

Introduction

During the six years that immediately followed the successful, forty-three-year-long reign of Nebuchadnezzar II (605–562), four kings ascended the Babylonian throne in quick succession. Nebuchadnezzar’s son Amēl-Marduk (561–560) reigned for just two years before he was murdered and replaced by his brother-in-law Neriglissar (559–556), who died after ruling over Babylonia for three years and eight months. After only two or three months on the throne, Neriglissar’s young and inexperienced son Lābāši-Marduk (556) was removed during a coup d’état and replaced by Nabonidus (555–539), the man who would be Babylon’s last native king. Seventeen years later, in 539, when Cyrus II took control of Babylon and its territorial holdings, the once-great Babylonian Empire founded by Nabopolassar (625–605) came to an abrupt end.

Amēl-Marduk

Amēl-Marduk (biblical Evil-Merodach), whose name means “man of Marduk,” became king after his father Nebuchadnezzar II died.¹ His duties, however, probably started earlier, during the final weeks or months of his father’s extremely long reign, when Nebuchadnezzar was sick and dying. Despite being the legitimate, designated successor to the Babylonian throne, Amēl-Marduk appears to have faced opposition from the very start of his reign. This is not only suggested by the fact that his reign lasted a mere two years and ended with his murder, but also from later sources that portray him negatively. For example, the Babylonian author Berossos is reported to have stated that he “ruled capriciously and had no regard for the laws” and a fragmentarily preserved, Akkadian propagandistic text records that he concerned himself only with the veneration of the god Marduk, that he neglected his family, and that his officials did not carry out his orders.²

Almost nothing is known about his accomplishments. One inscription of his alludes to him having renovated Esagil (“House whose Top Is High”) at Babylon and Ezida (“True House”) at Borsippa, however, there is no concrete textual or archaeological proof that he actually undertook construction on either of those temples.³ The fact that inscriptions of his are known from baked bricks and a paving stone does suggest that he did sponsor construction work at Babylon during his short reign. According to the Bible (2 Kings 25: 27–30 and Jeremiah 52: 31–34), Amēl-Marduk liberated the imprisoned, exiled Judean king Jehoiachin after he had spent thirty-seven years in captivity.⁴ This is the only political act of Amēl-Marduk that we know about.

¹ For studies on his reign, see, for example, Da Riva, *GMTR* 4 pp. 14–15; Finkel, *CDOG* 2 pp. 333–338; and Sack, Amēl-Marduk. Nebuchadnezzar had at least ten children: seven sons and three daughters; see Beaulieu, *Orientalia NS* 67 (1998) pp. 173–201; and M.P. Streck, *RLA* 9/3–4 (1999) p. 197. As I. Finkel (*CDOG* 2 pp. 323–342) has convincingly argued on the basis of BM 40474, a late Neo-Babylonian clay tablet inscribed with a plea of a jailed son of Nebuchadnezzar, Nabû-šum-ukīn and Amēl-Marduk might have been one and the same person and, thus, it is very plausible that that Nabû-šum-ukīn changed his name to Amēl-Marduk since Marduk, Babylon’s tutelary deity, came to his aid when his father had him imprisoned (with the exiled Judean king Jehoiachin). According to the 5th–7th-century-AD, rabbinical Midrashic text *Vayikra Rabbah* (XVIII 2), Amēl-Marduk was imprisoned because some officials had declared him king while his father was away.

² Respectively, Verbrugge and Wickersham, *Berossos and Manetho* p. 60; and Schaudig, *Inschriften Nabonids* pp. 589–590 P3 (Amīl-Marduk Fragment). Berossos’ statement about Amēl-Marduk having “no regard for the laws” might have been based on the fact that Nebuchadnezzar had his son arrested and thrown in jail. The Bible (2 Kings 25: 27–30 and Jeremiah 52: 31–34) and the “Uruk Prophecy” (Beaulieu, *Studies* Hallo p. 47), however, depict Amēl-Marduk in a positive manner.

³ In Amēl-Marduk 1, Amēl-Marduk refers to himself as *muddiš esagil u ezida* “the one who renovates Esagil and Ezida,” which could be true or simply an honorific title.

