

# Cuneiform Inscriptions in the Archaeological Museum of Sulaimaniya

By Karen Radner (London)

In the spring of 2010, I had the pleasure to work in the Archaeological Museum of Sulaimaniya (Slemani) and assist the museum staff with the registration of the rich holdings of cuneiform tablets which the museum has been acquiring since 2005. This material stems from the south of Iraq and the majority of tablets date to the Ur III period and the early Old Babylonian period, with some older third millennium material.

The museum also owns various building inscriptions, some of which I was asked to examine during my stay. I am very grateful to Kamal Rashid, head of the Directorate of Antiquities of the Autonomous Kurdish Province of Sulaimaniya, and Hashim Hama Abdulla, director of the Archaeological Museum of Sulaimaniya, for their hospitality and their generous permission to publish the following brick inscriptions and prism fragments in their care. I would like to extend my thanks to the very helpful museum staff and to Zuhair Rajab Abdallah and Ahmad Kamil Mu-

ammed (both University of Baghdad) for their kind assistance. I am much obliged to Peter Miglus (University of Heidelberg) for arranging my visit to Sulaimaniya.

## 1. Bricks of Šulgi of Ur, from Tell al-Wilayah

In March 2010, the Sulaimaniya Museum acquired four stamped bricks with an inscription of Šulgi of Ur (fig. 1). They have not yet been assigned inventory numbers. The bricks are of three different sizes. One



Figure 1.

brick is of the standard square shape and measures  $32 \times 32 \times 7,5$  cm. Two others are “half-bricks” and measure  $32 \times 15 \times 7,5$  cm (one complete, one broken). The last brick is of the rhomboid shape commonly used for the lining of wells or water basins ( $24 \times 31 \times 19 \times 7,5$  cm). The same stamp was used for all four bricks; its measurements are  $10,5 \times 9,5$  cm (fig. 2).



Figure 2.

- 1 ṣul-gi
- 2 nita-kala-ga
- 3 lugal-Uri<sub>5</sub>.ki-ma
- 4 lugal-an-ub-da-limmu<sub>2</sub>-ba

Translation: (1-4) Divine Šulgi, mighty man, king of Ur, king of the four world quarters.

1: Šulgi's name is written with the determinative marking divine names from the 20<sup>th</sup> year of his reign onwards.

4: The title “king of the four world quarters” was introduced in the 26<sup>th</sup> year of Šulgi's reign. With the exception of our inscription, the title “king of the four world quarters” is used for Šulgi only in private dedications from Adab and Ur.

An exact duplicate of this inscription is provided by a brick excavated as part of a water basin at Tell al-Wilayah. This brick ( $31 \times 31 \times 6,2$  cm) was stamped with the very same brick stamp used for the inscription of the four Sulaimaniya bricks. The brick from Tell al-Wilayah was published in transcription, translation and as a photograph by T. Madhloom (*Sumer* 16, 1960, p. 91, pl. 11: brick B; the find spot is indicated in plan IIa: area II). The brick is kept in the

Iraq Museum (IM 61778). The most recent edition is found in D. Frayne, *Ur III Period* (2112-2004 BC) (RIME 3/2), Toronto 1997, no. 3/2.1.2.47. Because of this parallel find, the bricks in the Sulaimaniya Museum certainly come from Tell al-Wilayah and quite possibly from the very same building of which Madhloom only excavated a small section. The looters may have used the old trenches as a starting point for their own excavations.

Tell al-Wilayah is thought to be the origin of an important Ur III merchant archive, the so-called Turam-ili Archive (M. Van de Mieroop, *JCS* 38, 1986, 6; P. Steinkeller, *Sale Documents from the Ur III Period* (FAOS 17), Stuttgart 1989, 307; *JCS* 54, 2002, 26 [editor's preface]). This hypothesis is further strengthened by the fact that many of the Ur III tablets which the Sulaimaniya Museum acquired together with the four bricks under discussion in March 2010 feature Turam-ili as their main protagonist.

