

*“O Marduk, (my) lord, wisest of the gods, proud prince,
you are the one who created me and entrusted me with
kingship over all of the people”¹*

Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian Royal Inscriptions

15 | Stele of Ashurnasirpal II from the temple of Ninurta in Kalhu (based on LAYARD 1853B, pl. 4)



Introduction

The close bond between earthly rulers and their divine patrons is regularly attested in the well-known genre of texts commonly referred to as royal inscriptions.² These documents composed in the name of the king (and generally in first person as if the gods' human vice-regent was personally dictating their contents) vary in length, material support, and intended audience. To date, nearly 2000 different Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian royal inscriptions dated between 1000 and 539 BCE have survived the test of time. These royally-commisioned and essentially self-aggrandising texts – which are inscribed, engraved, glazed, and stamped on a wide variety of clay, metal, and stone objects – were written in the Akkadian language (in the literary Standard Babylonian dialect); short inscriptions (those on baked bricks) could also be composed in Sumerian, a language that had long died out as a spoken language. In Assyria, inscriptions could be as short as one word and as long as 3000–6300 words. However, in Babylonia, inscriptions were significantly shorter and often not more than 300–850 words long. In a few rare instances, specifically during the reign of the famous Nebuchadnezzar II (604–562 BCE), texts as long as 1600–2200 words were commissioned to celebrate the pious deeds undertaken on behalf of Babylon's most important deity: Marduk, the king of the gods who annually confirmed the king's authority over the land during the New Year's Festival (held in late March/early April). The bulk of the presently-attested inscribed objects with provenances originate in modern-day Iraq, namely in Assyrian (Aššur, Kalhu, Nineveh) and Babylonian (Babylon, Borsippa, Sippar, Ur, and Uruk) cities (fig. 2 to Chapter 1.1); a significantly

smaller percentage of inscriptions have been found outside the imperial heartlands, especially in present-day Iran, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey (figs. 10 and 13 to Chapter 2.1). Most of the hitherto known texts were written or stamped on clay or engraved on stone; some inscriptions on metal are also known, but the majority of these did not survive antiquity since the gold, silver, and bronze objects upon which they were written were reused. For longer compositions, multi-column (foundation) clay tablets and multi-faceted clay prisms were the preferred mediums in Assyria, while multi-column clay cylinders (**cat. nos. 3 and 5–6**) were the most commonly used material supports in Babylonia. Freestanding monuments in the shape of statues (fig. 89 to Chapter 4.8), obelisks (fig. 12 to Chapter 2.1) and round-topped steles (fig. 15) also bore lengthy texts, some of which narrated the king's deeds chronologically (or geographically). For shorter texts, baked bricks (**cat. nos 4 and 120–121**), paving stones, and decorated wall slabs (**cat. nos 8, 74 and 78**) – objects embedded into the fabric of buildings (palaces and temples), city walls, embankment walls, and processional roads – served as the principal means for kings to be remembered for the good works that they had performed for their divine patrons, the gods and goddesses whom they faithfully served; in Assyria, especially in the late 8th century BCE, wall slabs lining the walls of the king's palace were also inscribed with long annalistic texts, compositions that read “like small historical novels and have behind them a complex textual history”.³ Finally, we must mention rock reliefs, which often proclaimed the pious deeds of kings in very remote areas of empires, sometimes created at the furthest point of a military campaign, and which can still be seen *in situ* today. In addition to the kings in whose name the texts were composed, future rulers (ideally the king's own descendants) and the gods were the target audiences of these carefully-crafted texts, which painstakingly blend royal ideology and historical reality in order to best present their royal “authors”.