⁴ The reason(s) for Jehoiachin’s release is/are uncertain and subject to scholarly debate. S. Zawadzki (*Šulmu* 4 [1993] pp. 307–317, esp. p. 315) has suggested that Amēl-Marduk may have released the exiled Judean king in order to gain support among the Judean deportees living in Babylonia since the king’s own magnates were constantly opposing him. Another possible explanation is that Amēl-Marduk and Jehoiachin became friends while they were imprisoned together and that former released the latter on account of that (close) friendship; Amēl-Marduk’s

Amēl-Marduk's tenure as king came to an abrupt and violent end in the summer of 560, when his brother-in-law Neriglissar had him killed and seized the Babylonian throne for himself.⁵

Neriglissar

Neriglissar, whose name means “O Nergal, protect the king” (Akk. *Nergal-šarru-ušur*), was not in the direct line of succession, as he was not the son of Nebuchadnezzar or of his immediate predecessor Amēl-Marduk.⁶ Instead, he was the son of the Aramaean tribal leader Bēl-šum-iškun⁷ and an influential and wealthy landowner⁸ who became the important *simmagir*-official⁹ of Nebuchadnezzar and later married one of the king's daughters (possibly Kaššaya).¹⁰ By the time he deposed Amēl-Marduk and seized control of the Babylonian throne, Neriglissar appears to have had ample political and military experience and, therefore, was regarded by the court, nobles, and prominent Babylonian families as a better choice of king than Nebuchadnezzar's own flesh and blood; perhaps, his marriage to Kaššaya helped seal the deal. As far as we can tell, Neriglissar's claim to the throne was not contested during the three years and eight months that he was king of Babylon.

During his short reign, Neriglissar sponsored several building activities in important Babylonian cult centers and undertook at least one military campaign. During his third regnal year (557), he marched west with his army to Cilicia, defeated king Appuašu of the land Pirindu, and captured, looted, and destroyed several royal cities of his, including the island fortress Pitusu; Appuašu, however, managed to avoid capture.¹¹

Inscriptions record that Neriglissar oversaw projects at or near Babylon and at Sippar.¹² At Babylon, he sponsored renovation of parts of Marduk's temple Esagil (“House whose Top Is High”), especially one of its enclosure walls;¹³ restored the Libil-ḥegalla canal (“May It Bring Abundance”; Babylon's eastern canal) and reinforced its banks; and he repaired a wing of the royal palace that had collapsed into the Euphrates River. At Sippar, his workmen made repairs to the ziggurat of the sun-god Šamaš, Ekunankuga (“House, Pure Stairway of Heaven”).

Lâbâši-Marduk

After ruling over Babylonia for three years and eight months, Neriglissar died. His son Lâbâši-Marduk, whose name means “O Marduk, may I not come to shame” (Akk. *Lâ-abâš-Marduk*), ascended the throne.¹⁴ The royal court did not approve of him becoming king since he was still a young child and inexperienced and, therefore, had him removed and killed shortly after he assumed power.¹⁵ Nabonidus, who was placed on the throne in his stead,

incarceration is recorded in the rabbinical Midrashic text Vayikra Rabbah (XVIII 2), as well as in the Medieval Chronicles of Jerahmeel.

⁵ Da Riva, GMTR 4 p. 15; and Wiseman, Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon p. 10.

⁶ For studies on his reign, see, for example, Da Riva, GMTR 4 pp. 15–16; Sack, Neriglissar; and van Driel, RLA 9/3–4 (1999) pp. 228–229.

⁷ Bēl-šum-iškun is probably identical with the Aramaean tribal leader of the Puqūdu tribe who is mentioned in the Hofkalender inscription of Nebuchadnezzar II (Da Riva, ZA 103 [2013] p. 271 EŠ 7834 v' 23'). The evidence will be presented in a forthcoming book chapter by R. Da Riva; see also D'Agostino, Alle soglie della classicità p. 121; and van Driel, RLA 9/3–4 (1999) p. 228.

⁸ Neriglissar had close connections with the wealthy and influential Egibi merchant family. See van Driel, JEOL 29 (1987) pp. 50–67; and Sack, Neriglissar pp. 23–25.

⁹ The precise function/sphere of influence of the *simmagir*-official remains largely unknown today, but it is clear that he was an important official at the king's court, as well as the governor of a large province in the trans-Tigridian area (the *bīt-simmagir* province). For studies about this Babylonian official, see Jursa, Achämenidenhof pp. 96–97; Jursa, Paszkowiak, and Waerzeggers, AfO 50 (2003–04) pp. 255–268; and von Soden, ZA 62 (1971) pp. 84–90. The *simmagir*-official mentioned in the Hofkalender inscription of Nebuchadnezzar II (Da Riva, ZA 103 [2013] p. 271 EŠ 7834 v' 21') and in the Bible (Jeremiah 39:3) in connection with the capture of Jerusalem is presumably none other than the future king Neriglissar; for details, see, for example, Jursa, Achämenidenhof pp. 85–88; and Vanderhooft, Neo-Babylonian Empire p. 151.