J. N. Postgate (*Sumer* 32, 1976, 78-82) has proposed to identify Tell al-Wilayah with Keš, a hypothesis which has been met with some approval, e.g. from M. A. Powell, *JNES* 39, 1980, 51-52 and M. Sigrist, *Neo-Sumerian Archival Texts in the Nies Babylonian Collection* (*Catalogue of the Babylonian Collection at Yale* 3), Bethesda 2001 who lists the texts belonging to the Turam-ili Archive as coming from Keš.

## 2. *Fragment of a six-sided prism of Sennacherib of Assyria, from Nineveh*

This Neo-Assyrian prism fragment has been kept in the Sulaimaniya Museum since 1981, registered there under the inventory number SM 409. The museum records offer no conclusive information regarding its provenance, but from the text's content it is clear that it stems from Nineveh: the text deals with the construction of the *ekal kutalli*, the arsenal constructed by Sennacherib (r. 704-681 BC) on the mound of Nebi Yunus.

The Sulaimaniya fragment features the remains of the last two columns of a six-sided prism with a text parallel to that of the Chicago Prism, kept in the Oriental Institute (A 2793), published by D. D. Luckenbill, *The Annals of Sennacherib* (OIP 2), Chicago 1924 and assigned the siglum T16 in the catalogue of E. Frahm, *Einleitung in die Sanherib-Inschriften* (*AfO Beih.* 26), Vienna 1997, 102-105. The text of the Sulaimaniya fragment corresponds to the lines 41-54 in column V and lines 26-45 in column VI of the Chicago Prism. The fragment's maximum preserved height is 8,9 cm, the maximum preserved width of column V (fig. 3) is 3,2 cm and of column VI (fig. 4) is 6,8 cm.



Figure 3.

## Column V

Beginning broken away

- 1' [... *im-hur-šú-nu-ti*]-*ma*  
 2' [ERIM.HI.A-šú KI.KAL×BAD-*su ú-pa-hir-ma*  
 GIŠ].GIGIR.MEŠ  
 3' [GIŠ.šu-*um-bi e-šu-ra* ANŠE.KUR.RA.MEŠ  
 ANŠE].KUNGA.MEŠ  
 4' [*is-ni-qa ši-in-di-šú* KUR.Par-*su-áš* KUR.An]-*za-*  
*an*  
 5' [KUR.Pa-še-*ru* KUR.El-*li-pi LÚ.Ia-a*]-*s-il*  
 6' [LÚ.La-*kab-ra LÚ.Ha-ar*]-*zu-nu*  
 7' [LÚ.Du-*um-mu-qu LÚ.Su-l*]-*a-a*  
 8' [LÚ.Sa-*am-ú-na* DUMU <sup>PN</sup>*d*MES]-A-SUM-*na*  
 9' [KUR.É-<sup>PN</sup>*A-di-ni* KUR.É-<sup>PN</sup>*A-muk*]-*ka-na*  
 10' [KUR.É-<sup>PN</sup>*Šil-la-na* KUR.É-<sup>PN</sup>*Sa*]-*a-la*  
 11' [UD.UD.AG.KI URU.La-*hi-ru LÚ.Pu-q*]-*u-du*  
 12' [LÚ.Gam-*bu-lum LÚ.Ha-la-tum LÚ.Ru-<sup>u</sup>*]-*ú-a*  
 13' [LÚ.Ú-*bu-lum LÚ.Ma-la-hu LÚ.Ra*]-*pi-qu*  
 14' [LÚ.Hi-*in-da-ru LÚ.Da-mu-nu kit*]-*ru GAL-ú*  
 15' [*ik-te-ra it-ti-šú gi-ip-šu*]-*su-un*  
 16' [*ú-ru-uh* KUR.URI.KI *iš-ba-t*]-*u-nim-ma*  
 17' [*a-na KÁ.DINGIR.RA.KI te-bu-ni a-di* <sup>PN</sup>*Šu-zu*]-  
*bi*

