkiršunūti (?) ...]
 3. ¹ur-ri¹ ¹ú²¹ [mu-ši (?) x x x x x x (x x x)]
 4. ¹a-di¹ ¹ar²-ku²-su²¹ [... ...]
 5. ¹ù al¹-ṭa-ta di-na-¹a¹-ti x x [x] x [x]
 6. la-bi-ra-¹a¹-ti ú-ba-³-i-ma ¹a²-[su-mit-ti]
 7. it-ti ša-¹lam¹ šar-ru-ti [ú²-kin²]
 8. di-na-a-[t]i a-di-nu ep-še-e-ti e-p[u-šu]
 9. ¹tal-lak¹-ti at-tal-la-ku ina ^{na},na-r[e-e]
 10. (uninscribed)
-
11. al-ta-aṭ-ṭar-ma ¹e¹-zib aḫ-r[a-taš ru-bu-ù]
 12. ár-ku-ú li-mur-ma ki-i ia-a-ti-ma lit-t[a-i²-id]
 13. di-in kit-ti ù mi-šá-ru li-din [(ù šá)]
 14. bābilāyī(^{lú}TIN.TIR^{ki}.meš) ub-bu-b[u-tu/ti]
 15. barsipāyī(^{lú}BÁRA.SIPA^{ki}.meš) reš-tu-ti sipparāyī(^{lú}ZIMBI^R^{ki}.meš) x x x
 16. kutāyī(^{lú}GÚ.DU₈.A^{ki}.meš) ki-di-né-e kišāyī(^{lú}KIŠ^{ki}.meš) [x x x]
 17. dilbatāyī(^{lú}dil-bat^{ki}.meš) šá pi-riš-ti urāyī(^{lú}ÚRIM¹^{ki}.meš) [x x x]
 18. urukāyī(^{lú}UNUG^{ki}.meš) ki-nu-tu larsāyī(^{lú}UD.UNUG^{ki}.meš) [x UN^{meš}(?)]
 19. ¹ma¹-ḫa-zi rabūti(GAL^{meš}) alāni(UR[U^{meš}]) [(x x x)]
 20. šá ^{kur}ka-ra-an-dun-ia-àš [x x x x]
 21. šá a-na ^dbēl(EN) bēl(EN) bābili(TIN.TIR^{ki}) a-na ^d?[...]
 22. a-na ili(DINGIR^{meš}) rabūti(GAL^{meš}) [šá šamē(AN)^e u eršetī(KI)^{tim} (?)]
 23. a-na ^dzar-pa-ni-tu₄ ištār(^d+INNIN) bābili(TIN.TIR^{ki}) u ¹d¹[...]
 24. tup-pi za-ku-ti-šú-nu áš-ṭur an-[du-ra-ár-šú-nu (eššiš) aškun (?)]
 25. ki-di-nu-ut-su-nu [akšurma (?)]
 26. il-ki tup-šik-ku ḫa-re-e nārāti(ÍD^{meš}) (u ...)
 27. ¹ši¹-si-it nāgiri(^{lú}NIMGIR) e-¹li-šú²¹-[nu² ul ukīn (?)]
 28. [ka-a-a-n]a² (?) ¹la¹ na-par-¹ka-a mu²¹-[...]
 29. [...] x (x) [...]
 30. karānu(¹GEŠTIN²¹.meš) [u kurunnu amkira šurrašun (?)]
 31. i-gu-la-a m[uḫ²-ḫa²-šú²-nu² ušašqi (?)]
 32. lu-bu-šu rabūti(¹GAL^{meš}¹) [... ...]
 33. ú-¹lab¹-[biš²]

Lacuna (ca. 5 lines)

Column iii

Lacuna (ca. 5 lines)

- 1'. ^ti¹-x [...]]
 2'. ki-m[a ...]
 3'. a-n[a ...]
 4'. ez-z[i[?] ...]
 5'. n[a[?] ...]
 6'. i-[...]
 7'. i-n[a ...]
 8'. nukurtu^(lúKÚR) ^ma[?]-a[?]-x [...]]
 9'. pa-ti-x [...]]
 10'. su-kup-ti x [...]]
 11'. ri-qut-su ^a?¹-[...]]
 12'. a-na šat-^ti¹ ^d1[...]]
 13'. i-na ep-še-t[ⁱ-ia (?) (...)]
 14'. marduk^(dAMAR.UTU) ḫa-diš [lip-pal-lis-su-ma (?) (...)]
 15'. išid(SUḪUŠ) kussē^(gīsGU.ZA)-šú ^ki-ma šu¹-pu[k šadī(KUR-i) ...]
 16'. li-kun x [...]]
 17'. ^dzar-pa-ni-tu₄ [...]]
 18'. i-na ma-ḫar ^{DINGIR}?¹ [...]]
 19'. dam-qa-a-ti-šú ^qa[?]¹ [...]]
 20'. ^dé-a bēl(EN) né-me-^qi igigal(IGI.GÁL)-lu-^ti¹ x [...]]
 21'. li-šá-an-di-il x [...]]
 22'. nabū^(d+AG) tupšar(DUB.SAR) é-sag-íl ūmī^(U₄meš) [balāṭi(TIN)-šú arkūti(GÍDmeš)]
 23'. i-na ṭup-pi liš-ṭur-ma lu-šam-x [...]]
 24'. šamaš^(dUTU¹) dikuggal(DI.KU₅.GAL) ili(DINGIR^{me[š]}) [(GAL^{meš?})]
 25'. i-na bi-ri purussē(EŠ.BAR) an-na ki-ⁿim¹ [lip[?]-pul[?]-šú[?]]
 26'. kit-ti u mi-šá-ri li-[...]
 27'. ^diš-tar ^be-let qab-lu u tāḫāzi(MÈ)¹ x [...]]
 28'. i-du-u[š[?] ... ayyābī(?)]
 29'. li-nar ga-re-[e(-šú) lišamqit]

Column iv

1. [nergal^(dU.GUR) bēl(EN) šib-ṭi u šag-ga-āš-ti (?)]
 2. [an-dul-la-šú elī(UGU)-šú-nu lit-ru-uš (?)]
 3. [li-ig-mil nap-šat ni-šu-šú-nu (?)]
 4. [šá[?]-a[?]]-^ti[?]-nu[?]¹ u[m[?]-man[?]]-^ti[?]-nu[?] ka[?]¹-r[as[?]-su[?]-un[?]]
 5. [li-ti-ru i-na qé-reb šap-^ti[?]-qī[?]¹]
 6. adad^(^d1IŠKUR) gugal(GÚ.GAL) šamē(AN)^e u eršeti(KI)^{ti} zunni(ŠĒGmeš) ṭaḫ-du-ti
 7. mīlī([ILL]Umeš) gap-šu-ti ina māti(KUR)-šú liš-tab-^ra-a¹ mu-šu u im-^rma¹
 8. ilū([DINGIRmeš]) rabūtu(GALmeš) šamē(^rAN)^e ù eršeti(KI)^{ti}
 9. [i]-na ku-un lib-^bi¹-šú-nu ḫa-diš lik-tar-ra-bu-šú-ma
 10. ilu([DING]IR) a-na ili(DINGIR) li-iš¹-bat a-bu-ut-su
 11. [li]-ri-ku ūmū(U₄meš)-šú li-^ri-ⁱ-da šá-na-ti-šú
 12. [ina] ^re¹-sag-íl ékal(É.GAL) ili(DINGIRmeš) la-le-e balāṭi(TIN) liš-bi
 13. [x] ^rx x¹ ^rli-šar¹-ri-šú li-^rap-pi-šú pa-pal-lu₄
 14. [...]]-^rx da¹-ru-ú
 15. [...]] x ^ra-na[?]¹ x x x x x ^rKUR[?]¹
 16. [man-nu ina šarri(LUGALmeš)] ár-ku-ú-ti māri(^rDUMU¹meš)-e-a
 17. [šá illū(E₁₁)]-ma ú-ma-^ra-^ra¹-ru māta(KUR)

18. *musarâ*([MU.SAR]^a) *ši-ṭir šu-mi-ia li-mur-ma*
19. [šamna li]p-šu-uš ni-qa-a liq-qí
20. [šu-m]i it-ti šu-mi-šú liš-ṭur
21. [ep-š]e-e-ti-ia lit-ta-'i-id
22. [ilū(DINGIR^{meš}) m]a-la ina ^{na}.na-re-e an-ni-i šumi(MU)-šú-nu az-ku-ru
23. [maššar(^{lu}EN.NUN)] šul-mu ù ba-la-ṭu lip-qí-du-šú
24. [šu-u]m-mi-rat lib-bi-šú li-šak-ši-du-šú-ma
25. [i-na q]a-bé-e-šú(-nu) li-pu-uš

Remainder uninscribed

Translation

Column i

1. The just [judgement]s that Ḫammu-rāpi,
2. a former [ki]ng, rendered,
3. he wrote (them) [on] a stele, thereby establishing (them).
4. He completed his [p]lan (and) made it available to the people so that they could
5. render judgement of each other [forev]er.
6. On (the body of) those who have neither [crim]e nor misdeed
7. they [impo]sed justice.
8. At the fury of the gods that [stel]e was desecrated and
9. removed [from] the land and (its) people, and its location could not be found.
10. Without law [the pe]ople lost direction, trampling on one an[other],
11. (12.) They used to [r]oam (11.) [*constant*]ly, in chaos and confusion,
12. with no support.
13. To the noise, the clamour of the people, negligence (and) wrongdoing
14. I [con]stantly listened, and I could not relax for a moment.
15. [On the kil]ling, slaughter, bloodshed, (and) loss of life
16. [I] constantly gazed, and I could not sleep properly.
17. [I raised] (my) hand(s), praying to the lord of Babylon, the king of the gods, Marduk,
18. and to Shamash, lord of the true and [jus]t judgement. I constantly beseeched
19. [*the kin*]g of judges, [Ner]gal, (and) Ninurta,
20. who renders judgement, who watches over all.
21. The *bēl piḫāti-*, *šakin tēmi-*, *zazakku-*, and *qablānū-* officials,
22. [the courti]ers of my palace who seize the path(s) of truth, who walk at the sides of the weak,
23. [with] one intention I commanded them, and
24. [*in the temple of*] the god Ninurta, the [Ehur]sagtila,
25. [*after*] I had finished [*working on it*],
26. [*in the Ehursagtila, the hou*]se of life,
27. [*I gathered them a*]nd made them swear an o[a]th by the gods.
28. [... I stre]ngthened the weak, (l. 29) [so that] (l. 28) the strong
29. [may] not oppress (l. 28) [the weak];
30. [*so that the elde*]r [*brother*] may not settle [...] on the younger brother,
31. [(and instead) *the guarantee for the house*] and the orchard, which they jointly bear, be *removed*; (so that) in the land
32. [...] ... be released and truth be instilled.
33. [...] ... be removed and justice be established.

34. [... ..] ... be borne.
 35. [...] ... the judgement be ...!
 36. [... ..] ... [...]
 Lacuna (ca. 2 lines)

Column ii

1. *king* [... ..]
 2. [*I made them swear*] *an oath by the god*[s]
 3. *day* [*and night*]
 4. *until I had arranged* [... ..]
 5. Moreover, *difficult* judgements, (l. 6) ancient (l. 5) [...]
 6. I sought out, and (l. 7) I [*established*]
 7. (l. 6) *a s[tone monument]* (l. 7) with [my] royal image.
 8. The judgements that I rendered, the deeds that I d[id, (and)]
 9. the road that I roamed
 10. –
 11. I had inscribed (l. 9) on the stele, (l. 11) and I left (it) behind for eter[nity. Let a future prince]
 12. read (it) and, like me, pay cl[ose attention!]
 13. Let him render true and just judgement(s)! [(And with regard to)]
 14. the unencumber[ed] citizens of Babylon,
 15. the pre-eminent citizens of Borsippa; the [...] citizens of Sippa[r];
 16. the citizens of Kutha, enjoyers of *kidinnu*-status; the [...] citizens of Kiš;
 17. the citizens of Dilbat, “of the secret”; the [...] citizens of Ur;
 18. the loyal citizens of Uruk; the [...] citizens of Larsa – [(the citizens of)]
 19. the great cult centres, the cit[ies (...)]
 20. of the land of Kar(an)duniaš [... ..],
 21. who [*are attentive/ bow down*] to the god Bēl, lord of Babylon, to the god [...],
 22. to the great gods [(of heaven and earth)],
 23. to the goddess Zarpanītu, goddess of Babylon, and the god [...] –
 24. I inscribed a tablet (recording) their tax-exempt status; [*I promulgated*] *an ed[ict of freedom (anew)]*;
 25. their *kidinnu*-status [*I established*];
 26. *ilku-tupšikku*-tax, the digging of canal[s (and ...)]
 27. at the herald’s proclamation [*I did not impose on them.*]
 28. [*Alway*]s, ceaselessly [... ..]
 29. ... [... ..]
 30. [*I watered their insides*] with wine [*and kurunnu-wine*]
 31. [*I soaked their*] h[eads] with perfumed oil [...]
 32. In great cloaks [...]
 33. I clot[hed (them)...]
 Lacuna (ca. 5 lines)

Column iii

Lacuna (ca. 5 lines)

- 1'. ... [... ..]
 2'. lik[e]
 3'. to [... ..]
 4'. *furi[ous]*
 5'. ... [... ..]

- 6'. ... [... ]
 7'. in [... ]
 8'. the enemy ... [... ]
 9'. ... [... ]
 10'. repulse ... [... ]
 11'. empty-handed ... [... ]
 12'. On account of this [... ]
 13'. With [*my valuable*] deed[s] ]
 14'. [May] Marduk [regard him] joyfully [(...)],
 15'. the foundation of his throne like the bas[e of a mountain ...]
 16'. may it be firm [... ]
 17'. [May] Zarpanītu [... ]
 18'. in the presence of [... ]
 19'. his well-being ... [... ]
 20'. [May] Ea, lord of sagacity, [bestow] wisdom [upon him!]
 21'. May he increase ... [... ]
 22'. [May] Nabû, the scribe of Esaggil, (23') inscribe [long] days [for his life]
 23'. on (his) tablet, and may he ... [... ]
 24'. [May] Šamaš, chief justice of the [(*great*)] gods,
 25'. [*answer him*] by (means of) divination (with) a decision, a firm yes!
 26'. May he [... ] truth and justice!
 27'. [May] Ishtar, lady of battle and warfare [... ]
 28'. at hi[s] side [... ]
 29'. may she kill [his enemies], [may she fell his foes!]

Column iv

1. [*May Nergal, lord of plague and murder,*]
2. [*stretch his protection over them!*]
3. [*May he spare the lives of their people*]
4. (and) save [them], thei[r] a[rm]y, and his camp [...]
5. from anguish!
6. May Adad, the canal inspector of heaven and earth, make plentiful rains
7. (and) swollen [floo]ds long lasting in his land! Night and day
8. may the great [god]s of heaven and earth
9. bless him joyfully in their steadfast hearts and
10. may [a god] intercede with (another) god for him!
11. [May] his days be long, his years be many!
12. [In] Esaggil, the palace of the gods, may he be full of the abundance of life!
13. May he sprout [...] (and) expand (his) offspring!
14. [May he] eternal [...!]
15. [May he ...]!
16. [Whoever among] future [kings], my descendants,
17. [who ascends (the throne)/ arises] to govern the land,
18. may he read [the monume]nt written in my name and
19. anoint (it) [with oil], pour a libation,
20. write my [name] with his name,
21. (and) repeatedly praise my [de]eds!
22. May [the gods], all whose names I have invoked on this stele,
23. appoint [a guardian] of health and life for him!