¹⁰ According to Berossos, Neriglissar married one of Nebuchadnezzar's daughters. P.-A. Beaulieu (Orientalia NS 67 [1998] pp. 199–200) proposes that this princess was most likely Kaššaya.

¹¹ The events are recorded in the Chronicle of the Third Year of Neriglissar; see Grayson, Chronicles pp. 103–104 for a translation of that text. Neriglissar 7 probably also refers to this campaign.

¹² Neriglissar 1–3 and 6 respectively. In brick inscriptions (Neriglissar 4–5), Neriglissar refers to himself as *muddiš esagil u ezida* “the one who renovates Esagil and Ezida.” This is probably true in the case of the former, as inferred from Neriglissar 1 (Esagil Inscription). However, there is no concrete textual or archaeological proof that he actually undertook construction on Ezida at Borsippa. The epithet might simply be an honorific title, rather than one that is based on historical reality.

¹³ He also manufactured eight copper *mušhuššu*-dragons and had them placed in the Ka-Utu-e, Ka-Lamma-arabi, Ka-ḥegal, and Ka-ude-babbar gates of Esagil.

¹⁴ For studies on his reign, see, for example, Da Riva, GMTR 4 p. 16; and Röllig, RLA 6/5–6 (1983) p. 409.

¹⁵ Da Riva, GMTR 4 p. 16. The classical authors Josephus and Berossos erroneously state that Lâbâši-Marduk was king for nine months. Economic and administrative records from Uruk and Sippar support the Uruk King List's statement that he ruled over Babylonia for about three months. His short reign is omitted in the Ptolemaic Canon. Nabonidus' personal involvement in Lâbâši-Marduk's assassination is

states that Lâbâši-Marduk “was untutored in proper behavior (and) ascended the royal throne against the will of the gods”; this biased statement about the impiety of his immediate predecessor, undoubtedly, sought to legitimize Nabonidus’ own claim to the throne.¹⁶ Lâbâši-Marduk was not in power long enough for him to accomplish anything and, therefore, it does not come as any surprise that no royal inscription recording his deeds has yet come to light.

Nabonidus

Unlike the four men who sat on the throne of Babylon before him, Nabonidus, whose name means “The god Nabû is praised” (Akk. *Nabû-na’id*), did not have any direct or even indirect family connection whatsoever with his predecessors (see below for further details); he did, however, according to his own inscriptions, serve at the royal court, starting in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II.¹⁷ When Lâbâši-Marduk, Neriglissar’s young and unqualified son, succeeded his father as king, the nobles, courtiers, and Babylonian elite were unhappy and plotted almost immediately to have him removed from the throne. During Lâbâši-Marduk’s second or third month as king, these men staged a coup against him and placed an older and more experienced man on the throne: Nabonidus.¹⁸ Despite being over fifty (or sixty) years old,¹⁹ Nabonidus proved to be a suitable choice since he, together with his son Belshazzar (Akk. *Bēl-šarru-ušur*), ruled over Babylonia for seventeen years.

Contrary to popular belief, which has generally been heavily influenced by a handful of later pro-Cyrus sources (for example, the Cyrus Cylinder and the propagandistic Verse Account), Nabonidus, Babylon’s last native king,²⁰ was a rather successful ruler. Not only did he lead his army on far-flung campaigns, he undertook numerous building activities in Babylonia’s most important cult centers and ensured that his land prospered and was financially stable. Nabonidus managed to accomplish a great deal during his tenure as king. Only the highlights of his life and career are provided here.²¹

Nabonidus’ Family

Information about Nabonidus’ family background is scarce in extant written sources.²² Unlike Neriglissar, it is certain that Nabonidus did not have any direct family ties to Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar II, although he was part of the royal court (according to some of his own inscriptions). In official texts written in his name, he regularly states that a certain Nabû-balāssu-iqbi (“Nabû has decreed his life”) was his father. The king’s father’s name is usually followed by the epithet “wise prince” (Akk. *rubû emqu*), as it is in two inscriptions of Neriglissar following that the name of king’s father, Bēl-šum-iškun.²³ Nabû-balāssu-iqbi, like the father of Neriglissar, might

assumed, although there is no direct evidence to prove it with certainty.