“Foundation” inscriptions

The best-attested, as well as longest, Assyrian and Babylonian royal inscriptions are generally inscribed on what modern scholars refer to as “foundation documents”. Although the usual material support was clay, stone and metal (bronze, silver, and gold) were also used to create objects (fig. 16)⁴ intended to be deposited (or displayed) in the brickwork of city walls (together with their gates), palaces, and temples. Clay tablets and prisms were the preferred medium in Assyria, while clay cylinders were the desired foundation document type in Babylonia. The sizes and shapes of the objects were tailored to the length of the inscriptions written on them. For example, in Assyria during the reigns of Sennacherib (704–681 BCE), Esarhaddon (680–669 BCE), and Ashurbanipal (668–ca. 631 BCE), multi-faceted clay prisms were used almost exclusively since those three kings commemorated their pious deeds on and off the battlefield in verbose Akkadian inscriptions that were over 3000 words long.⁵ The clay prism was an extremely versatile medium since it allowed kings to have shorter texts inscribed on pentagonal and hexagonal prisms and longer inscriptions (up to 6000 words) written on tall octagonal and decagonal prisms. For Nebuchadnezzar II, the most famous king of the Neo-Babylonian Period (625–539 BCE), his scribes were able to use clay cylinders in a similar manner to 7th-century-BCE Assyrian prisms: two-column cylinders (of different shapes and sizes; **cat. no. 3**) were inscribed with texts up to 250 words and three-column cylinders (**cat nos. 5–6**) were used for texts ranging from 600 to 1600 words.⁶ In Babylonia, Assyrian rulers usually conformed to the customs of the kings of Babylon and thus wrote significantly shorter inscriptions on single- or double-column clay cylinders.



16 | Tablet-shaped gold plate with royal inscription of Sargon II from Dür-Sarrukin (AO 19933)

Inscriptions written on foundation documents fall into four broad categories: building inscriptions, annalistic texts, summary inscriptions, and dedicatory inscriptions (sometimes referred to as display inscriptions). In Assyria, annalistic texts – which are often referred to as “annals” (which is not the case in the strictest sense) or *res gestae* (lit. “[royal] deeds”, as labelled by the Roman emperor Augustus [27 BCE–14 CE]) – are the most common type of royal composition. These lengthy compositions usually began with the king’s name, titles, and genealogy; gave a detailed (chronological or geographical) résumé of the king’s accomplishments (which he was only able to achieve on account of his piety to the gods); described the construction or renovation of a building (either a palace or temple) or city wall; and then concluded with advice instructing future rulers to respect the inscribed foundation objects.⁷ In Babylonia, building and dedicatory texts were the most common types of foundation inscriptions. As for the former type, which was more commonly used by the Assyrians, the text began with a dedication to the deity whose temple was being renovated/rebuilt; gave the king’s name, titles, and epithets; briefly recorded the renovation of the deity’s temple; and concluded with advice to future rulers and blessings and curses respectively for those who obey and disregard the king’s instructions.⁸ An example of an opening dedication by Ashurbanipal reads as follows:

“For Marduk, king of all the Igigu and Anunnaku gods, creator of heaven and earth, who establishes archetypes (and) dwells in Esagil, lord of Babylon, great lord, my lord.”

—
Opening lines of an inscription of Ashurbanipal on clay cylinders found at Babylon (no. 241, lines 1–2).⁹

As for the latter type, which is used especially by Neo-Babylonian kings, these began with the king’s name, titles, and epithets; summarised the king’s pious deeds (including the renovation of temples [especially in Babylon and Borsippa]); described the construction or renovation of the building or city wall in which the foundation document was placed or displayed; and concluded with advice to future rulers or a prayer to one of the king’s divine patrons (frequently Marduk). An example description of some of the king’s actions taken on behalf of the gods from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II reads as follows:

“In Esagil, the awe-inspiring shrine, the palace of heaven and earth, the residence of festiveness, I clad Eumuša, the cella of the Enlil of the gods, Marduk, Kaḥilisu, the residence of Zarpanītu, (and) Ezida, the residence of Lugdimmerankia, with bright gold and made (them) shine like daylight. (With regard to) Etemenanki, the ziggurat of Babylon, I built (it) anew. (With regard to) Ezida, the true house, the beloved of Nabû, I built (it) anew in Borsippa and with gold and precious stones I decorated (it) as beautifully as the stars (lit. ‘writings’) of the heavens. I clad (beams of) hard cedar with gold and (then) I had (them) stretched out as the roof of Emahtila, the cella of Nabû, over the three of them.”

—
Excerpt from the prologue of an inscription of Nebuchadnezzar II on a clay cylinder from Babylon, recording the construction of a temple for Gula (no. 31, i 46–ii 5).¹⁰

As is clear from the concluding lines of these inscriptions, the foundation documents were intended to ensure that the gods and goddesses in whose temples these texts were deposited were constantly reminded of the deeds that their earthly representative performed on their behalf. This is exemplified by the concluding prayer of a text of Nebuchadnezzar II from the Emaḥ temple at Babylon, which is known from Neo-Babylonian cylinders (**cat. no. 3**).