Rest broken away

## Column VI

Beginning broken away

- 1' *hur-ba-šu* [MĒ-*ia ki-ma le-e*]  
 2' *zu-mur-šú-u*[*n is-hu-up* GIŠ.za-*ra-te-šú-un*]  
 3' *ú-maš-ši-ru-ma a*-[*na šu-zu-ub* ZI.MEŠ-šú-*nu*]  
 4' *pag-ri* ERIM.HI.A-šú-*nu* [*ú-da-<sup>u</sup>i-i-šú* *e-ti-qu*]  
 5' *ki-i ša at-mi* TU.MUŠ[EN *kuš-šu-di i-tar-ra-ku*]  
 6' *lib-bu-šú-un ši-na-t*[*e-šú-un ú-šar-ra-pu*]  
 7' *qé-reb* GIŠ.GIGIR.MEŠ-š[*ú-nu ú-maš-še-ru-ni*]  
 8' *zu-ú-šú-un a*-[*na ra-da-di-šú-nu* GIŠ.GIGIR.MEŠ]  
 9' ANŠE.KUR.RA.MEŠ-*ia ú*-[*ma-<sup>u</sup>i-ir* EGIR-šú-*un*]  
 10' *mun-na-rib-šú-nu ša a-n*[*a nap-šá-a-te ú-šu-ú*]  
 11' *a-šar i-kaš-šá-du ú-r*[*a-sa-bu i-na* GIŠ.TUKUL]  
 12' *i-na* U<sub>4</sub>-*me-šu-ma ul-tu* É.GAL MURUB<sub>4</sub>-U[RU  
*ša NINA.KI*]  
 13' *a-na ri-mit* LUGAL-*ti-ia ú-šak*-[*li-hu*]  
 14' *a-na tab-rat kiš-šat* UN.MEŠ *lu-le-e ú-ma-lu*-[*ši*]  
 15' É.GAL *ku-tal-li ša a-na šu-te-šur ka-r*[*a-ši*]  
 16' *pa-qa-a-di* ANŠE.KUR.RA-MEŠ *sa-na-qi mim*-  
 [ma šum-šú]  
 17' *ú-še-pi-šú* LUGAL.MEŠ *a-li-kut mah-ri*  
 [AD.MEŠ-*ia*]  
 18' *tam-lu-šá ul ib-ši šu-bat-sa šu-u*[*h-hu-rat-ma*]  
 19' *la nu-ku-lat e-piš-taš la-b*[*a-riš* U<sub>4</sub>-*me*]  
 20' *tim-me-en-šá e-niš-ma iš-da*-[*a-šá ir-ma-a*]  
 21' *i-qu-pa re-šá-a-šá* É.[GAL *šá-a-tu*]

Rest broken away



Figure 4.

Column I': The division of lines differs throughout from that of the Chicago Prism.

Column II': The division of lines differs from that of the Chicago Prism in lines 1'-7' and 19'-21'. Variants: 1': *šú* instead of *šú* in the Chicago Prism; 3': *ši* instead of *še* in the Chicago Prism; 10': *šá* instead of *ša* in the Chicago Prism; 14': *tab-rat* instead of *tab-ra-a-te* in the Chicago Prism.

### 3. Fragment of a six-sided prism of Esarhaddon of Assyria, from Nineveh

This Neo-Assyrian prism fragment has been kept in the Sulaimaniya Museum since 1981, registered there under the inventory number SM 410 (fig. 5). The

museum records offer no conclusive information regarding its provenance but from the text's content it is clear that it originates from Nineveh.

The Sulaimaniya fragment is part of the final column of a six-sided prism. Preserved are the beginnings of 17 lines. Of these, however, due to the badly worn state of the fragment only line 16' can be read with certainty: *MÈ gi-mir ERIM.HI.A šal-[la-at na-ki-ri]*. This, meager as it is, proves sufficient to identify the fragment as a parallel text to one of the Nineveh versions of the annals of Esarhaddon (r. 680-669 BC), the only Neo-Assyrian inscriptions to feature this particular passage: R. Borger, *Die Inschriften Assarhadons Königs von Assyrien (AfO Beih. 9)*, Graz 1956, 64: Episode 24: Nin. A, VI 60. The fragment's pre-