¹⁶Nabonidus 3 (Babylon Stele) iv 34’–42’.

¹⁷Because Nabonidus was undoubtedly one of the most vibrant personalities of ancient Mesopotamia, it is little surprise that his life and times have received a great deal of scholarly attention. For some recent biographies of him, see, for example, Beaulieu, *Nabonidus*; D’Agostino, *Nabonido*; Dandamaev, *RLA 9/1–2* (1998) pp. 6–11; Da Riva, *GMTR 4* pp. 16–18; Sack, *Studies Astour* pp. 455–473; Schaudig, *Studies Kienast* pp. 447–497; and Weisberg, *Studies Astour* pp. 547–556.

¹⁸According to Nabonidus 3 (Babylon Stele) v 1’–7’, “they (the courtiers) brought me (Nabonidus) inside the palace, and all of them fell limp at my feet and (then) kissed my feet. They constantly blessed me being king.” Further details about the coup against Lâbâši-Marduk and Nabonidus’ ascent to the throne would have been described in the now-missing portion of col. v of that basalt stele. That same inscription records that Nabonidus not only served Nebuchadnezzar II, but also Neriglissar, stating: “I am the strong envoy of Nebuchadnezzar (II) and Neriglissar, the kings who came before me. Their troops are entrusted to my hand” (Nabonidus 3 [Babylon Stele] v 14’–20’). The Adad-guppi stele (Nabonidus 2001 ii 44–48) also records that Nabonidus served both of those kings. These statements, although they come from biased, self-aggrandizing sources, indicate that Nabonidus, like Neriglissar, had years of experience before sitting on the throne. The first known archival text dated to Nabonidus as king of Babylonia is dated to the 26th of June 556 (18-III, Strassmeier, *Nbn. 1*), for a discussion of the last texts dated to Lâbâši-Marduk and the first tablets dated to Nabonidus, see Frame, *Studies Rochberg* pp. 287–295.

¹⁹H. Schaudig (*Studies Kienast* p. 10) suggests that Nabonidus was born ca. 620 and was about sixty-five years of age when he became king. M. Dandamaev (*RLA 9/1–2* [1998] p. 7) proposes that he was born ca. 610 and, thus, was about fifty-five when he ascended the throne. In any case, Nabonidus was (by the standards of the time) quite old when he became king.

²⁰Although Achaemenid Persian rule over Babylonia (539–331) was relatively stable, there were a few, short-lived attempts to place a Babylonian on the throne. In 522, Nidinti-Bēl, a man claiming to be the son of Nabonidus and assuming the name of Nebuchadnezzar III, briefly declared himself king when Cyrus II’s son Cambyses II died; he was defeated and killed by Darius I. One year later, in 521, a certain Nebuchadnezzar IV revolted and declared himself king; he too was quickly defeated. During the second regnal year of Xerxes I (484), Šamaš-erība and Bēl-šimānī led revolts in Babylonian; both attempts were unsuccessful.

²¹See n. 17 for recent biographies of Nabonidus.

²²See, for example, Dandamayev, *RLA 9/1–2* (1998) pp. 7–8; and Schaudig, *Inschriften Nabonids* pp. 12–14.

²³Neriglissar 1 (Esagil Inscription) i 11 and Neriglissar 7 i 11’. In the inscriptions of both kings, it is uncertain if the epithet “wise prince” refers to the king’s father or to the king himself. H. Schaudig (*Inschriften Nabonids* p. 13 [with earlier references]) argued for a reference to

have been an Aramaean tribal chief, but this is far from certain given the present information in cuneiform sources, especially archival texts.²⁴