“O Ninmah, merciful mother, look with pleasure (upon Emaḥ) and may good things about me be set upon your lips. Expand (my) seed (and) increase my progeny. In the womb of my descendants, grant safe and easy childbirth.”

—
Concluding prayer of Nebuchadnezzar II (no. 29, ii 4–17).¹¹

CAT. NO. 3

Clay cylinder of Nebuchadnezzar II (604–562 BCE) from Babylon

Bibliothèque nationale de France: AA.TC.85
baked clay; diameter: 5 cm, length: 10 cm
Novotny – Weiershäuser 2024, 172–175 Nbk. 29
(C21) (<http://oracc.org/ribo/Q005500/>)

This two-column clay cylinder, which is presumably from the Ka-dingirra district of Babylon, records the reconstruction of one of Babylon’s most important religious buildings: Emaḥ, the temple of the goddess Ninmah. This text, which was also inscribed on baked bricks, states that Nebuchadnezzar raised the ground level of Emaḥ with an infill of ritually-pure earth, constructed an underground outer support using bitumen and baked brick, and built the temple’s superstructure anew (with sundried bricks); all of which have been attested in the ruins of this once-grand temple. The inscription concludes with a petition to the mother goddess (who is also known as Bēlet-ilī) to look favourably upon the king’s pious work and to speak well of him (presumably in the presence of Marduk, the king of the gods).



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Inscriptions as part of the architecture and decoration of buildings

In addition to the documents deposited within the brickwork of buildings and city walls, inscriptions were written, engraved, carved, glazed, and stamped on numerous objects built into the structure of city gates, city walls (together with their protective embankments), palaces, and temples, as well as the countless metal(-plated) objects with which they were lavishly decorated. Bricks that were built into the physical structure of buildings and walls could be inscribed or stamped with a short Akkadian (or Sumerian) inscription before they were baked. These texts could simply contain (1) the name and titles of the king (**cat. nos 120–121**); (2) the king's name and titles, a short statement about a building project, and a concluding prayer (**cat. no. 4**); or (3) an opening dedication to the deity whose temple (or ziggurat) was being renovated, the king's name and titles, and a statement about the construction work. For example, an inscribed brick of Nebuchadnezzar II from Babylon (**cat. no. 4**) reads as follows:

"Nebuchadnezzar (II), king of Babylon, son of Nabopolassar, king of Babylon: I built a palace, a residence for my royal majesty, in the Ka-dingirra district, which is in Babylon. I brought hard (beams of) cedar from Lebanon, the holy forest, and stretched (them over it) for its roof. O Marduk, compassionate god, listen to my prayer(s) so that I may be sated with the luxuriousness of the house that I have built, renovate the dilapidated section(s) of base that I have bound, (and) walk around inside it, in Babylon, for a long time. May my descendants rule over the black-headed (people) inside it forever."¹²

CAT. NO. 4

Brick inscription of Nebuchadnezzar II recording his work on the South Palace at Babylon

Bibliothèque nationale de France: Reg.C.1308
baked clay; height: 7 cm, width: 32 cm,
thickness: 2 cm
NOVOTNY – WEIERSHÄUSER 2025, B6
(<http://oracc.org/ribo/pager> [search: Icat B6])

Unlike the other baked bricks in this volume (**cat. nos. 120–121**), the Akkadian inscription is written on the edge, instead of on the face. This text records that the king (re-)built a palace (the so-called South Palace) in the Ka-dingirra district of Babylon and had it roofed with long beams of cedar, which his workmen had cut down and had transported from Mount Lebanon in the Levant. The inscription concludes with Nebuchadnezzar's petition to the god Marduk to heed his prayers and to grant his descendants (the future kings of Baby-

lon) the privilege of exercising their divinely-bestowed authority from within that newly-restored palace. Although the provenance of this brick has not been recorded, since it was brought back to France in the 19th century, it is clear from Robert Koldewey's scientific excavations at Babylon in 1899–1917 that the object almost certainly comes from the (old) "South Palace"; at least 147 bricks bearing an identical inscription were discovered in the ruins of that massive 45,000 m² (4.5 ha) royal residence. JN