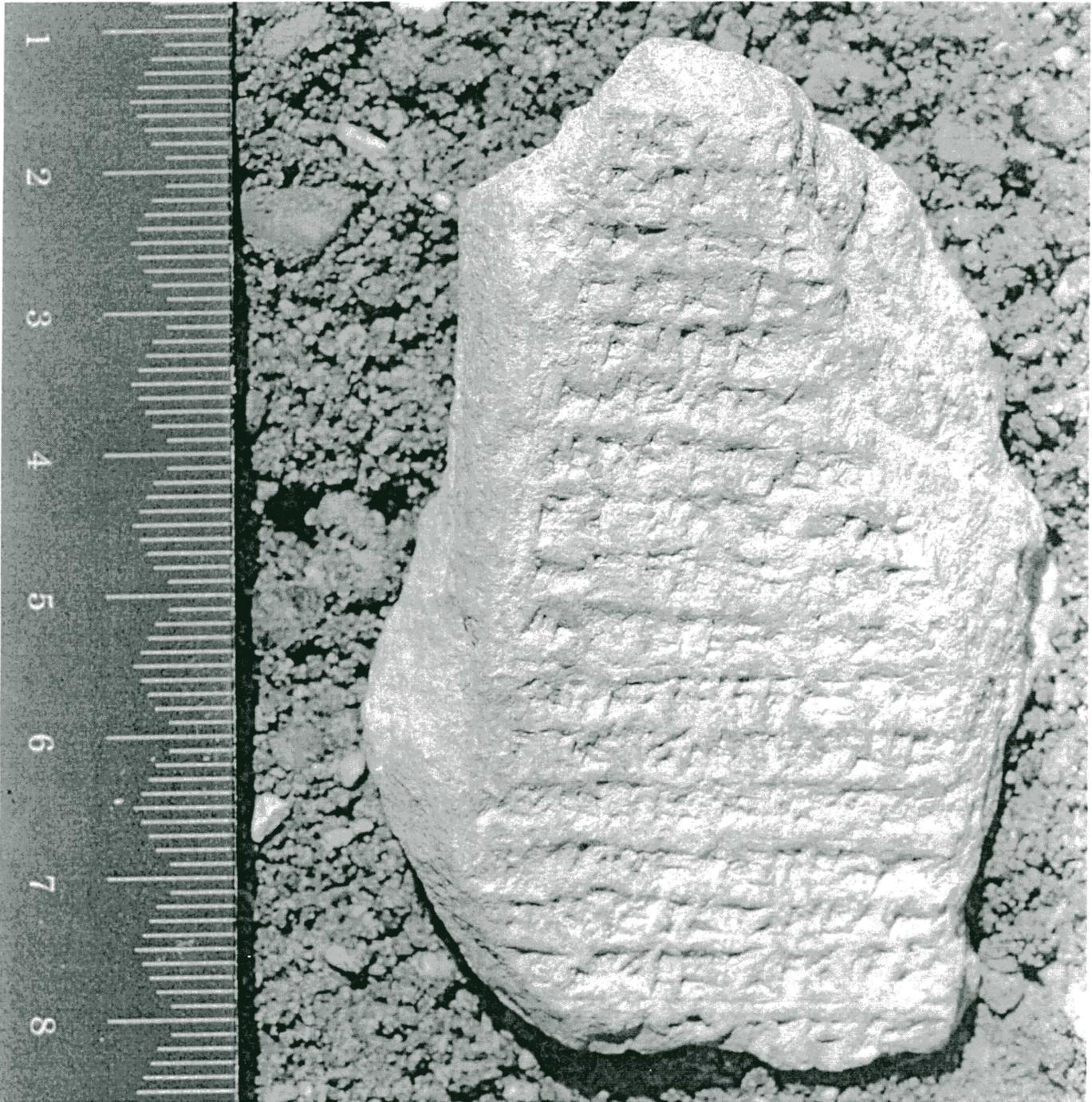


Figure 5.

served height is 7,3 cm, its maximum preserved width is 4,9 cm.

#### 4. *Bricks of Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon, from the Ebabbar at Larsa*

The Sulaimaniya Museum acquired 88 stamped bricks of the Neo-Babylonian period in early 2010. They have not yet been assigned inventory numbers. The bricks measure  $34 \times 34 \times 9,5$  cm. The inscription on these bricks consists of 13 lines of cuneiform text, written in the archaic ductus (fig. 6). Its content allows

us to establish the bricks' date, the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II (604-561 BC), and their provenance, the Ebabbar temple at Larsa. It is most likely that the looters destroyed the tiled floor of a courtyard within the temple complex in order to lift these bricks.