His mother Adad-guppi, whose name means “Adad has saved” (Aramaic *Hadad-ḥappi*),²⁵ is known from a long, pseudo-autobiographical inscription engraved on two steles from Ḥarrān (Nabonidus 2001 [Adad-guppi Stele]). Although her ancestry is currently unknown,²⁶ she almost certainly originated from Ḥarrān, one of the principal cult centers of the moon-god Sîn. After the conquest of that important Assyrian city by a coalition of Median and Babylonian forces in 610, Adad-guppi came to Babylon, where she had some (direct) access to the royal court. There, according to her “own” account of her life (which was written by her son after her death), she introduced her only son Nabonidus to the kings Nebuchadnezzar and Neriglissar, thereby, kick starting his career in Babylon’s influential, administrative circles. Adad-guppi’s ability to support her son in this manner suggests that she held an elevated social position in Babylon and seemingly confirms the scholarly assumption that she originated from a prominent family. At the ripe old age of 102 (although the stele states she was 104), during Nabonidus’ ninth regnal year (547), she died.²⁷ In scholarly literature, she is sometimes referred to as a priestess of the god Sîn of Ḥarrān on account of the devotion she claims to have given to the moon-god in the stele inscription written in her name. However, this need not be the case, since it is equally as plausible that Adad-guppi was a pious, upper class lay-woman.²⁸ The piety expressed in her pseudo-autobiographical account of her life does not necessarily have to be interpreted as cultic obligations of a priestess.

There is no information about Nabonidus’ brothers or sisters, if he indeed had siblings. According to an inscription of his from Ḥarrān, Nabonidus stated that he was an “only son who has no one” (*māru ēdu ša mamman lā išû*).²⁹ This might simply be a literary topos, but, because we have no further hint in contemporary or later sources to Nabonidus’ siblings, he might have indeed been the only (surviving) son of Adad-guppi.³⁰

Although we have almost no information about the wife (or wives) of Nabonidus, we know that he had at least four children, three daughters and one son. All three of his known daughters might have been consecrated as priestesses. En-nigaldi-Nanna, whose (Akkadian³¹) birth name is not known, was appointed *ēntu*-priestess of the moon-god Sîn at Ur during his second regnal year (553),³¹ and Akkabu’unma (exact reading uncertain) and Ina-Esagil-rīšat might have been installed as priestesses in Ebabbar, the temple of the sun-god Šamaš at Sippar.³² Nabonidus had Egipar, the traditional residence of the *ēntu*-priestess in the Ekišnugal (Egišnugal) temple complex at Ur, rebuilt for En-nigaldi-Nanna.

Nabonidus because his father is otherwise not known as a prince or tribal leader. Schaudig also mentions Neriglissar 3 (Royal Palace Inscription), where the name of Bēl-šum-iškun is followed by the title “king of Babylon” (i 14) definitely refers to Neriglissar himself and not his father. For Schaudig, this is additional proof that the title following the father’s name actually refers to the king himself. R. Da Riva (SANER 3, pp. 15–16), discussing the inscriptions of Neriglissar, has argued for an intended ambiguity in the use of this title as it could refer to both the father and the son simultaneously.

²⁴ Landsberger, *Studies Edhem* pp. 150–151; and Dandamaev, *RLA* 9/1–2 (1998) p. 7. There is no way to confirm with any degree of certainty that Nabû-balāssu-iqbî was an Aramean tribal chief. As H. Schaudig (*Inschriften Nabonids* pp. 12–13) has already pointed out, there are other possibilities: Nabonidus’ father may have been either an Assyrian (military official) or related to Nabopolassar. Given the complete lack of textual evidence, Nabû-balāssu-iqbî’s origins remain elusive.

²⁵ For the interpretation of the Akkadian form of her name as an originally Aramaic name, see Röllig, *ZA* 56 (1964) p. 235 n. 39; and von Soden, *Orientalia* NS 37 (1968) p. 271.

²⁶ W. Mayer (*Studies Römer* pp. 250–253) has suggested that Adad-guppi might have been a daughter of the Assyrian prince Aššur-etel-šamê-eršetî-muballissu (Pempe, *PNA* 1/1 pp. 184–185; Novotny and Singletary, *Studies Parpola* pp. 170–171) and, therefore, a granddaughter of Esarhaddon, but there is no extant textual evidence to support this proposal. Nevertheless, it is remarkable that Nabonidus is the only Neo-Babylonian king who uses Assyrian royal titles in one of his inscriptions (Nabonidus 28 [Eḥulḥul Cylinder]) and who regularly mentions the Assyrian kings Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal in inscriptions from Babylon, Sippar, and Ḥarrān.

²⁷ According to the Nabonidus Chronicle (ii 13), Adad-guppi died on the fifth day of the month Nisannu (I) of that year, that is, on April 6th, 547, in Dūr-karšu, which is upstream of Sippar (Grayson, *Chronicles* p. 107). Where she was buried is presently not recorded in extant sources. For further details on the age discrepancy of Adad-guppi, see, for example, Schaudig, *Inschriften Nabonids* pp. 14 and 504 n. 734 (with references to earlier scholarly literature).