In Assyria, the lower walls of palaces, especially the main courtyards and reception rooms (principally the throne room), were lined with decorated orthostats. In the 9th and 8th centuries BCE, inscriptions were engraved in a horizontal band that ran across each. In the reign of Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 BCE), the visible text was that short, standardised summary inscription on the slab (**cat. nos 1, 8, 74, and 78**) but, while Tiglath-pileser III (744–727 BCE) and Sargon II (721–705 BCE) were kings of Assyria, the faces of the wall slabs were inscribed with the king's annals, texts with as many as 4000 words.¹³ In temples, the daises upon which the statues/effigies of gods and goddesses stood could also have inscriptions written on them; for example, Ashurnasirpal II had his 6300-word-long annals inscribed on the sides of Ninurta's stone dais.¹⁴ This would also have been the case with daises used during the New Year's festival. Some of these temporarily-used raised platforms appear to have been plated with or constructed entirely out of metal (bronze, silver, or gold), at least according to contemporary textual sources, and presumably they had inscriptions on them, perhaps with an opening dedication addressing the gods whose divine statues stood atop them.¹⁵ Furthermore, most (if not all) of the metal-plated objects that lavishly decorated the interior rooms of palaces and temples (especially the holiest rooms, the cella and ante-cella) bore (short) Akkadian inscriptions (including dedicatory inscriptions written on apotropaic gateway guardians);¹⁶ the metal-plating of roof beams, like the (decorated) bands affixed to monumental double doors, would have also had inscriptions on them.¹⁷ Unfortunately, very few of those metal objects survive today since they were either carried off as spoils of war (for example, when the capitals of the Assyrian Empire were destroyed in 614–609 BCE) or were melted down and reused. The vast number of inscribed objects built into and decorating temples served as constant reminders to the gods and goddesses inhabiting them that the kings worshipping and serving them had humbly and piously created these objects specifically for them.

Inscriptions on freestanding stone monuments

Furthermore, Assyrian and Babylonian kings commemorated their deeds on freestanding monuments, some of which they had placed in very prominent places (for example, in the entrances of buildings or in city gates); others were less accessible since they were displayed inside the holy rooms of temples. These stone objects varied in shape and size, just like their contents, which could record (far-flung) military campaigns and/or the construction of important buildings (including temples). These ranged from small 36-cm-tall round-topped steles to impressive 197-cm-tall obelisks and 220-cm-high round-topped "monoliths".¹⁸ In addition to bearing Akkadian inscriptions commemorating the king's pious deeds, these monuments often depicted



17 | An inscribed marble stela depicting Ashurbanipal with a brick-carrying basket on his head, recording his restoration of Ekarzagina, the temple of Ea at Babylon (BM 90864)

a left- or right-facing ruler standing humbly before symbols of the gods and goddesses whom he served and who granted him kingship (for example, the horned crown [the Assyrian national god Aššur] and the star, i.e., the planet Venus [Ištar]). Alternatively, some steles showed a front-facing (Assyrian or Babylonian) king carrying a basket on his head (fig. 17), that is, showing the ruler personally aiding in the restoration of temples, specifically the carrying of (the first) brick(s) which the king fashioned with his own two hands using ritually-pure materials.¹⁹ The contents of the inscriptions were tailored to where the monument was intended to be placed. For example, in Babylon and Borsippa, the texts were primarily concerned with the renovation of the temple in which the stele was to be displayed. As is clear from the concluding sections of the texts, the king's actions (including the creation of the stone monument) were to further strengthen his sacred bond with his divine patrons. For example, the relevant passage of the text engraved on a small pink marble stele of Ashurbanipal recording his restoration of the temple of Ea at Babylon reads as follows:

“May Ea, king of the Watery Abyss, look upon this work with [pleasure] and may a good word for me — [Ashurbanipal, king of Ass[yria, ruler] who reveres him — be set upon his lips! May he determine as my fate a long life, fullness of old age, good health, and happiness! May he [make] the foundation of my [royal th]rone[ne as secure] as a mountain! May he make my reign as firm as heaven and earth!”