24. May they allow him to achieve his heart's desire, and
 25. may he act [according to] their¹¹ [c]ommand!

III Philological Commentary

i 1–2 [dī]-^lnat mi-šá-ri šá ḥa-am-mu-^lra^l-pí | šarru ([LUG]AL) maḥ-ri-i i-di-nu, “The just [judgement]s that Ḥammu-rāpi, | a former [ki]ng, rendered”: These lines are reminiscent of those of the Epilogue of the Laws of Ḥammu-rāpi:

di-na-a-at mi-ša-ri-im ša ḥa-am-mu-ra-pí šar-ru-um le-ú-um ú-ki-in-nu-ma

(These are) the just judgements that Ḥammu-rāpi, powerful king, established ...

(CH xlvi 1–5; Borger 1979, 45).

Note also the designation of the Laws of Ḥammu-rāpi as *dīnāni ša Ḥamm[u-rāpi] (...)* in a Neo-Assyrian catalogue (Lambert 1989, 95: 9). Alternatively, if one assumes that this tablet is the second of a two-tablet series in which the first tablet contained *dīnāt mišari ša Ḥammu-rāpi*, one could translate ll. 1–2 as an independent sentence: “(These are) the just [judgement]s that Ḥammu-rāpi, a former [ki]ng, rendered.” We owe this interesting idea to A. Cavigneaux. On Ḥammu-rāpi's importance to the king of the inscription see the Study below, section e.

i 3 [ina n]^a.narē iš-ṭur-ma iš-tak-kan, “he wrote (them) [on] a stele in order to establish (them)”: A similar phrase occurs in Nabonidus' Ḥarrān Stele inscription:

ipišti Sîn rabitu ša ... | ... | nišū māti (lā) ippalsūma | ina tuppi lā iš-ṭu-ru-ma | lā iš-tak-ka-nu ana ūmi šāti

The great deed of the god Sîn, which the people of the land had (not) seen, written down on a (clay) tablet, nor deposited for eternity ...

(RINBE 2, Nabonidus 47: 1–5)¹²

The idea of perpetuating information by committing it to writing is also found in the SB recension of the Cuthean Legend, ll. 3 (restored) and 29 (Goodnick Westenholz 1997, 300. 306), but there the verb used is, instead of a derived form of *šakānu*, *ezēbu(m)*. The closest parallel is perhaps

¹¹ Text: his.

¹² Similarly: Schaudig (2001, 496): “(Dies ist) die große Tat Sîns ... die die Menschen des Landes (nicht) gesehen haben und (sie) daher auf eine Tafel nicht geschrieben und nicht hinterlassen haben für die Tage ferner Zeit”, and CAD Š/1 151a: “the deeds of Sin which they did not write down and did not deposit for all time.”

Enūma eliš VII 158, where “the preeminent one” (*maḥrû*)¹³ is said to have acted as follows:

iš-ṭur-ma iš-ta-kan ana ši-mé-e ar-ku-ti

He wrote it down and stored it so that generations to come might hear it.

(Lambert 2013, 132–33)

AHw. 1137b and CAD Š/1 151 interpret *iš-tak-ka-nu* in the Ḥarrān Stele as Gt-stem (cf. GAG § 92f, Gt as “etwas für die Dauer tun”), but Schaudig argues that it should, “Wegen der eindeutigen Schreibungen mit doppeltem [k],” instead be understood as Gtn preterite, i. e., as *ištakkanū* (Schaudig 2001, 218 §IV.6.1 e). However, while the double [k] in the spellings in the Ḥarrān Stele and the present line is against parsing the forms as a Gt preterite (*ištaknū*), it would nevertheless be consistent with a Gt durative (also *ištakkanū*). The tense sequence preterite – durative can express purpose,¹⁴ and a purpose clause would make good sense in Si. 4+5 i 3 as well as in Ḥarrān Stele i 4–5. In Enūma eliš VII 158, the spelling points to a Gt preterite, or else to a G perfect in *consecutio temporum*.

i 4 [ši]-^lbu-ut-su ú-šal-lim^l, “He completed his [p]lan”: The expression *šibūta šullumu* is, to the best of our knowledge, attested only here. It seems to express the same idea as the more common *šibūta kašādu*, attested in Neo-Babylonian letters, among other places (CAD § 169b–70a, AHw. 1099a).

The phrase *ana qātī x šūšū* can mean either “to lose or remove from s. o.” or “to be available to” (CAD A/2 371). Abusch/Schwemer (2016, 229 ad l. 96) propose that the phrase can mean “to make available,” and this meaning also makes best sense in the present line.

i 5 [*udda*]kam aḥāmeš idīnū, “so that they could render judgement of each other [forev]er”: The adverb *uddakam*, from Sumerian u d - d a - k a m, appears in Babylonian poetry and four royal inscriptions, the latter all from the kings of the Neo-Babylonian empire (see CAD U/W 18b–19a for references). Two of the four are Nabonidus inscriptions, namely the Emašdari Cylinder i 24; ii 25 (Schaudig 2001, 2.3^a 1 = RINBE 2, Nabonidus 2) and an ex-

¹³ Presumably the work's author (Lambert 2013, 492).

¹⁴ GAG § 158f. For further examples see: Streck (1995, 69–71), Schaudig (2001, 288 §VI.1.1.3 c), and Mayer (2007, 136).

cerpt from a votive inscription for a table (Schaudig 2001, 2.21: 10 = RINBE 2, Nabonidus 5: 10).

i 6) [šá gul-lul-t]i u hibilti lā išû, “those who have neither [crim]e nor misdeed”: Alternatively restore [šá gīl-la-t]i.

Compare the similar phrase: *sittūtēšunu šá ħi-ī-ṭu ù gul-lul-tú la i-šú-ú*, “(As for) the rest of them, who were not guilty of (any) sin or crime ...” (RINAP 4, 1 iii 54).

i 6-7) [ša gullult]i u hibilti lā išû ina zumrišun | [ušzi]zū kīnāti, “They [impo]sed justice on (the body of) those who have neither [crim]e nor misdeed”: We thank an anonymous reviewer for suggesting this interpretation. Alternatively: “[Those who] were wholly innocent of [crim]e and misdeed | [impo]sed justice”: The former interpretation has the advantage of maintaining the same subject as in the preceding line (i. e., “the people”).

i 7) [ušzi]zū kīnāti (lit. “they caused justice to stand”): For the expression compare the following year name in a document from Susa from the first half of the second millennium BC:

[šattum(MU) R]N₁ u RN₂ kittam(GI.NA) u me-ša-ra-am uš-zi-zu-ma
[Year (when) R]N₁ and RN₂ imposed truth and justice.
(MDP 24 348 r. 25–26, cited CAD U/W 392a)

i 8) [nar]ū šuāti ina uggat libbi ilāni ussaḥḥīma, “That stele, at the fury of the gods, was desecrated”: Compare the use of the Dt-stem in the similarly structured phrase *bur-ti | šu-a-ti us-saḥ-ḥi-ma* (“that cistern/well was desecrated”) in an undated brick inscription from Nippur of Ninurta-šuma-iddin, an otherwise unknown priest of Enlil (PBS 15 69: 8’–9’),¹⁵ and also the use of the Dt-stem in Prophecy Text B, 18 (Biggs 1967, 122): *ešrēt ilāni rabūti us-saḥ-ḥa-a* (“the shrines of the great gods will be desecrated”).

i 9) ¹in¹-na-siḥ-ma, “(it) was removed”: The alternative reading ¹in¹-na-bit-ma (“(it) was destroyed”) seems incompatible with the following statement *lā innamir ašaršu* (“its location could not be found”). For the removal (lit. “tearing out”) of *kudurru*-monuments see CAD N/2 7 and Paulus (2014, 220, 237).

lā innamir ašaršu, “its location could not be found”: For instances of *lā* instead of expected *ul* in main clauses in the inscriptions of Nabonidus see Schaudig (2001, 278 §V.9.7 b). The variant *ul innamir ašaršu* is encountered several times in the inscriptions of Sennacherib (e. g., RINAP 3/1, 1: 34), where, however, it concerns a person’s rather than an object’s location.

i 10) *summûma*, “(they) lost direction”: In this context the CDA’s translation of *samû* II in the D-stem, “cause

to stray, lose direction” (²CDA 315b), makes better sense than AHw.’s “etwa lahmlegen” (AHw. 1020b) and CAD’s “hamper, interfere, harass” (CAD S 126a). Apart from here the D-stem of *samû* seems to be primarily attested in Assyrian and Babylonian correspondence from the seventh and sixth centuries.¹⁶

summûma idarrisû aḥā[meš], “(they) lost direction, trampling on one an[other]”: For other examples of the stative followed by the present tense to express the simultaneity of two actions see Streck (1995, 56 f.), Schaudig (2001, 289 f. §VI.1.1.2 b), Jiménez (2017, 189).

i 11) [gī²-n]a²-¹ma², [“constant]ly”: We thank an anonymous reviewer for suggesting this restoration.

ina ešāti u dalḥāti, “in chaos and confusion”: While *ešāti* and *dalḥāti* are paired several times in Babylonian literature, the phrase *ina ešāti u dalḥāti* is only attested once elsewhere, in the inscription on the Sun-God Tablet (SGT) of Nabû-apla-iddina in combination with a reference to the Suteans “ransacking” (*ú-saḥ-ḥu-ú*) of the Ebabbar temple of Sippar:

(É.BABBAR.RA) šá ina e-šá-a-ti | ù dal-ḥa-a-ti šá KUR URI^{ki} | ¹⁶su-tu-ú ¹⁶kúr lem-nu | ú-saḥ-ḥu-ú
(in the Ebabbar) which, in the (time of) chaos and confusion of the land of Akkad, the Suteans, the evil enemy, had made unrecognizable. (BBSt. 36 i 4–7 = Paulus 2014, 651)

Because the phrase is attested infrequently it is worth noting that the SGT was likely familiar to Nabonidus’ scribes (Powell 1991, 21; Woods 2004, 34 f.). Accordingly, if this text was commissioned by Nabonidus (see the Study below, section b), the text of the SGT may have inspired the use of the phrase here.

i 13) *rigmu ḥubūr niši šī-¹ṭu¹ ḥabālu*: Despite the spelling, the fact that four types of criminal activity are listed in the parallel line, i 15 ([*dāk*]u *šagāšu tabāk dāmi ḥalāq napšāti*), means that *šī-ṭu* probably represents the noun booked as *šettu* or *šēṭu* in the dictionaries (CAD Š/2 339b–340a; AHw. 1221b; cf. Frahm 2009, 42 f.), i. e., “act of negligence,” rather than the adjective *šīṭu*, “negligent” (CAD Š/3 147a; AHw. 1253b), which is attested only in the Neo-Assyrian state correspondence where it is once written *šī-ṭu* (SAA 15, 54 r. 7’) and twice written *še-e-ṭu* (SAA 10, 95 r. 9’; SAA 5, 211 r. 4).

i 13–16) The reference to *rigmu* and *ḥubūru* (*rig-mu ḥu-bur* UN^{meš}, i 13) and the restlessness and insomnia suffered by the narrator as a result (i 14, 16) recall Enlil’s

¹⁵ The date of the inscription is unclear. Brinkman (1968, 98 n. 529) notes that it “possibly” dates to the Isin II period.

¹⁶ According to SAA 17, 130 o. 7 and note ad loc., the word would be an Aramaism, but von Soden (1987, 458) adds an attestation in an Old Babylonian letter.

complaint to the other gods about the noise of mankind in Atrahasis I 358–9 // II i 7–8:

[iktabta] rigim awilūti | [ina ḫubūrīši]na uzamma šitta
The noise of mankind [has become too intense for me] | [With
th]eir [uproar] I am deprived of sleep.
(Lambert/Millard 1968, 66f.)

The phrase *ḫubūr niši* is elsewhere attested in Erra I 82, where the *Sebetti*-demons use mankind's clamour to motivate Erra to go on campaign:

^da-nun-na-ki ina ^lḫu^l-bur niši(UN^{mes}) ul i-re-eḫ-ḫu-ú šit-tu₄
The Anunaki gods cannot fall asleep because of the clamour of
the people.
(Cagni 1969, 66)

For the restoration [eš-te-n]em-mé-e-ma compare [e]š-te-né-em-me-e-ma in Schaudig (2001) 3.7^a i 5' = RINBE 2, Nabonidus 1003 i 5', a fragment of a stele which has been attributed to Nabonidus (Schaudig 2001, 536).

i 14 ul ušarbab surriš, “I could not relax for a moment”: The use of the durative tense both here and in the parallel line i 16 (ul uqatti [š]itti) may be examples of Praesens historicum. See Schaudig (2001, 289 f. § VI.1.1.4 e) for discussion of a possible example of Praesens historicum in King of Justice.

i 15 [da-a-k]u šá-ga-ši, “[On the kil]ling, slaughter ...”: Cf. The Crimes and Sacrileges of Nabû-šuma-iškun iii 10' (Cole 1994, 230):

šat-ti-šam-ma da-ku ḫa-ba-lu šá-ga-šú ša-ba-ti il-ki u tup-šik-ki
eli(UGU)-šú-nu ú-šá-tir
Every year he inflicted more killing, wrongdoing, slaughter, and
ilku-tupšikku-tax on them (viz. the citizens of Babylon, Borsippa
and Kutha).

i 16 [at-t]a-na-aṭ-ṭal-ma, “[I] constantly gazed”: The Gtn of *naṭālu* is also attested in the En-nigaldi-Nanna Cylinder:

tup-pa-nu ù lēⁱ(^{giš}LE.U₅.UM^{mes}) labīrūti(LIBIR.RA^{mes}) at-ta-aṭⁱ(šⁱ)-
ṭa-al-ma
I carefully examined the ancient tablets and writing boards ...
(Schaudig 2001, 2.7 i 34 = RINBE 2, Nabonidus 34 i 34)

ul ú-^lqāt-ti šit^l-ti, “I could not sleep properly”: Nabonidus suffers from a deficit of “sweet sleep” in cylinder inscriptions commemorating his restoration of the Ebabbar at Sippar:

i-na ma-a-a-al GE₆ ul ú-qa-at-ta-a šī-it-tim ṭa-ab-tim
In (my) night bed I did not complete (my) sweet sleep.
(Schaudig 2001, 2.13 i ii 21 = RINBE 2, Nabonidus 23 ii 20–21
// CTMMA 4, 176 ii 4'–5' = RINBE 2, Nabonidus 22 ii 4'–5'
// RINBE 2, Nabonidus 21 i 7')