- 1 <sup>d</sup>AG-NIG<sub>2</sub>.DU-ŠEŠ
- 2 LUGAL *Ba-bi-lu*.KI
- 3 *za-nin* E<sub>2</sub>.SAG.IL<sub>2</sub>
- 4 *ù* E<sub>2</sub>.ZI.DA
- 5 *ap-lu* SAG.KAL
- 6 *ša* <sup>d</sup>AG-*ap-lu*-ŠEŠ

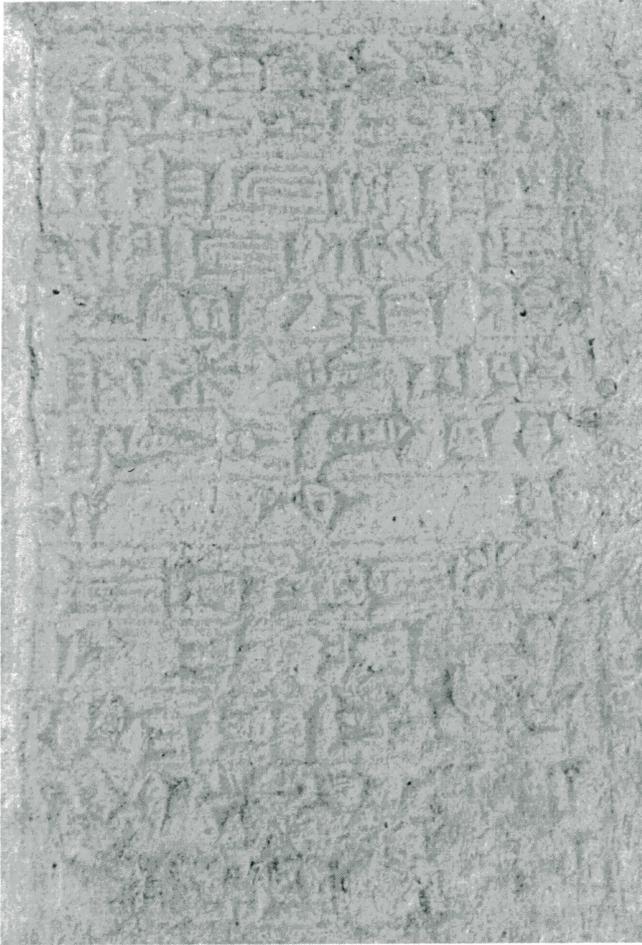


Figure 6.

- 7 LUGAL *Ba-bi-lu*.KI  
 8 *a-na-ku*  
 9 E<sub>2</sub>.BABBAR.RA E<sub>2</sub> <sup>d</sup>UTU  
 10 *ša* UD.UNUG.KI  
 11 *ki-ma la-bi-rim-ma*  
 12 *a-na* <sup>d</sup>UTU EN-*ia*  
 13 *e-pú-uš*

Translation: (1-8) Nebuchadnezzar (II), king of Babylon, provider of the Esaggil temple and of the Ezida temple, first son of Nabopolassar, son of Babylon, am I. (9-13) I built the Ebabbar temple, the house of Šamaš of Larsa, as of old for Šamaš, my lord.

The inscription of the Sulaimaniya bricks matches the brick inscription edited as “Nebukadnezar Nr. 45” in S. Langdon, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften* (VAB 4), Leipzig 1912, 43, 204-205. The catalogue in P.-R. Berger, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften: Königsinschriften des ausgehenden babylonischen Reiches 626-539 v. Chr.* (AOAT 4/1), Kevelaer – Neukirchen-Vluyn 1973, 216: Nebukadnezar Backstein B I, 11 lists ten individual copies, including the brick excavated in 1967 at Larsa (mentioned by M. Birot, *Syria* 45, 1968, 243 n. 1: no. 1). Berger’s entry corresponds to the entries “Nebuchadnezzar B19” and “Nebuchadnezzar B29” in the catalogue of R. Da Riva, *The Neo-Babylonian Royal Inscriptions: An Introduction* (GMTR 4), Münster 2008, 117 which need to be combined.