—
Concluding address to Ea in an inscription of Ashurbanipal written on a stone stele (no. 246, lines 67b–74a).²⁰

Inscriptions on freestanding monuments generally concluded with instructions to future rulers to respect the inscribed objects. For those who acted disrespectfully, the gods were asked to respond in kind, for example, to remove the offending king from power and to completely obliterate his royal line. For those who obey, the gods and goddesses were called upon to heed their prayers.

Inscriptions on open-air monuments

Assyrian and Babylonian rulers also had self-aggrandising texts with accompanying images (including divine symbols, especially the [winged] sun-disc [Šamaš], the crescent moon [Sîn], and the star, i.e., the planet Venus [Ištar]), carved into cliffs at important and difficult-to-access locations, including the sources of rivers (for example, the Tigris). These open-air monuments – which are in various locations (including in modern-day Lebanon) and which are often poorly preserved due to more than two thousand years of exposure to the elements – connected kings with their divine patrons, especially through their invocation of the gods at the beginning and the end of the text. For example, the opening and closing lines of an inscription engraved by the scribes of the Assyrian king Sennacherib at Khinnis-Bavian in northern Iraq read respectively as follows: “Aššur, Anu, Enlil, Ea, Sîn, Šamaš, Adad, Marduk, Nabû, [Nergal], Ištar, (and) the Sibitti, the great gods, who install the lord (and) name the ruler to lead the black-headed (people) all over the inhabited world” and “may the great gods, as many as are named in this stele, by their holy decree, which cannot be al[tered], curse him with a harsh [curse] and overthrow his dynasty”.²¹ As to be expected, the main bodies of these compositions record one or more of the pious deeds of the king undertaken on behalf of the gods, namely Aššur (the Assyrian national god) or Marduk (the chief god of Babylon). In the case of the Assyrians, these texts recorded successful military campaigns or the construction of canal networks, while in the case of the Babylonians, these inscriptions commemorated construction projects (especially temples at Babylon).

Inscriptions as letters to the gods

From time to time, Assyrian kings wrote inscriptions in the form of a “letter” to the god Aššur; these were inscribed on multi-column clay tablets.²² These texts were “not to be deposited in silence in the sanctuary, but to be actually read to a public that was to react directly to their contents”.²³ Thus, some inscriptions were intended for a contemporary audience and, therefore, recited during carefully-staged triumphal processions. Such presentations were not only for the benefit of the Assyrian national god but also for the Assyrian king himself since he could witness firsthand the (positive) reactions of his subjects who listened to the accounts of his heroic deeds in foreign lands as countless spoils of war passed before them. Afterwards, these “letters to Aššur” were archived for posterity.