To the best of our knowledge, no other king describes himself in his inscriptions as suffering from lack of sleep. The inspiration may be Gilgamesh IV 94, where Gilgamesh is described as waking up during the middle watch:

[ina q]ab-li-ti šit-ta-šu ú-qat-ti
[In the] middle watch (of the night) he reached his sleep's end.
(George 2003, 592f.)

i 17 [áš-ši] qá-ti ú-sap-pa-a bēl bābili šar ilī marduk, “[I raised] (my) hand(s), praying to the lord of Babylon, the king of the gods, Marduk”: For the restoration compare the following passages in two Nabonidus inscriptions:

áš-ši qá-ti ú-šal-[la-a bēl(EN) bēli(EN.EN) um-ma]
I raised (my) hand(s), pray[ing to the lord of lords as follows]
Larsa Cylinder ii 34 (Schaudig 2001, 2.11 = RINBE 2,
Nabonidus 16)

áš-ši qá-ti-ia ú-ša-al-la-a ^den-[lil ilī(DINGIR^{mes}) ^dmarduk(AMAR.
UTU)]
I raised my hands, praying to the En[lil of the gods, Marduk]
RINBE 2, Nabonidus 21 i 8'

In Nabonidus' known inscriptions, Marduk is only called *šar ilī* in inscriptions datable to the first years of his reign (Beaulieu 1989, 44–45). The presence of the title in this text could therefore be an argument against our proposal to date it to the last years of Nabonidus' reign, or even against attributing the inscription to Nabonidus (see Study below, section b). But see below, Study, section f with n. 86 on the possibly localized nature of the elevation of Šin in Nabonidus' reign.

i 18 The epithets *bēl dīni*, *bēl kitti* and *bēl mišari* are all attested epithets of Šamaš, and the phrase *dīn kitti u mišari* is found (as well as below ii 13) elsewhere, e. g., SAA 18, 181 r. 12–13.¹⁷ However, the present line seems to contain the first attestation of the epithet *bēl dīn kitti u mišari*, “lord of the true and just judgement.”

i 19 šar([LUG]AL?) dayyānī(DI.KUD^{mes}), “[ki]ng of the judges”: If the first sign is correctly restored, this is the first attestation of the epithet *šar* (or *bēl*) *dayyānī*, “king (or lord) of the judges.” Alternatively read the first sign as a damaged determinative ^lú¹, in which case DI.KUD^{mes} (“judges”) refers to both Nergal and Ninurta. In favour of the former reading is the available space and the resulting chiasmic structure (epithet – DN – DN – epithet); in favour

¹⁷ *di-i-nu kit-ti* | ^lú¹ *mi-šá-ru ina ma-ti-ia di-i-na*, “Render true and just judgements in my land!” Note too Schaudig's restoration of the first preserved line of the Verse Account of Nabonidus as: [*di-in kit-tú u*] *mi-šá-ri ul uš-ṭe-šu ki-šú* (Schaudig 2001, P1 i 2').

of the reading ¹⁴l, however, is Nergal's (rare) depiction in the role of judge (on Nergal's attributes see: Tallqvist 1938, 394; von Weiher 1971, 68–89; Wiggermann 1998–2000, 221f.) and Ninurta's comparatively frequent attestation in this role (on Ninurta as judge see Tallqvist 1938, 80 and Annus 2002, *passim* and especially 162f.).

i 20) Neither *dā'in dīni*, “who renders judgement,” nor *hā'it kullati*, “who watches over all,” are attested elsewhere as epithets of Ninurta. The former is attested elsewhere in connection with, e.g., Asalluḫi, Ea, Girra, and Šamaš (Tallqvist 1938, 79), while the latter is attested elsewhere in connection with Ištar (*hā'itat kullati*, KAR 109 r. 2).

i 21) While *bēl pīḫati* and *šākin tēmi* may have been alternative terms for the office of provincial governor in earlier periods (Frame 1992, 226f.), their appearance in this line suggests that they may have come to refer to two distinct positions.

On the office of *zazakku*, “royal secretary,” in the Neo-Babylonian period see Dandamayev (1994), Joannès (1994), and Jursa (2007, 81 with n. 20 and n. 21; 2010b, 91).

The office of ¹⁴*qablānū* is, to the best of our knowledge, not attested elsewhere. It seems unsafe to speculate on the official's sphere of interest based on the etymology of the word alone (*qablu* + *ān* + *ī* + *u*: lit. “the one of the middle;” see GAG §56r for the different semantic categories of words ending in the suffix *-ān/ -ānu*).

i 22) *mar-de¹e kit-ti¹*, “true path(s) (lit. path(s) of truth)”: The noun *mardū* is not listed in the dictionaries but since it can be analysed as a *mapras*-form (GAG §56b) derived from *redū(m)* I, “to lead,” it nevertheless seems a plausible reading. Note too that a *maprast*-form, *marditu*, “riverbed, stage of a journey,” is already attested (see CAD M/1 278 and AHW. 611a for references).

If correctly read, the expression *mardē/ê kitti* resembles the phrase *tūdāt mišari*, “just ways,” which were opened to Nabonidus by the deities Šamaš and Aya, according to the Eamaškuga and Larsa Cylinders (Schau-dig 2001, 2.6 i 24–25; 2.11 i 24–25 = RINBE 2, Nabonidus 15 i 24–25; 16 i 24–25).

i 23) [*kī*] *pī ištēniš*, “[with] one intention”: This phrase is also attested in Damkina's Bond (Lambert 2013, 324 l. 31 = Oshima 2010, 150 l. 30).

i 26) [*ina é-ḫur-sag-ti-la*] *bīt*(¹É²) ¹*ba¹-la-ṭu*: We thank Enrique Jiménez for suggesting this restoration and reading of the sign preceding *balātu*. It is assumed that *balātu* represents the end of an etymological explanation of the name of the Ehursagtila temple ([*ḫur-šá-a*]*n*! *balāti* or [KUR]-*e*! *balāti* are also possible, but they do not fit the traces as well). The name of the temple is explained elsewhere as *bītu ša ultu ḫur-š[á-an ...]* (George 1992, 78 no. 4 o. 19).

i 27) The expression “I made them swear an oath” (*ušazkiršunūti*) is used to describe Esarhaddon's *adē*-treaty in inscriptions by that king (RINAP 4, 1 i 18f. // 5 i 11'f.: *aššu našār ridūtiya zikiršun kabta ušazkiršunūti*, “I made them (scil. the people of Assyria and Esarhaddon's brothers) swear a solemn oath concerning the safe-guarding of my succession”) and by his son Assurbanipal (RINAP 5/1, 9 i 15f.: *adē niš ili ušazkiršunūti udannina riksāti*, “(my father Esarhaddon) made them swear to a treaty, an oath by the gods; he made the agreements strong”). The latter parallel might suggest a different restoration of the beginning of i 28, but the context seems too dissimilar to that of the present passage.

i 28a) [*x x x ú-da*]*n-nin en-ši*, “[... I stre]ngthened the weak”: The idea of the weak becoming strong is also found in, e.g., two prayers to Ishtar (Ebeling 1953, 128: 11; 132: 61), a ritual instruction for stones (Schuster-Brandis 2008, 326 ii 30'), and the literary disputation, Series of the Poplar (Jiménez 2017, 168 Ic 13'). As they are restored here, ll. 28–29 are understood as conveying the same idea as the beginning of CḪ i 37–39 (Borger ²1979, 5): *dannum enšam ana lā ḫabālim*, “so that the strong could not oppress the weak,” an idea that is echoed in inscriptions of Sargon II, Assurbanipal, Darius I (Hallo 1990, 205), and other kings (e.g., Lambert 1965, 4 ii 3). Although one might expect an infinitive after *ušazkiršunūti* in i 27, it does not seem possible to read one in this line; moreover, it seems unlikely that the king would have delegated the royal duty of “protecting the weak” to his officials.

i 28b–29) *dan-n[u a-na en-ši] | [a-na (x x)] la sa-ka^o-¹pi^o*, “[so that (...)] the stron[g] do not overthrow [the weak]!”: The KA-sign is partially obscured by modern adhesive but is fully legible in Ehelolf's photograph (below, Photographs, Figure 1). The traces of the final sign are largely obscured by the adhesive; a reading *-¹pu¹* or *-¹na¹* seems epigraphically possible but less likely than *-¹pi¹*. Note too that what looks like the tail of a vertical wedge in the photograph may instead be the remains of a vertical ruling (compare the extra vertical ruling visible at the ends of i 1–8). If the reading *sakāpu/i/a* is correct, in this context *sakāpu* I (“to push down/off/away, overthrow”) seems to make better sense than *sakāpu* II (“to rest, lie down”), despite a possible parallel with a passage in King of Justice that clearly contains *sakāpu* II (see Study below, section d).

Because of the damaged context the meaning of the infinitive forms here and in the following line is uncertain. They could express commands, as seems to be the case in i 32–33 (on infinitives as commands see GAG §149 and Aro 1961, 28f.), but they could also express finite tenses. Infinitives replacing finite tenses are attested, for

example, in the Babylonian Fürstenspiegel, where they “may have been a stylistic device intended to add a feel of strangeness or antiquity to the text” (Biggs 2004, 4 with further attestations and earlier literature). A third option, adopted here in the translation, is that they all represent final clauses, an option supported by the fact that at least some of them are introduced by *ana*. The sequences ¹muš-šur¹-um-¹ma¹ and ¹nu-uk¹-kur-um-¹ma (i 32f.) are accordingly understood as genitives, which seems possible in Neo-Babylonian royal inscriptions (see, e.g., Schaudig 2001, 162, §IV.2.3.1.c). A fourth option is that these infinitives represent indirect speech following *ušažkiršunūti* in i 27.

i 30) [x x ŠEŠ² GA]² *ana aḫi šaḫru lā šarāku*, “[so that the elde]_r [brother] may not settle [...] on the younger brother”: The specification “younger” brother suggests that the missing subject may be “elder brother,” and the meagre traces of the sign preceding *ana* are consistent with GAL (we owe these observations to Zsombor Földi). The direct object of *lā šarāku* may be *bītu* “house/estate” (reconstructed in the next line), the subject of several judgements in CḪ (see CAD B 295a for references).

i 31f.) [*pu-ut bīti*(¹É¹)] ¹ū *kiri*(^{giš}KIRI₆)¹ *šá a-ḫa-meš na-šu-ú šu-lu-ú ina māti*(KUR), “[and instead] the guarantee for the house] and the orchard, which they jointly bear, be removed; (so that) in the land ...”: An alternative reading, *šu-lu-ú-mu* seems does not yield better sense. On the use of *našū*, “bear,” said of a guarantee (*pūtu*) in Neo-Babylonian documents, see CAD N/2 106a; on *pūt X aḫāmeš našū*, “to guarantee X mutually,” see CAD A/1 164a. On the present context, compare CBS 5310 (PBS 2/1, 17): 7: *ina 1GI-an-ni muš-šir* [*pu¹-ut-su-šú-nu ni-iš-šú*], “put them at our disposal, we assume their guarantee.” At the end of i 31, compare perhaps the Neo-Babylonian expression *qāt PN elū*, “suffer a loss,” “forfeit”: for its use in the Š stem, see Hackl/Jursa/Schmidl (2014, 256). It is unclear whether *ina māti*(KUR) should be understood as the beginning of a new thought (so the translation) or as belonging with the *šūlū* (“removed from the land”).

i 32f.) On the “broken writings” ¹muš-šur¹-um-¹ma¹ and ¹nu-uk¹-kur-um-¹ma (perhaps to be read as *šuru* and *kuru*) in Neo-Babylonian texts, see Jiménez (2017, 256). Alternatively, read as the particle *umma*, which introduces direct speech.

i 33) *mi-šá-ri šá-ka-ni*, “(so that) justice be established”: On the use of the infinitive see above ad i 29. Note that the same words seem to represent a command in Prophecy Text B: 7: *anu ana enlil mišara šakāna i[qbi(?)]* *mišaru iš-šak-kan*, “Anu c[ommanded] Enlil to establish justice: justice will be established” (Biggs 1967, 120).

i 34) ¹a² x x ¹a²¹-*ti na-šu-ú*, “... be borne”: The object of *našū* should parallel *kittu* and *mišaru* (i 32–33) but a suitable restoration eludes us.

i 35) [...] x x(-)[i]m-*ma di-nim sa-¹na²¹-[x]*: Consider restoring: [...] *ki-ma*(?) [¹la²-*bī²-ri²¹-[i]m-ma di-nim sa-¹na²¹-[qu]*] (“Ch[eck] (each) verdict [according to how it was in ancient t]imes!”). The phrase *kīma labīrimma* (always written *ki-ma la-bi-ri-im-ma*) appears in several of Nabonidus’ inscriptions (RINBE 2, Nabonidus 16 iii 5. 24; 19 ii 4; 25 ii 1. 22. 34; 32 i 21; 34 i 35) but seems inconsistent with the traces of the signs preceding [i]m-*ma*. Alternatively, it may contain two verbs, in parallel with the previous lines.

ii 2) *nīš ilāni*(DINGIR^[meš]) [*ušažkiršunūti* (?) ...], “[I made them swear] an oath by the god[s]”: Restoration on the basis of i 27. Alternatively, one could read *šar*(MAN) *ilī*(DINGIR^[meš]); the use of MAN/20 as a writing for *šar* is an Assyrianism elsewhere attested in the writing of Nabonidus’ title *šar*(MAN) *bābīli*(TIN.TIR^{ki}) and in a votive inscription on a chalcedony bead from Ḫarrān (Schaudig 2001, 4.1: 1). It is also attested in a brick inscription of Cyrus II of Anšan (Schaudig 2001, K1.1: 4).

ii 5) ¹al¹-*ṭa-ta di-na-¹a¹-ti*, “difficult¹⁸ judgements”: The interpretation of the word preceding *dināti* is uncertain but judgements are described as “difficult to understand” in a hymn to Ninurta attested in a Kuyunjik manuscript:¹⁹

... *di-i-nu šup-šuq-ma a-na la-ma-da aš-ṭu*

... the case was laborious and difficult to understand. (K.128: 22)

A further parallel occurs in an ambiguously phrased passage in the “L₄” inscription, where Assurbanipal boasts of being able to read (perhaps) “Akkadian” which is “difficult to decipher”:²⁰

aš-ta-si kam-mu nak-lu šá šumerū(EME.GI-) *šu-ul-lu-lu ak-ka-du-u ana šu-te-šu-ri aš-ṭu*

I have read skilfully written *kammu*-tablets whose Sumerian is obscure (and whose) Akkadian is difficult to decipher (lit. “make straight”). (K.2694+ i 22)

Alternatively, instead of ¹al¹-*ṭa-ta*, read: *al-ṭa-ri¹*, the Neo-Babylonian form of the preterite 1cs of G *šaṭāru* (Standard Babylonian: *ašṭur*), attested, e.g., in the Neo-Babylonian letter CT 22, 63: 18. The *-ri* would be an

¹⁸ We thank an anonymous reviewer for suggesting this interpretation.

¹⁹ For a recent edition and translation see Mayer (2005, 53f.).