Conclusion

Whether on clay, stone, or metal objects, buried, embedded, or displayed in buildings (especially temples), walls (including embankments), or processional streets, or engraved into a remote and inaccessible cliff face, royal inscriptions are among the most important Mesopotamian texts recording the close relationship between kings and their gods. Like prayers and hymns, these carefully-worded and highly-edited self-aggrandising compositions give us a glimpse into what deeds kings deemed worthy of reporting to the gods and goddesses who granted them sole authority over the lands and people over whom they ruled. The descriptions of successful military campaigns, in addition to the construction of palaces and temples, were vital to Assyrian kings, while temple building took pride of place for Babylonian rulers. The bonds between heaven and earth were reinforced and maintained through the composition of these royally-commissioned Akkadian (and Sumerian) texts.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ East India House Inscription of Nebuchadnezzar II (ix 47–51).
- ² Editions (with English translations) are included in GRAYSON 1992, 131–393; GRAYSON 1996; LEICHTY 2011; TADMOR – YAMADA 2011; GRAYSON – NOVOTNY 2012 and 2014; NOVOTNY – JEFFERS 2018; WEIERSHÄUSER – NOVOTNY 2020; FRAME 2021; JEFFERS – NOVOTNY 2023; NOVOTNY – JEFFERS – FRAME 2023; NOVOTNY – WEIERSHÄUSER 2024 and 2025. Open-access versions of these texts are accessible at <http://oracc.org/riao/pager>, <http://oracc.org/ribo/babylon7/pager>, and <http://oracc.org/rinap/pager> [accessed: 1 August, 2024].
- ³ GRAYSON 1991a, 142.
- ⁴ THOMAS 2016a, 121; FRAME 2021, 237–238: Sargon II 46.
- ⁵ This was in part due to the fact that these rulers did not write their “annals” on the stone slabs that lined important rooms of their palaces.
- ⁶ Four-column cylinders were used when the text was written using a larger, archaizing script. Those inscriptions were usually less than 500 words long.
- ⁷ See, for example, LEICHTY 2011, 9–26; GRAYSON – NOVOTNY 2012, 167–186; and NOVOTNY – JEFFERS 2018, 222–264.
- ⁸ For an overview, see NOVOTNY – JEFFERS – FRAME 2023, 5.
- ⁹ Translation adapted from NOVOTNY – JEFFERS – FRAME 2023, 49.
- ¹⁰ Translation adapted from NOVOTNY – WEIERSHÄUSER 2024, 180–181. This passage is also in cat. nos. 5–6.
- ¹¹ Translation adapted from NOVOTNY – WEIERSHÄUSER 2024, 175.
- ¹² Translation adapted from NOVOTNY – WEIERSHÄUSER 2025.
- ¹³ Respectively GRAYSON 1992, 268–276; TADMOR – YAMADA 2011, 19–79; and FRAME 2021, 43–131.
- ¹⁴ GRAYSON 1992, 191–223.
- ¹⁵ One example from the reign of Sennacherib partially survives, see GRAYSON – NOVOTNY 2014, 273–274.
- ¹⁶ This is suggested by archival copies (or drafts) of some of the inscriptions written on clay tablets, see, for example, JEFFERS – NOVOTNY 2023, 287–306 and 311–316.
- ¹⁷ Several sets of bronze bands of gates were excavated at ancient Imgur-Enlil. For details, see CURTIS – TALLIS EDs. 2008.
- ¹⁸ The most famous is the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III (858–824 BCE). For the inscription, see GRAYSON 1996, 62–71.
- ¹⁹ The best example comes from reign of Ashurbanipal from Babylon, see NOVOTNY – JEFFERS – FRAME 2023, 58–62 (with fig. 7).
- ²⁰ Translation adapted from NOVOTNY – JEFFERS – FRAME 2023, 61.
- ²¹ Translation adapted from GRAYSON – NOVOTNY 2014, 313, lines 1–2 and 317, lines 59–60.
- ²² The best example is Sargon’s Letter to Aššur, see FRAME 2021, 271–307, no. 65.
- ²³ OPPENHEIM 1960, 143.



CAT. NO. 5

**Clay cylinder
of Nebuchadnezzar II
(604–562 BCE) from Marad**

National Museum of Denmark: 7055
baked clay; height: 22 cm, diameter: 13.7 cm
Novotny – Weiershäuser 2025, C32
(<http://oracc.org/ribo/pager> [search: !cat C32]).

This three-column clay cylinder was composed to commemorate the rebuilding of the temple of the god Lugal-Marda at Marad, a building whose Sumerian name was Ewigkala ('House, Eye of the Land'); the exact same text is written on cat. no. 6. It is clear from the main building report that this clay foundation document was inscribed very early in the temple's renovation since that passage concludes with a short statement about how Nebuchad-

nezzar had Ewigkala's (stone) foundations relaid on its original (and divinely-sanctioned) foundations, and how he deposited this clay cylinder in the base of the temple so that its divine owner (Lugal-Marda) would act beneficially on his behalf, including having the god's weapons march at his side so that he might defeat his enemies. Like other inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar II, including some for his imperial capital Babylon, this text has

↑
For the detail of the clay cylinder,
see page 392

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CAT. NO. 6

**Clay cylinder
of Nebuchadnezzar II
(604–562 BCE) from Marad**

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Wien: SEM 952
whitish baked clay; height: 21.5 cm, diameter:
14.5 cm, weight: 2.7 kg (acquired in 1935)
Novotny – Weiershäuser 2025, C32 (<http://oracc.org/ribo/pager> [search: !cat C32]).

This three-column clay cylinder bears an identical inscription to cat. no. 5, which was written by Nebuchadnezzar II's scribes to commemorate the rebuilding of Ewigkala ('House, Eye of the Land'), the temple of the god Lugal-Marda at Marad. The text, which is written in contemporary Neo-Babylonian

script, and which was composed sometime after Nebuchadnezzar II's seventh year as king (598 BCE), also records the construction and decoration of temples in eight other Babylonian cities, including Babylon. For additional information, see the entry for cat. no. 5.

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CAT NO. 121

Baked brick from Babylon
with the stamped inscription
of Nebuchadnezzar II
(604–562 BCE)

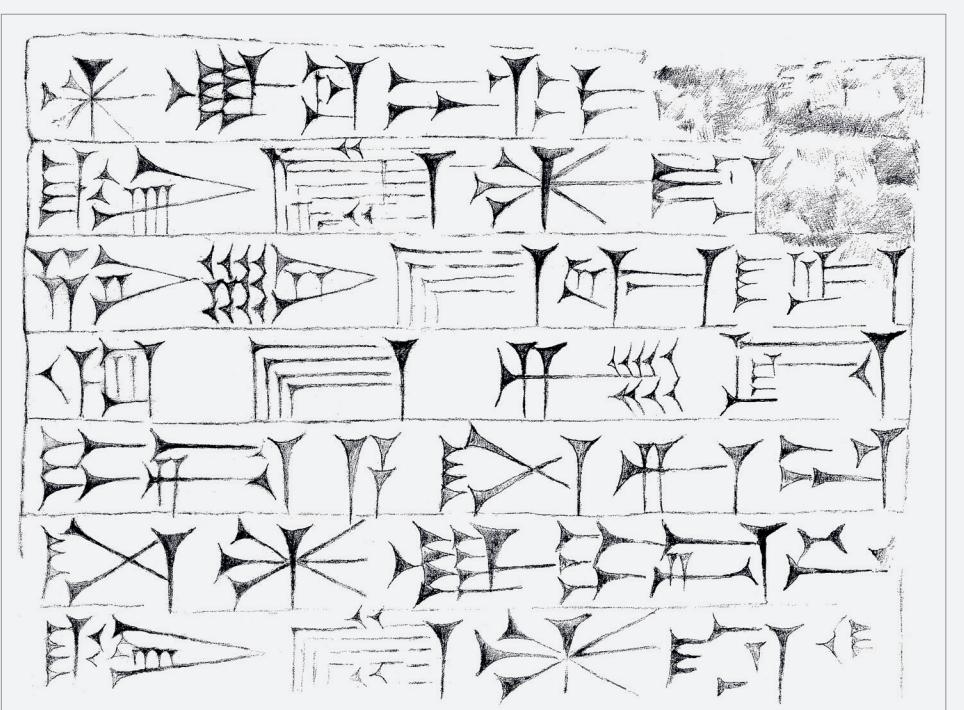
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest 63.4-E
baked clay, height: 32.5 cm, width: 32.5 cm,
thickness: 8 cm, weight: 5 kg (acquired from
a private owner)

EVERLING 2000, 15 and 24 no. 3; NOVOTNY – WEIER-
SHÄUSER 2025, B6 (<http://oracc.org/ribo/pager>
[search: !cat B6])

This short, seven-line inscription gives only Nebuchadnezzar II's name and titles, as well as his affiliation to Nabopolassar (625–605 BCE), the founder of the Neo-Babylonian Empire (625–539 BCE). The text reads as follows: "Nebuchadnezzar (II), king of Babylon, the one who provides for Esagil and Ezida, foremost heir of Nabopolassar, king of Babylon."

The inscription on this brick provides no information about the pious deeds undertaken by Nebuchadnezzar on behalf of his divine patrons. It does, however, state that he provided for Esagil ('House Whose Top Is High') at Babylon and Ezida ('True House') at Borsippa, the two most important Babylonian temples. Other texts of this Neo-Babylonian king record the sumptuous daily offerings that were provided to the gods and goddesses of these temples.

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Abbreviations
 AKT 6 = Kültepe Tabletleri v. 6a–e: The Archive of the Šalim-Asšur Family, see LARSEN 2010, 2013, 2014, 2018, 2021
 CS = Cylinder Seal siglum of Kültepe seals see ÖZGÜC – TUNCA 2001 and ÖZGÜC 2006
 KAR = E. Ebeling, *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts I/II* (Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichung der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 28), 1919;
 (Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichung der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 34), 1923.
 KAV = Keilschrifttexte aus Assur verschiedenen Inhalts

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