²⁰ Or else: “obscure Sumerian” which is “difficult to translate into Akkadian,” following Frahm (2011, 272 with n. 1290).

“überhängender Vokal” of unclear function: see GAG §18e. However, against this interpretation is the use of Standard Babylonian forms of the preterite of *šaṭāru* elsewhere in the text (i 3 and ii 24).

ii 5–6) ¹x x¹ [x] ¹x¹ [x] | *labīrāti uba’ima* (“the ancient [...] | I sought out”): A f. pl. noun, or else another adjective of *dīnāti*, is clearly required here. *uṣurāti* (“groundplans”) might fit the traces but is unlikely to be paired with “difficult judgements.” Note that *bu’ū*, “seek,” is the verb that Nabonidus regularly uses to describe his archaeological endeavours, e. g., RINBE 2, Nabonidus 10 ii 2’. 7’; 16 i 46; 27 ii 33. 36. 39. 41. 48. 61. 63.

ii 6–7) [...] | *itti ṣalam šarrūti*, “(lit.) [...] with an image of kingship”: The term *ṣalam šarrūti* can designate a glyptic representation of the king either in the round or in relief.²¹ For the missing word at the end of ii 6, *asumittu*, “stone monument,” seems possible, although one would expect the spelling to begin with the determinative *na₄*, which does not fit the traces. *šīṭir šumi*, “inscription,” would also make sense, but in possible parallel passages *šīṭir šumi* and *ṣalam šarrūti* are connected by *u*, not *itti*, e. g., Schaudig (2001) 2.9 ii 9–10 = RINBE 2, Nabonidus 24 ii 9–10:

ši-tīr šu-mi-ia u ṣa-lam šarrūti(LUGAL-ú-ti)-ia | da-ri-a ú-kin qé-reb-šú

I securely placed an inscription of mine **and** an eternal image of my royal majesty inside it.

ii 8) *dīnāti adīnu epšēti e-p[u-šu]*: An alternative restoration of the second verb, *e-t[e-pu-šu]*, seems less likely in view of the clear preterite tense of the preceding verb (*adīnu*).

ii 9) *tallakti attallaku*: Compare Nabonidus’ two descriptions of his sojourn in Tēmā in the Ḥarrān Stele inscription (Schaudig 2001, 3.1 i 24–26. ii 10–11= RINBE 2, Nabonidus 47 i 24–26. ii 10–11):

ú-ru-uḫ uruṭe-ma-a uruda-da-nu urupa-dak-ku | uruḫi-ib-ra-a uruṭa-di-ḫu u a-di uruṭa-at-ri-bu | 10 šanāti(MU.AN.NA^{meš}) at-tal-¹la-ku¹ qé-reb-šú-un

For ten years, I marched the road between the cities Tēmā, Dadānu, Padakku, Ḥibrā, Yadiḫu, and (then) as far Yatribu.

ur-ḫu pa-rik-tú šá at-tal-la-ku | 10 šanāti(MU.AN.NA^{meš})
... on the obstructed road that I marched for ten years ...

The use of *tallakti* as the direct object, otherwise unattested, is probably influenced by the preceding *figurae etymologicae* in ii 8.

ii 10) The decision to leave this line empty and to follow it with a double ruling – found elsewhere in the manuscript only at the end of column iv – seems to reflect a perceived division of the text into two parts. Since the syntax requires that ii 8–ii 11a be understood as a semantic unit, the break may reflect the distribution of the text on two sides of the stele mentioned in iv 22 (i–ii 9 on the obverse and ii 11–iv on the reverse).

ii 11) *al-ta-aṭ-ṭar-ma e-zib aḫ-r[a-taš]*: Compare the following passages in the inscriptions of Sennacherib and Assurbanipal:

musarē(MU.SAR)^e ši-tīr šumi(MU)-¹ia 1¹ ME 60 ti-ib-ki tam-li-i | qé-reb-šú al-ṭu-ur-¹ma šap-la¹-nu ina ušši(uš₆)-šú e-zib aḫ-ra-taš
I inscribed monuments bearing my name 160 courses of brick within the terrace and I deposited (them) deep down in its foundation for ever after. (RINAP 3/2, 138 r. ii’ 5–6)

musarū(MU.SAR)^u ši-tīr šumi(MU)-ia ta-nit-ti qar-ra-du-ti-ia ... aš-ṭur-ma e-zī-ba aḫ-ra-taš
I inscribed a monument bearing my name (and) the praise of my heroism ... and I deposited (it) for future days. (RINAP 5/1, 7 x 65’–66’. 72’)

Note that the Gtn stem of *šaṭāru* is elsewhere attested only in King of Justice (Schaudig 2001, 582 P2 ii 23’–25’) discussed in the Study below, Section d.

ii 11–12) [*ru-bu-ù*] *ár-ku-ú*, “[Let a future prince]”: Restoration based on [*ru-bu*]-¹ú¹ *ár-ku-ú* in the Stone Wall Cylinder (Schaudig 2001, 2.25 ii’ 17’ = RINBE 2, Nabonidus 1008 iii’ 18’).

ii 12) *lit-t[a-’i-id]*: The Gt precativ of *na’ādu* (“pay close attention”) is also attested in Nabonidus’ En-nigaldi-Nanna inscription (Schaudig 2001, 2.7 i 23 = RINBE 2, Nabonidus 34 i 23). Formally the verb could be analysed as Dtn precativ of *nādu*, “praise” (for attestations in inscriptions see CAD N *nādu* 104a).

ii 14) The Babylonians’ epithet, *ububūtu* (lit. “cleared (of claims)”) serves to remind the reader of royal largesse. It was a royal prerogative to “clear” the legal claims of groups of people; in the En-nigaldi-Nanna Cylinder, for example, Nabonidus records how he “cleared” claim on the members of the assembly of the temple of Sîn at Ur:

i-li-ik-šu-nu ap-ṭu-ur-ma šubarrā(ŠU.BAR.RA)-šu-nu ¹aš¹-ku-un
(erasure) *ub-bi-¹ib-šú¹-nu-ti-ma | a-na ^dsîn(EN.ZU) ù ^dnin-gal bēl(EN^{meš})-e-a ú-zak-ki-šu-nu-ti*

I released (them) from their *ilku*-tax and established their *šubarrū*. I cleared them (of legal claims) and exempted them for the god Sîn and the goddess Ningal, my lords.

(Schaudig 2001, 2.7 ii 27–28 = RINBE 2, Nabonidus 34 ii 27–28)

²¹ See Schaudig (2001, 35–40) with further literature for analysis of the preserved reliefs of Nabonidus.

ii 14–18) After beginning with the citizens of Babylon and Borsippa, the first and second cities of Babylonia, the list seems initially to proceed on a geographical basis from northwest to southeast: the citizens of Sippar, Kutha, Kiš and Dilbat are listed next, followed by the citizens of Ur, Uruk and Larsa. The sequence of the last three groups does not conform to a northwest to southeast movement, but “citizens of Ur, Uruk, and Larsa” also occurs in the Ḥarrān Stele inscription (Schaudig 2001, 3.1 i 15 = RINBE 2, Nabonidus 47 i 15).

The absence of the citizens of Nippur from the list is surprising. They are chastised together with five other citizen groups in the Ḥarrān Stele inscription (i 14–15), but the other five groups are all named in the present inscription. The omission is all the more surprising in light of the fact that the Babylonian Fürstenspiegel, a work with which the author of this inscription appears to have been familiar (see ad ii 27), is explicitly concerned with the tax-exemptions of the the citizens of Nippur, Sippar and Babylon.

ii 15) The Borsippans’ epithet, *rēštūti*, “firstborn/ancient/preeminent”, reflects the status of their patron god, Nabû, who is frequently described as the “firstborn” of the god Marduk (Tallqvist 1938, 381).

ii 16) The Kutheans’ epithet, *kidinnūtu* (“enjoyers of *kidinnu*-status”), seems to refer to the fact that the Kutheans had previously been granted *kidinnu*-status. However, in contrast to the citizens of Babylon, Borsippa, Sippar, and Dilbat, for whom there is evidence that they held *kidinnu*-status before the time of the Neo-Babylonian empire,²² this is the only indication that prior to the act commemorated in these lines the Kutheans ever held this status.

ii 17) The Dilbateans’ epithet, *ša pirišti*, “of the secret,” reflects the syncretism, by the time of the first millennium BC, of Uraš, tutelary deity of Dilbat, with Ninurta, who is frequently attested with the epithet “of the secret” or “lord of the secret” in lexical lists.²³

ii 20) ^{kur}*ka-ra(-an)-dun-ia-āš*: The use of the toponym Kar(an)duniaš for Babylonia, well attested in Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions, is not known in texts commissioned by Neo-Babylonian monarchs. Note, however, that the toponym is spelled in NA inscriptions as *kár(/kar)-(-an)-dun(/du-ni)-ia(/ia/ia)-āš(/āš)*, whereas spellings begin-

ning with *ka-ra-an-*, like the one attested here, appear to be limited to the Middle Babylonian period (Balkan 1954, 96 f.; Nashef 1982, 150 f.), or later copies of Kassite letters, such as CT 22, 247 obv. 8 (Frazer 2015, 232).

ii 24) *tuppi zakūtišunu aštur*, “I inscribed a tablet (recording) their tax-exempt status”: As a royal act, the writing of a *tuppi zakūti* is otherwise attested only in several of Esarhaddon’s Babylonian inscriptions (RINAP 4, 104 v 32–33 // 105 vii 36b–38a // 107 viii 7–10 // 111 vi 13a’–15’), where it appears in a list of similar royal acts to those detailed here, ii 25–27. For a detailed discussion of implications of the term *zakūtu*, albeit based on the evidence of earlier texts, see Kraus (1968, esp. 31–40).

For the tentative restoration of the second half of the line compare: *an-du-ra-ār-šú-nu eš-šiš āš-kun*, which occurs in two of Esarhaddon’s inscriptions from Babylon (RINAP 4, 104 v 14–15 // 105 vii 16–17).

ii 25) *kidinnūssunu [akšurma (?)]*: For the restoration compare: *ki-di-nu-^lut¹-su-nu ak-šur-ma* in the En-nigaldi-Nanna Cylinder (Schaudig 2001, 2.7 ii 31 = RINBE 2, Nabonidus 34 ii 31). The phrase *ana ašriša utir*, “I restored” (lit. “returned to its place”), attested with *kidinnūssunu* in four of Esarhaddon’s inscriptions from Babylon (RINAP 4, 104 v 29–31 // 105 vii 33–36 // 107 viii 1–6 // 111 vi 11’–13’), would also fit the space.

ii 26) *ilku tupšikku*, “*ilku-tupšikku*-tax”: This term is sometimes translated as two distinct taxes, e. g., “service obligation (and) corvée labour,” but Postgate (1974, 81) argues that the appearance of the terms *ilku* and *tupšikku* without an intervening *u* (“and”), as here, suggests that they referred to one concept, namely “*ilku*-service consisting of corvée-work,” and Radner (2007, 221 f.) regards *ilku u tupšikku* as simply the literary expression for *ilku*. On the term *ilku* see Study below, section f).

ii 27) *e-^lli-šú-nu²¹ [ul ukīn (?)]*: The restoration of the end of the line assumes a similar pattern to the phrase *il-ki šī-si-it^{lū} na-gi-ri e-li-šú-nu ú-kan-nu* (“(by) imposing on them *ilku*-tax at the herald’s proclamation ...”) in the Babylonian Fürstenspiegel.²⁴

ii 28) [*x x*] *x^lla¹ na-par-^lka-a*: The traces of the sign preceding ^l*la*¹ seem to preclude a restoration of the first word of the line as *ukīn* or *ginā*.

ii 30 f.) ^l*GEŠTIN²¹[meš u kurunnu amkira šurrašun (?)]* | *ḷ-gu-la-^la¹ m[uḥ²-ḥa-šunu ušašqi (?)]*: The tentative restoration of these lines is based on the possible parallel with a passage in Esarhaddon’s Nineveh A–C inscriptions,

²² See section f) below for further discussion of grants of *kidinnu*-status to communities.

²³ The Sumerian term URAŠ, which may lie behind the second component of Ninurta’s name, can also mean “secret.” See Annus (2002, 10 f. n. 21) with further literature. See also Lenzi (2008, 51 with n. 121).

²⁴ Nineveh MS, l. 25 (Lambert 1960, 112) // Nippur MS, l. 25b–26 (Civil *apud* Reiner 1982, 325). A score edition is provided by Cole (1996, 270).

where the king celebrates the completion of the armory at Nineveh by holding a banquet:

rabûti(LUGAL^{mes}) *niši*(UN^{mes}) *mâti*(KUR)-*ia ka-li-šú-nu* | ... | ... | *qé-reb-šá ú-še-ši-ib-ma* | ... | *karāni*(GEŠTIN^{mes}) *ku-ru-un-nu am-kir-ra šur-ra-šú-un* | *rūšta*(Ī.SAG) *i-gu-la-a muḫ-ḫa-šú-nu ú-šá-áš-qi*

I seated ... all the officials (and) people of my country in it ... I watered their insides with wine (and) *kurunmu*-wine. I had (my servants) drench their (the guests') heads with fine oil (and) perfumed oil. (RINAP 4, 1 vi 49–53 // RINAP 4, 2: 18–24 // RINAP 4, 3: 2'–4')

iii 12') *ana šatti*, “On account of this”: On the use of this expression to introduce the blessings section in Neo-Babylonian royal inscriptions, see Schaudig (2003, 472).

iii 12'–13') *a-na šat-ti*¹ ^{d1}[...], “on account of this [...]”: Compare the similar wording in Nabonidus' *Sammel-inschrift* (Schaudig 2001, 2.14 iii 36' = RINBE 2, Nabonidus 27 iii 58f., see also Schaudig 2003, 465–474): *a-na šá-at-ti*^dUTU *u*^d*a-nu-ni-tu*₄ *a-na ep-še-ti-ia šu-qu-ra-a-ti lib-ba-ku-nu li-iḫ-du-ma li-ri-ku* *U*₄^{mes}-*iá*, “On account of this, O Šamaš and Anunītu, may your heart(s) be happy with my precious deeds so that my days are long!”

iii 14') ^d*marduk*(AMAR.UTU) *ḫa-diš* [*lip-pal-lis-su-ma* (? (...)], “[May] Marduk [regard him] joyfully [...]”: Alternatively one could restore an epithet, such as *ḫa-m*[*im*? ...] (“the one who gathers”) or *ḫa-¹a¹-[a-iḫ]* (“the one who searches”), neither of which is otherwise attested for Marduk.

iii 15') ¹*ki-ma šu¹-pu*[*k šadī*(KUR-*i*), “like the bas[e of a mountain]”: On the simile, attested in several Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions, see CAD Š/3 324a.

iii 21') The spelling *li-šá-an-di-il* for *lišaddil*, “May he increase ...,” is otherwise attested only in Nabonidus' Ehulhul Cylinder, ii 35 (Schaudig 2001, 2.12 = RINBE 2, Nabonidus 28).

iii 22') ^d*nabû tupšar é-sag-íl ūmī* [*balāṭi*(TIN)-*šú arkūti*(GÍD^{mes})], “[May] Nabû, the scribe of Esaggil, (23') inscribe [long] days [for his life]”: Restoration following the Borsippa Stele of Šamaš-šuma-ukin (RIMB 2 B.6.33.3: 22–23). Scheil (1902, 96), in his catalogue entry for Si. 5 (cited above, p. 232), mistakenly assumes that no text is missing at the end of this line.

iii 29') The blessings in iii 29'–iv 12 parallel, with minor orthographical variants, those preserved in a fragment of an Esarhaddon prism, possibly from Sippar (RINAP 4, 112 v 2–15). The possibility that the preceding blessings (iii 14'–28') also mirror those in the prism cannot be verified because the relevant lines of the prism are lost.

iv 10) *ilu*([DINGIR]) *a-na ili*(DINGIR) *li-iš¹-bat a-bu-ut-su*, “may [a god] intercede with (another) god for him!”: Probably parallels and enables the restoration of RINAP 4, 112 v 13 (DINGIR *a-na* DINGIR *li-[x x x x]-su-un*²⁵).

iv 11–13) As noted above, n. 2, these three lines were published in transcription already by Scheil (1894, 190). Note the Late Babylonian form *li-'i-i-da* for *lim'idā*.

iv 12) [*ina*] ¹É.SAG.ÍL É.GAL DINGIR^{mes} *la-le-e TIN liš-bi*, “[In] Esaggil, the palace of the gods, may he be full of the abundance of life!”: This line enables the full restoration of the second half of RINAP 4, 112 v 15 (*ina* É.SAG.ÍL É.GAL [DINGIR^{mes} ...]). The same blessing also occurs in the Elugalmalgasisa Cylinder ii 31 (Schaudig 2001, 2.2 = RINBE 2, Nabonidus 17).

iv 13) [*x*] ¹x *x¹ lišarrišu lirappišu papallu*, “May he sprout [...] (and) expand (his) offspring!”: Scheil's tentative restoration of the signs preceding *lišarrišu* as *kim-ti²-šu* (Scheil 1894, 190) does not seem to fit the preserved traces, and indeed Scheil omits the restoration in the entry for Si. 4 in his 1902 catalogue (cited above, p. 232). Elsewhere *šarāšu* D is attested only with *papallu* as its direct object (CAD 260b–1a, AHW. 1085a). Synonyms of *papallu*, e. g., *lipu*, *liblibbi*, and *per'u*, seem not to fit the traces.

iv 17) [*šá illū*(E₁₁)]-*ma ú-ma-'a¹-a¹-ru māta*(KUR), “[who ascends (the throne)/arises] to govern the land”: Restoration following the Borsippa Stele of Šamaš-šuma-ukin (RIMB 2, B.6.33.3: 18).

iv 18–20) These lines are paralleled by RINBE 2, Nabonidus 29 iii 53–54 and by RINAP 4, 112 v 21–23, according to which passages the first word of iv 18 is restored *musarâ*(MU.SAR)^a. An alternative restoration, *narâ*[(^{na}, NA. RÚ)]^a, is also possible.

²⁵ The number of missing signs is not indicated in the RINAP 4 edition, but the inscription's first editor thought that there was space for five signs (Gerardi 1993, 124 v iii').

IV Photographs



Fig. 2: Si. 4+5, obverse (2)
Photographer: Selim F. Adali. Published with the permission of the Istanbul Archaeological Museums



Fig. 1: Si. 4+5, obverse (1)
Photo [K[onstantinopel] 382. Photographer: Luise Ehelolf. Published with the permission of the Istanbul Archaeological Museums



Fig. 4: Si. 4+5, reverse (2).
Photographer: Selim F. Adalı. Published with the permission of the Istanbul
Archaeological Museums



Fig. 3: Si. 4+5, reverse (1).
Photographer: Luise Ehelolf. Published with the permission of the
Istanbul Archaeological Museums

V Autographs

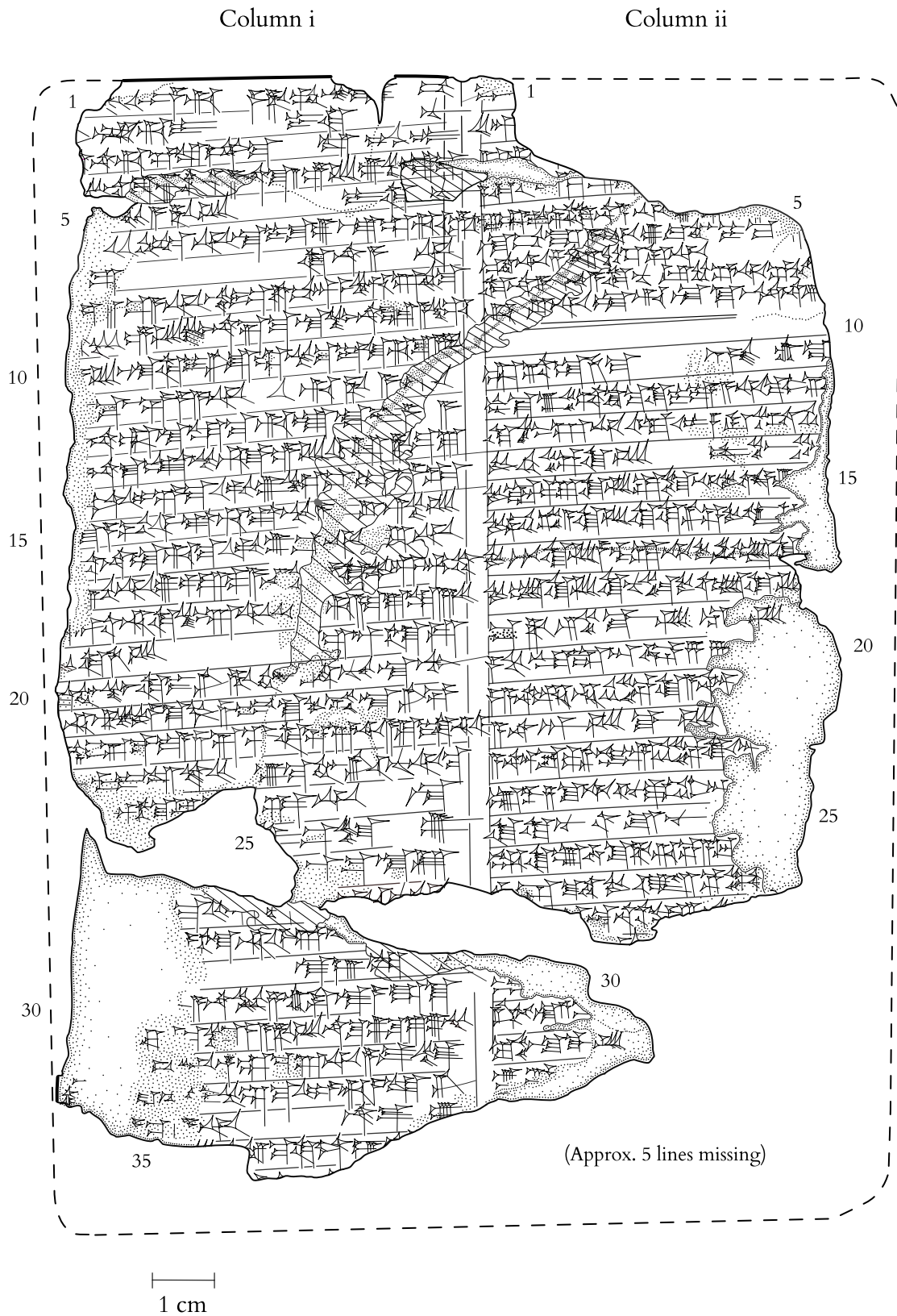


Fig. 5: Si. 4+5, obverse. Copy by Mary Frazer

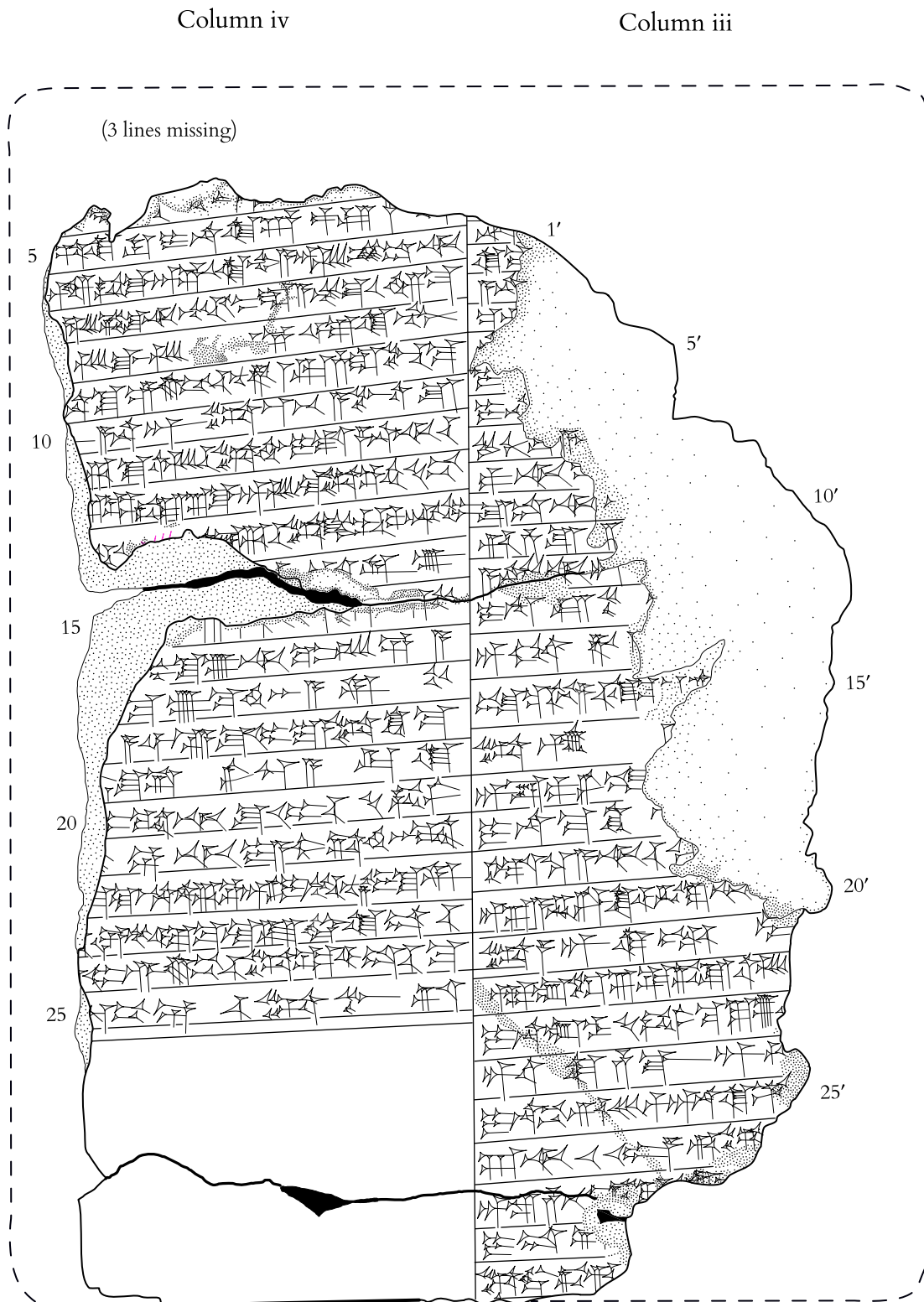


Fig. 6: Si. 4+5, reverse. Copy by Mary Frazer

VI Study

This study examines the following issues relating to the text:

- a) The possible absence of a section identifying the king, and the related issue of whether the text represents an authentic royal inscription.
- b) The attribution of the text to a particular king's reign.
- c) The location of the stele on which the text was (intended to be) displayed, and the purpose of the clay tablet Si. 4+5.
- d) The significance of similarities between the text and the literary work *King of Justice*.
- e) The significance of the text's interest in a stele containing "just judgements" of Ḫammu-rāpi.
- f) The historical significance of the grants of *kidinnūtu* commemorated in the text.

a) Authenticity

In its current state of preservation, the text contains neither the name of the royal narrator nor any royal titles or epithets that could help identify him. Since substantial sections of the text are fully legible, the absence of the narrator's name and titulary raises two interrelated questions:

- (1) Did the text originally identify the royal protagonist?
- (2) If it did, where did this identification occur?

Since the benefactor's name is the essential component of any Mesopotamian official inscription,²⁶ an obvious approach to the problem is to assume that the text preserved on Si. 4+5 *did* contain a name, but that it occurred in one of the several damaged passages. However, the first occasion when there would be space to reconstruct the king's name and titulary is after i 35, which would mean a long delay between the king's first appearance in the text at i 13 and his identification. The king would be anonymous for his first "action," namely his observations of criminal behaviour (i 13–16), and he would remain so when he prays to the gods (i 17–20), summons his officials and makes them swear an oath (i 21–27), and when he details how he "strengthened the weak" (i 28–35). Such a delay between the protagonist entering the narrative and identifying himself is atypical of Mesopotamian royal inscriptions, in which the royal benefactor is normally

named, if not in the opening lines of the text, then at the point when he is first mentioned.

Because of the unusual delay between the protagonist's first appearance and the earliest line in which he could be identified, the possibility should be entertained that the text as written on Si. 4+5 *did not* identify the royal protagonist by name. However, why a text would be anonymous in this manner is not clear to us. The nature of the support, a clay tablet, may mean that the text represents a draft,²⁷ but in any draft one would expect the name of the king in question, as a defining component of the inscription, to be present. Another option, namely that the text is not an authentic royal inscription, but rather a composition in the style of a royal inscription, is also problematic: anonymity of this sort seems contrary to the nature of known examples of inauthentic Mesopotamian inscriptions, which derive much of their meaning from representing the voice of a *specific* king.²⁸

In sum, the most plausible explanations for the apparently missing section are either (a) that it occurred in the damaged passage between i 36 and ii 4, or (b) that the text on Si. 4+5 represents a preliminary version of an inscription in which the relevant section had not yet been added. But neither explanation is entirely satisfactory: the first entails assuming an unusual gap between the king's first appearance in i 13 and the revelation of his identity over twenty lines later; the second does not adequately account for the omission of such an important section. The problem will be addressed again below, section c, in the discussion of the purpose of the clay tablet Si. 4+5.

b) Attribution

As noted above (p. 232), Scheil (1902, 96) attributed the text "vraisemblablement" and "probablement" to Nabonidus, king of Babylon 556–539 BC. In support of this attribution,

²⁷ For possible drafts of Assyrian inscriptions see: RINAP 1, p. 9 and RINAP 3/2, pp. 5–8. See, too, Weissert (1997, 351) and RINAP 5/1, p. 27 n. 173 on K.6085 as a draft or archival copy of an Assurbanipal stele inscription. For possible drafts of Nabonidus' inscriptions see the discussion below, section c, with reference to further literature.

²⁸ E.g., the Cruciform Monument of Maništušu, on which see most recently Finkel/Fletcher (2016); the Sargon Birth Legend, discussed with references to earlier literature by Haul (2009, 24. 106f.); and the inscription written in the voice of Šulgi edited by Frahm (2006). Inscriptions whose pseudepigraphic status is uncertain because of their similarities to authentic inscriptions include the Agum-Kakrime Inscription (Paulus 2018), the Donation of Kurigalzu (Paulus 2018, 152f.), and the Nebuchadnezzar (I) Autobiography (RIMB 2 B.2.4.6; Longman 1991, 194f.).

²⁶ "Das Kernelement jeder Inschrift ist der Name des Stifters" (Radner 2005, 153).

he offers the reference to a monument of Ḫammu-rāpi in Nabonidus' *Sammelinschrift*.²⁹ The text's interest in a monument of Ḫammu-rāpi certainly seems to find a close parallel in Nabonidus' official account of his restoration of the Ebabbar temple at Larsa: other kings' inscriptions draw on the text of Ḫammu-rāpi's famous inscription (see below section e), but only Nabonidus' *Sammelinschrift* and Larsa Cylinder stress the importance of a physical monument of Ḫammu-rāpi in the same manner as the new text.³⁰ Be that as it may, an attribution would ideally be supported by more than one similarity, and now that the text's contents are better understood, it is necessary to consider the question of its attribution afresh.³¹

Several features of the text are elsewhere attested only in inscriptions of rulers earlier than Nabonidus, of the late eighth and seventh centuries BC. One of the major royal actions commemorated by the text, namely the granting of *kidinnūtu* ("kidinnu-status") to entire citizen groups (Si. 4+5 ii 13/14–27) was an important policy of the Assyrian Sargonid kings (721–611 BC) in their tortuous relationship with the urban centres of Babylonia (see further below section f).³² The policy seems, moreover, to have been abandoned by the succeeding kings of the Neo-Babylonian empire.³³ A second feature in favour of a Sargonid king is the use of the toponym *kar(an)duniaš* to designate Babylonia (ii 20). This toponym is not attested in the known inscriptions of

the kings of the Neo-Babylonian empire, but it is attested in the inscriptions of Sargonid kings.³⁴

Two features might narrow down the likely Sargonid contenders to Esarhaddon (king of Assyria 680–669 BC) or one of his immediate successors, Assurbanipal (king of Assyria 669–631 BC) or Šamaš-šuma-ukīn (king of Babylon 668–648). First, the royal act of writing a tax exemption tablet (*tuppi zakūti*), mentioned in ii 24, is otherwise attested only in Esarhaddon's Babylonian inscriptions, where it is one of several royal measures taken by that king to revitalize the city of Babylon.³⁵ Second, seven consecutive invocations in the blessings section in cols. iii and iv correspond to a sequence of invocations in an Esarhaddon inscription found at Sippar.³⁶ Perhaps, therefore, the inscription represents previously unattested measures adopted by Esarhaddon in his attempt to gain Babylonian acceptance of Assyrian rule. Alternatively, it could be a display of 'Babylonianism' by either Assurbanipal or Šamaš-šuma-ukīn.

What of the kings of Babylon who ruled in the century between Šamaš-šuma-ukīn and Nabonidus? In favour of Nabopolassar, the founder of the Neo-Babylonian empire (r. ca. 626–605), is the likely reference in i 24–25 to building work on Eḫursagtila, the temple of Ninurta in Babylon (George 1993, 102 no. 489); Nabopolassar is the only king known to have sponsored work on this temple,³⁷ though this fact does not exclude the possibility that the temple required further work during Nabonidus' reign. In favour of Nebuchadnezzar II (r. ca. 605–562) is the fact that his

²⁹ See above, n. 3.

³⁰ See Schaudig (2003) with references to earlier literature.

³¹ Until a complete, reliable catalogue of the artefacts discovered during the 1894 Sippar campaign is published, museum "archaeology" cannot help us much in this respect. One must currently rely on Scheil's incomplete catalogue (1902, 95–141), which includes tablets dated to the reigns of both Šamaš-šuma-ukīn (668–648 BC) (see Jiménez/Adalı 2015, 186) and Nebuchadnezzar II (605–562 BC). Note, moreover, that even a complete, up-to-date catalogue is unlikely to point decisively in the direction of any particular king, since Scheil explicitly states that he excavated all sectors of the city: "nous ataquâmes tous les points de la ville, successivement" (Scheil 1902, 6; Jiménez/Adalı 2015, 186b).

³² Indeed, as Leemans (1946, 36. 54) points out, the earliest attestation of the term *kidinnūtu* ("kidinnu-status") dates to the reign of Sargon II (721–705 BC). For the most up-to-date systematic review of the attestations of both *kidinnu* and *kidinnūtu* in the Neo-Assyrian period see Reviv (1988, 286–294).

³³ So Reviv (1988, 294): "With the change of the Assyrian empire, the distribution of the familiar pattern of *kidinnūtu* ... ceased. A fact which emerges from the Neo-Babylonian inscriptions, is the almost complete absence of references to the protection of the god over the community in urban frameworks." Note that G. van Driel (2002, 299) thought that Babylonian communities still held *kidinnu*-status in the sixth century, but that the status had "not much practical effect."

³⁴ See Philological Commentary ad ii 20.

³⁵ See commentary ad ii 24.

³⁶ Esarhaddon's Sippar Prism, BM 56617 (RINAP 4, 112 v 2–15). For details see above, Philological Commentary ad iii 29'f. Note too that the phrase *tallakti attallaku* (ii 9) finds its closest parallel in an inscription of Assurbanipal: *attallaka alkakātēšun* (RINAP 5/1, 3 i 26), and the line *[ša illū]ma uma'aru māta*, "[whoever ascends (the throne)/arises] and governs the land" (iv 17) finds a precise parallel in a stele inscription of Šamaš-šuma-ukīn (see Philological Commentary ad loc.).

³⁷ As documented by his *é-PA.GIN-ti-la* inscription, edited most recently as RINBE 2, Nabopolassar 6 (on *é-PA.GIN-ti-la* as a learned writing for *é-ḫur-sag-ti-la* see George 1992, 314. 385). Nabonidus' building work in Babylon is recorded in the Imgur-Enlil Cylinders (restoration of the city-wall), the Babylon Stele viii 1'–57' (adornment of various shrines), and the Emašdari Cylinder (restoration of the temple of Ištar of Agade in Babylon). The work recorded in the Babylon Stele may have taken place in his accession year, prior to the New Year's Festival that marked the start of his first regnal year (Beaulieu 1989, 113 f.) or else after Nabonidus' return from Tēmā (Schaudig 2001, 48. 515), but there is no evidence for when the work on the city-wall or the temple of Ištar of Akkade took place (Beaulieu 1989, 39 sub Inscriptions A and B).

inscriptions show a degree of interest in the figure of Ḫammu-rāpi, and he *might* be the king behind the ‘King of Justice’ text, with which the author of Si. 4+5 seems to be familiar (see section d). However, against the attribution to Nabopolassar is the relatively little interest his inscriptions display in earlier kings’ monuments, and against the attribution to Nebuchadnezzar is the absence of close parallel turns of phrase with his inscriptions.

Despite the text containing features that are consistent with the reigns of earlier rulers, Nabonidus still seems, on balance, the strongest contender. In addition to the fact that he is the only one of these rulers to display interest in the monuments of Ḫammu-rāpi, discussed above, the fact that the text was intended for display on a stele (*ina narê annî*, iv 24) also points in his direction: with 14 attested steles in Babylonia, he appears to have commissioned more steles than any other ruler of the late eighth, seventh and sixth centuries: Nebuchadnezzar II is known to have commissioned one stele, and currently no steles at all are attested for Nabopolassar. Of the Sargonid kings, the most prolific commissioner of steles seems to have been Sargon II, with 10–11 known steles to his name. For Esarhaddon, 7 are attested, while one stele apiece is attested for Assurbanipal and Šamaš-šuma-ukin.³⁸

The inscription’s language also sways the argument in Nabonidus’ favour. Two phrases in the text otherwise occur only in Nabonidus’ inscriptions. The first is *išturma ištakkan*, “he wrote (them, i. e., the just judgements) [on] a stele thereby establishing (them)” (i 3), a phrase that finds its closest parallel in Nabonidus’ Ḫarrān Stele inscription (see Philological Commentary ad loc). The second is the verbal form *[att]anaṭṭalma*, “I [con]stantly gazed” (i 14), a phrase in Nabonidus’ En-nigaldi-nanna Cylinder inscription (i 34), where the king scrutinizes ancient tablets and writing boards.³⁹ A further phrase, *mardē/ê kitti*, “path(s) of truth” (i 22), though unique, is reminiscent of the *ṭūdāt mišari*, “ways of justice,” which appears in Nabonidus’ Eamaškuga and Larsa Cylinder inscriptions (see Philological Commentary ad loc).

³⁸ Figures calculated according to the inscriptions published in RINAP 2, RINAP 3/1–2, RINAP 4, RINAP 5/1 & 5/3, RIMB 2, RINBE 1/1–2, RINBE 2. Note that the total of 14 for the number of Nabonidus’ known steles includes the four *asumittu* whose inscriptions are preserved in the *Sammelinschrift* (Schaudig 2001, 2.14 = RINBE 2, Nabonidus 27).

³⁹ See Philological Commentary ad i 14. Nabonidus is also depicted as looking at tablets carefully (*naṭālu* Gtn) in the Royal Chronicle (Schaudig 2001, 2.11 iii 12’), which was probably composed after Nabonidus’ reign (Waerzeggers, 2015, 114f.), and which may intentionally echo the language of his inscriptions.

What, then, is one to make of the apparently Sargonid elements of the inscription discussed above, namely the writing of a *tuppi zakûti*, the grant of *kidinnu*-status, and the use of the toponym Kar(an)duñaš? These become explicable if one considers Nabonidus’ interest in claiming a degree of continuity with the Assyrian empire, which is far more noticeable in his surviving official monuments than in those of any other king of the Neo-Babylonian empire. Several of Nabonidus’ building accounts celebrate the earlier building achievements of Assyrian kings,⁴⁰ historical narratives can extend back into the Assyrian period,⁴¹ and on one notable occasion Nabonidus even refers to Shalmaneser III and Assurbanipal as *abbēya*, “my ancestors.”⁴² His steles, with their rounded tops and their depictions of the king in their bas-reliefs, seem intended to evoke Assyrian *Herrscherstellen*.⁴³ Among the earlier kings celebrated in Nabonidus’ inscriptions, none appears more frequently than the last “great” king of Assyria, Assurbanipal (r. 669–631),⁴⁴ and it can be argued that Nabonidus saw himself as the spiritual successor of Assurbanipal in particular.⁴⁵ However, affinities between the inscriptions of Nabonidus and Esarhaddon have also been noted,⁴⁶ and it seems possible that

⁴⁰ As in Nabonidus’ account of the restoration of the Eḫulḫul temple, which relates the discovery of the foundations of the temple built by Assurbanipal (r. 669–631). Schaudig (2001, 2.12 11 i 48) = RINBE 2, Nabonidus 28 i 48.

⁴¹ See the historical prologue of the Babylon Stele (Schaudig 2001, 3.3 i 1’–19’ = RINBE 2, Nabonidus 3 i 1’–19’) which begins with the reign of the Assyrian king Sennacherib (704–681), if not earlier.

⁴² Schaudig (2001, 2.12 1 ii 7 and 11 ii 3) = RINBE 2, Nabonidus 28 ii 7. As noted by Beaulieu (1989, 101 with n. 27) the only occasion when a Babylonian king associates himself with Assyrian rulers in this manner.

⁴³ The cloak worn by Nabonidus in the reliefs on the two Ḫarrān Steles and the Tariff Stele (Börker-Klähn 1982, 229–231, nos. 263. 264. 266) resembles *Schalgewand* Nr. 2, the garment of the Assyrian king in depictions on several Assyrian monuments (Braun-Holzinger 1994, 39; Schaudig 2001, 38f.). See also Braun-Holzinger/Frahm (1999, 141) and Schaudig (2001, 33 with n. 136) with references to further literature.

⁴⁴ See Schaudig (2001, 708–11) for a convenient overview of the earlier kings named in Nabonidus’ inscriptions.

⁴⁵ Nabonidus’ presentation of himself as Assurbanipal’s spiritual successor has been inferred from the alleged stylistic influence of Assurbanipal’s inscriptions on the Cyrus Cylinder (Harmatta 1974, Michalowski 2014), but see now Schaudig (2019b, 71f.). Michalowski (2014) argues that Nabonidus’ apparent affinity for Assurbanipal may stem from his childhood, part of which may have been spent in Ḫarrān.

⁴⁶ Most notably in the phrase that Nabonidus uses to express his careful attention to earlier building plans, *ubān lā ašê ubān lā erēbi*, “not a finger wider or a finger narrower.” As Schaudig (2003, 484)

Esarhaddon's monuments in Ḥarrān as well as those of Assurbanipal may have influenced Nabonidus' decision to restore the Ehulhul at Ḥarrān.⁴⁷ If the ascription to Nabonidus is correct, therefore, Si. 4+5 would expand this picture of Nabonidus' scribes drawing on Esarhaddon's inscriptions for phrases and, possibly, for policy too, by indicating a close engagement with Esarhaddon's Babylonian inscriptions.⁴⁸

The ascription of the text to Nabonidus, if correct, begs the question of when during his reign it might have been composed. The expression "the road that I roamed" (*tallakti attallaku*, ii 9), which could refer in quite a general way to the king's military campaigns, finds an inexact parallel in the phrase *uruḥ ... attallaku*, which is used by Nabonidus in the Ḥarrān Stele inscription to refer to his campaigns in the southern Levant and northern Arabia,⁴⁹ conducted during his Tēmā sojourn.⁵⁰ He left Tēmā in the thirteenth year of his reign⁵¹ and so Si. 4+5 could date to the period after his return to Babylon, i. e., the four years between his departure from Tēmā in October 543, in the second half of his thirteenth regnal year, and the end of

his reign on 29th October 539, in the second half of his seventeenth regnal year.

c) Text Supports: A (Lost?) Stele and the Clay Tablet Si. 4+5

The reference towards the end of the text to "[the gods], all whose names I have invoked on this *narû*" (iv 22) indicates that the text was intended for display on a *narû*. The Akkadian term can designate a tablet of stone or precious metal, which was usually inscribed with a building inscription and buried in a building's foundation or used to pave temple floors.⁵² However, the term more commonly designates a stele, i. e., an object designed for upright display in a (semi-)public location. Since the *narû* of Ḥammu-rāpi mentioned in the opening lines of the new text clearly refers to a stele and not a tablet, the term must also refer to a stele in iv 22: the king of the text clearly intends to present himself as following in the footsteps of Ḥammu-rāpi, whose decision to write his "just judgements" on a stele, "thereby establishing (them)" (i 1. 3), is the opening act in the text's narrative. The text does not specify the intended location of the new inscription: the stele has either not survived or, conceivably, it was never inscribed. Be that as it may, the priority given in the text to the tutelary deity of Babylon, Marduk, the first of the gods to whom the king prays (i 17–20) and the first whom he invokes to bless a future ruler (iii 14'–iv 15'), as well as the probable reference to Ehursagtila (i 24), point to the stele's (intended) location somewhere in the city of Babylon.

The fact nevertheless remains that the inscription is preserved not on a stone monument from Babylon but on a clay tablet from Sippar. What, then, was the purpose of this clay tablet? Since four stele inscriptions attributed with certainty to Nabonidus are also attested only on clay supports, including a tablet,⁵³ and four further Nabonidus inscriptions intended for other supports are attested only on clay tablets,⁵⁴ we will first consider the purpose(s) of these clay tablets.

has pointed out, this phrase finds its closest parallel in Esarhaddon's account of his rebuilding of the Esaggil (RINAP 4 104 iii 41b–46).

⁴⁷ Esarhaddon was as active as Assurbanipal in promoting the cult of Sîn of Ḥarrān (Holloway 2002, 407; Beaulieu 2007, 139; Michalowski 2014, 206; Novotny 2020, 76), and before his Egyptian campaign of 671 BC Esarhaddon received the prophecy that he would conquer the world (SAA 10, 174 o. 12–15; see Nissinen 1998, 124 and Holloway 2002, 408 for discussion): The same event may be reflected in Nabonidus' statement that his Assyrian ancestors were "entrusted by Sîn with the rule over mankind" (Beaulieu 1989, 143).

⁴⁸ Note too that the spelling of Kar(an)duniaš in the text is not attested in Esarhaddon's inscriptions, and may therefore reflect the influence of inscriptions of Middle Babylonian inscriptions. See commentary above ad i 24 for details.

⁴⁹ Ḥarrān Stele i 24–26; ii 10–11 = Schaudig (2001, 3.1) and RINBE 2, Nabonidus 47. Both passages are quoted in full in the Philological Commentary ad ii 9. A fragmentary line of the "Nabonidus Chronicle" (Grayson 1975: Chronicle 7 i 7) indicates that Nabonidus also campaigned in Cilicia (Humê) in his accession year, and the record of his gift to the gods Bêl, Nabû and Nergal of "2,850 (people) from an (enemy) army, booty from the land of Humê" in the Babylon Stele (ix 31'–41') indicates that he probably campaigned in Cilicia again during his first regnal year. However, since none of Nabonidus' known inscriptions contains a narrative of these Cilician campaigns, they seem less likely to be referred to here than his Levantine and Arabian campaigns.

⁵⁰ For epigraphic evidence for Nabonidus' presence at the ancient sites of Tēmā and Padakku (mod. al-Ḥā'it) see Eichmann e. a. (2006), Hausleiter/Schaudig (2016), and Schaudig in Hausleiter e. a. (2018, 99f.).

⁵¹ For Nabonidus' departure from Tēmā in the thirteenth year of his reign see Beaulieu (1989, 149–160).

⁵² Ellis (1968, 94–107).

⁵³ The *Sammelinschrift* (Schaudig 2001, 2.14 = RINBE 2, Nabonidus 27) is attested on one tablet and three clay cylinders.

⁵⁴ Schaudig (2001, 2.20; 2.21; 2.22; 2.23) = RINBE 2, Nabonidus 44; Nabonidus 5; Nabonidus 45; Nabonidus 1011. Note that the tablet fragments BM 68234 and BM 68321 (Schaudig 2001, 2.15a; 2.16) have since proven to be copies of old inscriptions (Bartelmus/Taylor 2014).

Of the five tablets, H. Schaudig has identified three as possible drafts.⁵⁵ He considers them drafts for two different reasons: one tablet's text contains phrases untypical of Nabonidus' inscriptions, while the other two tablets have a landscape format. Since neither criterion applies to Si. 4+5, and no other feature of the text or the tablet is suggestive of a draft, it seems unlikely that Si. 4+5 represents a draft. Of the fourth clay tablet very little is preserved,⁵⁶ but if it is not a draft, it could be either a copy produced for archival purposes or a copy produced as a scribal exercise, or indeed both. Of these options, a copy produced for archival purposes seems, in our opinion, the most likely because of the absence of scribal errors in the text. Other features that seem to point towards a practiced scribe is the elegance of the script and the careful distribution of the text within each line. An archival copy can also be reconciled with the presence of the inscription from Babylon at Sippar. Sippar was one of the nine cities whose exemption from tax is recorded in the inscription (ii 24–27). Perhaps, therefore, Nabonidus' scholars were tasked with creating archival copies of the stele inscription for each of the cities whose citizens were exempted from tax, for purposes of convenient reference.⁵⁷

Returning to the issue of the missing name and titulary of the royal protagonist (see above, section a), it remains to note that if one accepts the theory that Si. 4+5 represents an archival copy of a real inscription, it seems likely that the king was identified somewhere in the damaged passage i 36–ii 4. This is because there is no obvious reason why the scribe of an archival copy would choose to omit the section identifying the king. The fact that the protagonist was only identified long after he first enters the narrative may have been intended to create narrative suspense. Experimentation with the traditional structure of an inscription does not seem completely surprising in the context of Nabonidus' court.

d) Parallels with King of Justice

The overarching narrative of the new text – namely: a king restores order to his land and celebrates his inscription of his judgements, among other achievements, on a stele (ii 5–11) – resembles the basic trajectory of the narrative

of the Babylonian literary text known as King of Justice (henceforth KJ), in which a king is celebrated who restored justice and wrote down laws for his land after a period of disorder.⁵⁸ Three turns of phrase in the new text: *dīn kitti u mišari*, “true and just judgement” (Si. 4+5: i 18), *lā sakāpu*, “do not rest!” (i 29), and *šaṭāru* Gtn (ii 11) are also encountered in KJ. Thus, the king of KJ *ana dīn kitti u mišari lā igi lā iskup muša u urra*, “did not neglect true and just judgement. He did not rest night or day” (Schaudig 2001, 582: P2 ii 22’), and *dīna u purussā ... ištaṭṭarma*, “he repeatedly wrote down judgement(s) and decision(s)” (Schaudig 2001, 582 P2 ii 23’–25’). Indeed, *šaṭāru* Gtn is *only* encountered in the text of KJ, which suggests identifying the king of our inscription with KJ's royal protagonist. Note, moreover, that the author of KJ clearly drew heavily on the text of the Laws of Ḫammu-rāpi (CḪ), as discussed by Hurowitz (2005, 507–16); the joint interest of KJ and the new text in CḪ reinforces the impression that they originated in the same intellectual environment.

The identity of KJ's heroic protagonist is uncertain: the first editor of the text, Lambert (1965, 2–3), thought the king in question was Nebuchadnezzar II (r. 605–562 BC) both because of the military conquests mentioned in KJ col. v, which Lambert thought best corresponded with the military victories of Nebuchadnezzar, and because of an extended parallel between the food offerings listed in KJ col. v and in Nebuchadnezzar's Wadi Brisa Inscription. Lambert's view has been disputed since the mid-1970s, when Berger (1974, 222 n. 51) and von Soden (1976, 283; 1983, 63) separately argued in favour of Nabonidus. Von Soden's preference for Nabonidus was based on his hypothesis that a fragment of a text mentioning Amēl-Marduk, king of Babylon 562–560 BC, belongs to the same manuscript as the large fragment that preserves KJ; if his hypothesis is correct, it would follow that the heroic king's reign came after Amēl-Marduk's, which would accordingly leave Nabonidus as the only likely candidate.⁵⁹ However, because the fragment in question does not represent a direct join to the manuscript, a question mark over this argument remains. Less open to dispute, however, is von Soden's point that Nebuchadnezzar is unlikely to have

⁵⁵ BM 34706 (Schaudig 2001, 2.20), BM 38770 (Schaudig 2001, 2.21), and BM 76544 (Schaudig 2001, 2.23). See Schaudig (2001, 29. 75).

⁵⁶ BM 58756 (Schaudig 2001, 2.22).

⁵⁷ Alternatively, the impulse for the creation of the copy may have come from the Sippareans.

⁵⁸ The most recent edition is by Schaudig (2001, 579–588).

⁵⁹ Crucial for von Soden's argument is the fact that the fragment preserves part of the tablet's left edge, i. e., comes from the missing first column of text. Its location in the text would entail identifying Amēl-Marduk or his immediate successors, Neriglissar (r. 560–556) and Labāši-Marduk (r. 560), as the ruler whose reign is depicted so negatively in ii 2'–21', which in turn would mean that Nebuchadnezzar could not be the heroic successor depicted in col. ii 21'f.

depicted his predecessor's reign negatively because his immediate predecessor was his father, Nabopolassar.⁶⁰ The debate is, however, not over yet: M. Jursa, proposing that the text of KJ was composed around the same time as its only surviving manuscript was written, i. e., in the Achaemenid- or Hellenistic-era,⁶¹ has argued again in favour of Nebuchadnezzar, observing that he is more likely than Nabonidus to be depicted positively in a work of this date.⁶²

If one accepts the attribution of the text to Nabonidus (section b), the text comprises new evidence in favour of identifying Nabonidus as the king of KJ. An attribution of both texts to Nebuchadnezzar II – or indeed to Nabopolassar – cannot, of course, be excluded, but Si. 4+5 contains no parallels with these kings' inscriptions that are as striking and specific as the parallels with Nabonidus' inscriptions discussed in section b above.

e) The Law Stele of Ḫammu-rāpi in Later Tradition

The new text appears to provide a royally sanctioned account from the mid-sixth century of how it came to be that a stele inscribed with the “just judgements of Ḫammu-rāpi, a former king” was no longer present in Babylonia. According to the inscription, the stele had been “removed [from] the land and the people” (*ina māti u niši innasiḫ*, Si. 4+5 i 9); while it is not explicitly stated that it was removed by the army of a foreign king, the phrase, “At the fury of the gods” (*ina uggat libbi ilī*, Si. 4+5 i 8) may well have suggested such an occurrence to a Babylonian audience familiar with the idea of foreign invasions serving as instruments of divine wrath.⁶³ This version of

events is consistent with the fate known to have befallen the famous stele of Ḫammu-rāpi now on display in Room 227 of the Musée du Louvre, on which is inscribed the inscription known since its publication by Scheil in 1902 as the “Code” or “Codex” of Ḫammu-rāpi (CḪ). The stele was excavated at Susa, one of the Elamite royal capitals, and seems to have been looted from Babylonia at some point in the first half of the eleventh century BC by the Middle Elamite king Šutruk-Nahhunte I.⁶⁴

Until now, however, evidence for later Babylonian knowledge of what happened to this monument has relied on a colophon of IM 124469, a sixth-century manuscript of the Prologue of CḪ from Sippar.⁶⁵ This colophon (col. viii 4–12) presents an alternative history for the stele. It reads as follows:

DUB 1.KAM ḫ-nu¹ AN si-ru-um | NU AL.TIL ki KA šá-tá-ru | GABA. RI NA₄.RÚ.A la-bi-ri | ša ḫa-am-mu-ra-pi | LUGAL E^{ki} ina ^{uu}šū-šī^{ki} | uš-zi-zu IM | ^{m.d}AMAR.UTU-MU-ÛRU | A šá¹ ^{mmu}šašal-lim¹² [A¹³SANG]A¹⁷-A.GA.DĒ^{ki} (Fadhil 1998, 726. 728 f.)

First Tablet of When Exalted Anu. Incomplete. According to the written wording of *an original*, an ancient stele which Ḫammu-rāpi, king of Babylon, erected in Susa. Tablet of Marduk-šumu-ušur son of Mušallim of the [Šang]i-Akkadē family.

While the scribe of this tablet thought that the stele stood in Susa, he misunderstood the historical significance of the location: he thought that the king responsible for bringing the stele to Susa was Ḫammu-rāpi himself, whose hegemony – the scribe must have assumed – extended as far as Susa.

The testimony of the colophon of IM 124469, datable ca. 539–ca. 500,⁶⁶ raises the possibility that the author of

⁶⁰ Von Soden (1976, 283). See Schaudig (2001, 579 f.) for further arguments in favour of Nabonidus and several rebuttals of arguments advanced by Lambert in favour of Nebuchadnezzar II.

⁶¹ BM 45690 (81-07-06, 95) was acquired by the British Museum from a London antiquities dealer, Joseph M. Shemtob as part of a large consignment of tablets of late Achaemenid or Hellenistic date. On this consignment see Leichty/Finkel/Walker (2020, 598) and Reade (1986, xv).

⁶² Jursa in Jursa/Debourse (2017, 85 f. with n. 21). Note, however, that the question of the KJ's composition date remains open. Even though the manuscript dates to the Achaemenid or Hellenistic period, it could well contain a composition that dates to the period of the Neo-Babylonian empire.

⁶³ From the Babylonian perspective, the gods were agents of military failures of Babylonian kings as well as agents of their successes. For a recent detailed discussion of this characteristic of Babylonian thought see Schaudig (2019a, 54–61).

⁶⁴ The historical circumstances of the stele's removal from Babylonia are suggested by the effaced area on the lower front of the stele, the purpose of which was probably to prepare the stele for the addition of a short inscription present on a handful of other Babylonian monuments found on the Susa acropolis in which Šutruk-Nahhunte I recounts how he had defeated a particular Babylonian city, removed the monument from that city, and dedicated it to the Elamite god In-šušinak (König 1965, Inschriften 22–24c). For an overview of the Babylonian monuments excavated at Susa see Harper (1992).

⁶⁵ IM 124469 = Sippar Library 3/2166.

⁶⁶ The assemblage of literary tablets to which Marduk-šumu-ušur's tablet belongs, the “Sippar Library,” dates ca. 635–484 BC (Hilgert 2013, 146; Schaudig 2009). As pointed out by Charpin (2003), the presence of a Babylonian at Susa points to the Achaemenid period as the probable time frame for Marduk-šumu-ušur's tablet. The last years of the assemblage's formation, i. e., ca. 500–484 BC, can probably be excluded on the grounds that a man who may well be Marduk-šumu-ušur's son also wrote tablets that form part of the “Sippar Library.” See Charpin (2003) with further literature.

Si. 4+5, active ca. 543–539,⁶⁷ deliberately ignored the fact that the stele was known to be at Susa. The colophon's evidence that the stele was still standing at this relatively late date is, however, not as watertight as has sometimes been assumed.⁶⁸ As pointed out by Frahm (2012, 26 n. 42), the critical passage is ambiguous. Instead of meaning:

“According to the written wording of *the original*, an ancient stele which Ḫammu-rāpi ...,”

it could mean:

“According to the written wording of *a copy* of the ancient stele which Ḫammu-rāpi ...”

If the second interpretation of the critical term, *gabarû* (wr. GABA.RI) is the correct one, then IM 124469 was not produced by copying from the stele but rather from an earlier tablet of unknown date, which itself may or may not have used the stele as its exemplar. Be that as it may, the scribe's ignorance of how the stele came to stand in Susa can no longer be regarded as representative of later Babylonians' knowledge of the stele: the new text shows that the royal court at least knew full well that the stele had originally stood in Babylonia, and that its disappearance was due to the gods' anger. What is more: if businessmen from Sippar knew that a stele of Ḫammu-rāpi stood at Susa, it seems likely that the royal court knew not only that the stele had been removed by a foreign army (as the account of its disappearance in the new text suggests) but also that the Elamites were the historical agents of its removal.

As well as shedding new light on later Babylonians' knowledge of the Law Stele of Ḫammu-rāpi, the new text provides eloquent further testimony to the importance of CḪ in later Babylonian royal ideology, filling out the picture painted by KJ of a community keenly interested in both Ḫammu-rāpi's inscription and the original monument on which it was displayed. This is not a complete surprise: the clear influence of CḪ on the Wadi Brisa inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar II (Berger 1973, 95; Da Riva 2012, 24–28) already indicated that the text enjoyed prestige during his reign. However, unless one accepts the attribution of KJ to Nabonidus (see above, section d) there is surprisingly little evidence that Nabonidus was par-

ticularly interested in CḪ and/or Ḫammu-rāpi.⁶⁹ Copies of Ḫammu-rāpi's building inscriptions in Neo-Babylonian script, such as BM 46543,⁷⁰ are impossible to date precisely, and may well have been produced during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II or in the subsequent Achaemenid period. Likewise, several known manuscripts of CḪ in Neo-Babylonian script may well have been produced by trainee scribes who lived during the sixth century BC,⁷¹ but they cannot be dated to a particular king's reign and so do not comprise evidence that CḪ enjoyed an elevated status under Nabonidus in particular. Without Si. 4+5 and KJ, one could interpret echoes of CḪ present in Nabonidus' inscriptions as reflecting the influence of that text on later royal inscriptions rather than a deliberate attempt by Nabonidus to emulate the royal image of Ḫammu-rāpi.

If, however, the attribution of both Si. 4+5 and the literary work KJ to Nabonidus is correct, these texts reveal that Ḫammu-rāpi was a *particularly* important model for the last king of the Neo-Babylonian empire, and that his importance lay in CḪ's portrayal of him as a king who promoted truth and justice. Depending on how one understands the reference to a stele in Si. 4+5 ii 8–9. 11:

*dinā[t] adīnu epšēt ēp[ušu] | tallakti attallaku ina nar[ē] |
altaṭṭarma ēzib aḫr[ataš ...],*

The judgements that I rendered, the deeds that I d[id], (and) the roads that I roamed I had inscribed on the stele, and I left (it) behind for eter[nity ...]

the king behind the text may even have commissioned his own “law stele” as a deliberate act of imitation of the Old Babylonian ruler.

⁶⁹ Both the *Sammelinschrift* i 67b–ii 10 and the Larsa Cylinder inscription ii 20–27. ii 58–iii 7a. iii 27–31 (= Schaudig 2001, 2.11 and RINBE 2, Nabonidus 16) relay how Nabonidus discovered and reburied a building inscription of Ḫammu-rāpi in the course of his restoration of Larsa's Ebabbar temple (on these passages see Braun-Holzinger/Frahm 1999, 139 with n. 35, Schaudig 2003, 463–465 and Charpin 2011, 71f.), yet one could attribute this interest in Ḫammu-rāpi to Nabonidus' general antiquarian interests (on which see, e. g., Beaulieu 1989, 138–143; 1994; 2013; Schaudig 2003; Joannès 1988; 2009). On the use of earlier foundation inscriptions in Nabonidus' Sippar-Anunitu project see Bartelmus/Taylor (2014, 122–6).

⁷⁰ Subject of a recent detailed study: Schaudig 2020.

⁷¹ Further copies of the Prologue of CḪ, in addition to Marduk-šumu-ušur's discussed above, were found in the “Sippar Library.” Fadhil (1998, 717) notes two in total whereas al-Adhami (1999–2000, 1) notes three.

⁶⁷ If the attribution of the text to Nabonidus and the dating of it to the latter part of his reign (see above section b) are accepted.

⁶⁸ Charpin (2003) considers the colophon infallible evidence that the stele was still standing in Susa after Assurbanipal's destruction of Susa.

f) The Political Significance of Granting *kidinnūtu*

The historical significance of the royal narrator's claim to have written a *tuppi zakūti* for the citizens of various Babylonian cities (ii 14–24) extends beyond an implied familiarity with Esarhaddon's Babylonian policy (discussed above, section b). It represents, as the lines immediately following make clear, specific benefits for the recipient citizens: the king promulgates for them (restoration dependent) *andurāru*; he establishes for them *kidinnūtu*; and he “does not impose” on them *ilku-tupšikku* and “canal digging at the herald's proclamation” (ii 24b–27). These benefits are granted on an unparalleled scale, a fact to which we will return. But first: what did these acts mean in practical terms?

The term *andurāru* designates, in the words of P. Villard, “a periodic reinstatement of good and persons, alienated because of want, to their original status.”⁷² Since, however, the restoration of this term in the second half of l. 24 is uncertain,⁷³ we will concentrate on the next act in the sequence, namely the establishment of *kidinnūtu*. The word from which *kidinnūtu* is derived, *kidinnu*, seems originally to have designated a divine symbol, which came to symbolize a right to divine protection held by certain individuals.⁷⁴ In sources from the first millennium BC, however, *kidinnu* and *kidinnūtu* are encountered as a status granted exclusively by kings to a region, city, or professional community.⁷⁵ In the late eighth and seventh centuries, it is clear that holders of this status enjoyed economic advantages, and it is therefore no surprise that receiving the status was a matter of importance to Babylonian urban elites.⁷⁶ As emerges most clearly from the Aššur Charter, in which Sargon II of Assyria commemorates his restoration of *kidinnūtu* to the city of Aššur, the status entailed an exemption from *ilku-tax*.⁷⁷

⁷² Villard (2007, 124).

⁷³ See Philological Commentary ad loc.

⁷⁴ Koschaker (1935, 42–46), Leemans (1946, 40–54), Reviv (1988, 286).

⁷⁵ Reviv (1988), Frame (1992, 35–36), and Vera Chamaza (1992, 26–27).

⁷⁶ See, e.g., *kidinnūtu* as the main topic of letters from the Babylonians to Sargon II (SAA 17, 21 and 23) and to Esarhaddon (SAA 18, 158), as well as the references to the Babylonians' *kidinnu*-status in the correspondence between Assurbanipal and the Babylonians in the lead-up to Babylon's rebellion in 652 (SAA 21, 3, 90 and 105).

⁷⁷ RINAP 2, 89: 12 and 30–40a. See also the letter to Sargon from the governor of Aššur, SAA 1, 99 r. 2'–9', in which the governor refers to the fact that he is responsible for the “*ilku-tax* of Aššur” because of the king's exemption of Aššur from taxes (on this passage see, e.g., Postgate 1974, 44 f., Parpola 1981, 133, and Vera Chamaza 1992, 30).

Ilku-tax, often translated as “service obligation,” was part of a land-for-service system whereby the taxpayer acquired land, and in return performed duties for the higher, land-distributing authority.⁷⁸ In the Middle Assyrian period it was possible to substitute personal service for that of a hired hand, and by the sixth century BC it seems to have been standard procedure to pay *ilku-tax* in silver.⁷⁹ The term which occurs in the passage under consideration, *ilku-tupšikku*, seems to be the literary term for *ilku-tax*. In other words, the exemption from *ilku-tupšikku* in ii 25 is merely an elaboration or specification of what a grant of *kidinnu*-status entailed. The same probably applies to the exemption from “canal digging at the herald's proclamation” (col. ii 26–27), since maintenance of the canal system falls under the general umbrella of *ilku-tax* in administrative documents from the sixth century.

How much was *ilku-tax* worth? Estimates for the number of days of labour to be paid in *ilku-tax* during the sixth century are not available, but data from much earlier periods point to a range of between one and six months annually.⁸⁰ Even if *ilku-tax* in the sixth century corresponded to the value in silver of labour for the shorter end of this time range, the economic impact on the royal finances of exempting multiple communities from *ilku-tax* must have been significant.⁸¹ The value of *ilku-tax* is further suggested by the fact that, of the three Sargonic kings known to have granted *kidinnu*-status, only Sargon II (r. 721–705 BC) extended the status to more than one urban community.⁸² As Frame (2020, 23, 29) suggests, Sargon's decision to grant *kidinnu*-status to Aššur, and later on to award related privileges to several Babylonian cities, may have been an attempt to win over communities

⁷⁸ On *ilku* in sixth- and fifth-century Babylonia see van Driel (2002, 254–59) with references to earlier literature, and Jursa (2010a, 647 f.; 2011, 441; 2011–2013). On *ilku* in Assyria see Postgate (1974, 63–93), Jakob (2003, 34–36), and Radner (2007, 221 f.). On *ilku-tupšikku*, the literary term used to designate *ilku* in the passage under discussion, see Philological Commentary ad ii 26.

⁷⁹ On payment of *ilku* with silver in the sixth and fifth centuries see van Driel (2002, 255 f.). On the substitution of a hired hand or silver payments in Assyria see Jakob (2003, 35) and Radner (2007, 222).

⁸⁰ See Stol (1995, 302 with n. 44) with reference to further literature.

⁸¹ Also suggestive of a close connection between *kidinnu*-status and tax exemption is the frequent association of the terms *kidinnu* and *kidinnūtu* with *zakūtu* (“tax-exempt status”): in addition to the present text (ii 24–25), see, e.g., RINAP 4, 104 v 29–34; 105 vii 33b–38a; 107 viii 1–10 (partially restored).

⁸² In addition to Aššur he also granted *kidinnu*-status on the citizens of the provincial capital Ḫarrān, and after his conquest of Babylonia he awarded *šubarū*-status to Babylon, Sippar, and Nippur, and *andurāru*-status to Dēr, Ur, Uruk, Eridu, Larsa, Kullab, Kisik, and Nemed-Laguda (RINAP 2, 7: 8–9; 43: 4–6).

hostile to his reign. It is noteworthy that Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal limited the status to the citizens of Babylon, and even then Assurbanipal seems to have parted with *ilku*-related revenue only reluctantly: he may have held off granting the Babylonians *kidinnu*-status until the fifth year of his reign at the earliest.⁸³ Both the restriction of the grant to the Babylonians and the delay in its confirmation may reflect its financial significance.

Since granting *kidinnūtu* on the scale recorded in Si. 4+5 is otherwise unattested, the act is so startling (nine cities!) that it invites explanation. If the benefactor is Nabonidus, an important factor in his decision may have been the riches he likely channelled into Babylonia after his military campaigns in northern Arabia.⁸⁴ Evidence for the economic benefits to Babylonia of these campaigns is not as abundant as one might expect and rests primarily on the reputation of northern Arabia as a source of luxury goods and wealth,⁸⁵ but it nevertheless seems possible that, after his return from Tēmā, Nabonidus was in a financial position to grant *kidinnūtu* on a scale that he could not have afforded at the beginning of his reign.

Long-distance trade and commerce may have flourished in Babylonia in the latter years of Nabonidus' reign, but the scale of the tax exemption recorded in Si. 4+5 may point to a deficit in a different arena. The only king known to have granted privileges on a comparable scale is Sargon II, whose grant of *ilku*-tax exemption and related measures may have been a strategy for retaining control of the recipient cities. Could it therefore be possible that the royal benefactor in Si. 4+5 granted *kidinnūtu* to so many citizen groups in order to boost support for his reign among these communities? If the new inscription dates to the post-Tēmā period of Nabonidus' reign, then this may have been a time when his popularity in the old Babylonian urban centres was at a low ebb: regardless of the extent to which he promoted the moon god Sîn and the reception of this policy by the priesthood in Babylon,⁸⁶

⁸³ As has often been noted, Assurbanipal seems to have granted the Babylonians *kidinnu*-status by 652 BC, when the king addresses the Babylonians in a letter as “people of *kidinnu*” (SAA 21, 3). A *terminus post quem* for the act may be supplied by a letter published by Frame/George (2005, 270–77) preserved on the Parthian-era manuscript BM 28825. In the letter, which is dated to “the fifth year” (see Frame/George 2005, 277 ad l. 36), Assurbanipal states that he will confer the status on the Babylonians in the future. If this letter is a reliable source for events of Assurbanipal's reign, Assurbanipal conferred *kidinnu*-status on the Babylonians at some point in or after his fifth year.

⁸⁴ See Philological Commentary ad ii 9.

⁸⁵ See Beaulieu (1989, 181–83) with reference to further literature.

⁸⁶ On Nabonidus' promotion of Sîn see most recently Häntinen (2021, 140–44, 200–6) with references to earlier literature.

a decade-long absence is unlikely to have endeared the king to Babylonian urban elites. Moreover, in 553, when Nabonidus left Babylon for Tēmā, the possibility of an Iranian ruler invading Babylonian territory must have seemed a distant possibility; after 547 BC, however, when Cyrus II of Anšan conquered a land to the east of the Tigris,⁸⁷ the threat of an invasion of Babylonia must have become much more real.

Knowledge of Nabonidus' preparations for Cyrus' invasion of Babylonia is currently limited to the order he issued to various cult centres to send their cult statues to Babylon, presumably with the aim of protecting them from being plundered by Cyrus' troops. According to both the chronicle and the administrative documents from Uruk and Sippar that document this step, it was taken in 539, in the months leading up to an important military encounter between Persian and Babylonian forces at Opis.⁸⁸ It seems unlikely that the transfer of the cult statues to Babylon was the first measure that Nabonidus took to prepare for the coming invasion – especially if, as Beaulieu (1989, 203) suggests, the Persian threat was one of the factors that triggered the Babylonian king's departure from Tēmā in 543. To galvanize support in the forthcoming war, the elderly king could have made the grant recorded in Si. 4+5 relatively soon after his return from Arabia; the need would have seemed the more urgent if enthusiasm for his rule had waned in the years of his absence.

This reconstruction of the circumstances surrounding the events recorded in Si. 4+5 ii 27 is highly hypothetical. It rests on the identification of the text as a genuine inscription of Nabonidus, an identification which cannot be verified without the discovery of a duplicate that clearly identifies the royal protagonist. However, if the attribution and reconstruction volunteered here *are* correct, it remains to note that the grant, though ineffective as a means of halting Cyrus' conquest of the region, may explain Nabonidus' positive reputation in the decades immediately after the fall of Babylon to Cyrus, among at least some Babylonian urban elites.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ The name of the land invaded by Cyrus in 547 is damaged in the relevant passage of the manuscript of the Nabonidus Chronicle (Grayson 1975a, Chronicle 7 ii 16). On the earlier proposals to read Lydia or Urartu, and a new possible reading, the land of Suteans, see Adalı e. a. (2017) with earlier literature.

⁸⁸ See Beaulieu (1993) for a detailed reconstruction of the episode.

⁸⁹ Seventeen years after his reign ended, Nabonidus was such a popular figure in certain Babylonian circles that in 522/1 the leaders of two Babylonian revolts against Darius I claimed descent from him (Weissbach 1911, 22–23 § 16, 54–55 § 49.58–59 § 52). On Nabonidus' reputation among Babylonians in the early years of Darius I's reign see, e. g., Beaulieu (1989, 232 n. 59) and Jursa (2007, 77 n. 7).

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