²⁸ For this opinion, see, for example, Dhorme, *RB* 5 (1908) p. 131; Garelli, *Dictionnaire de la Bible* 6 (1960) p. 274; Funck, *Das Altertum* 34 (1988) p. 53; W. Mayer, *Studies Römer* (1998) pp. 253–256; and Jursa, *Die Babylonier* p. 37. Note that B. Landsberger (*Studies Edhem* p. 149) has long ago already argued against the idea of Adad-guppi being an *ēntu*-priestess of the moon-god at Ḥarrān and that P. Michalowski (*Studies Stolper* p. 207) believes that this proposal is “an unsubstantiated modern rumor.”

²⁹ Nabonidus 47 [Ḥarrān Stele] i 8. The same image is given in an inscription of his mother, where one finds the phrase *māru ēdu* (“only son”) twice (Nabonidus 2001 [Adad-guppi Stele] i 40 and ii 13).

³⁰ Schaudig, *Inschriften Nabonids* p. 14.

³¹ En-nigaldi-Nanna’s consecration is mentioned in Nabonidus 19 (Eigikalama Cylinder) and 34 (En-nigaldi-Nanna Cylinder), as well as in the so-called Royal Chronicle (see pp. 27–28 below). According to Nabonidus 34, the decision to appoint her to the position came as a result of an eclipse of the moon that took place on September 26th, 554, during Nabonidus’ second regnal year. For the date of the eclipse, see H. Lewy, *ArOr* 17 (1949) p. 50 n. 105. From Nabonidus 34 and the Royal Chronicle, it is clear that the appointment was not straight forward and was met with some opposition. For details, see Beaulieu, *Nabonidus* pp. 127–121 (§2.3.3.1).

³² Beaulieu, *Nabonidus* pp. 136–137; and Schaudig, *Inschriften Nabonids* pp. 12–13. Both are known from documents from Sippar.

More details about Nabonidus' son Belshazzar are known. This famous and important son appears in archival texts of his father's reign, starting in his first regnal year (555); note that Belshazzar is absent from textual sources prior to Nabonidus' tenure as king and, therefore, his rise to power came only after his father sat on the throne of Babylon. Some archival texts record Belshazzar's private economic activities and his business deals with the wealthy and influential Egibi family.³³ This parallels the early career of Neriglissar, who also belonged to the inner circle of rich Babylonian businessmen. Because Belshazzar is completely unknown from records prior to Nabonidus becoming king, it has been sometimes assumed that the property of Neriglissar's family was confiscated after the murder of his son Lâbâši-Marduk and handed over to Belshazzar, who took over the business deals of Neriglissar's family.³⁴

During Nabonidus' sojourn in Arabia (see below), Belshazzar was appointed regent.³⁵ His regency is generally considered to have been a success because there are no hints in extant sources to unusual incidents, uprisings, or other problems in Babylonia while his father was absent. When Nabonidus returned to Babylon, probably in his thirteenth regnal year (543), power was smoothly transferred back to him. For about ten years, Belshazzar acted as the *de facto* ruler of Babylon and principal representative of his father, the divinely-appointed king. Despite his position, (a) he never commissioned an inscription in his own name, although he likely played a role in the composition of official inscriptions written in the name of his father; (b) in archival records, he was never referred to as "king" (*šarru*), the position held by his father Nabonidus, but always as "son of the king" (*mār šarri*) and, therefore, as one expects, no text is ever dated by Belshazzar's regency; and (c) he was never a surrogate for Nabonidus during an *akītu*-festival, which meant that Babylon's most important festival, the New Year's Festival, had to be cancelled while the god Marduk's earthly representative, the king, was residing on the Arabia peninsula.³⁶

Nabonidus' Military Campaigns

Little is known about the military campaigns led by Nabonidus. Given the nature of Neo-Babylonian royal inscriptions, in contrast to the detailed Neo-Assyrian reports on military campaigns, we must rely on other genres of texts to find that information. Some details are provided by the Nabonidus Chronicle, the Royal Chronicle, and the Verse Account; in addition, two stele inscriptions refer to the king's military expeditions.³⁷

During Nabonidus' first three years on the throne (555–553), the Babylonian army marched west three times. In his first regnal year (555), he campaigned in Cilicia, against the city Ḥumê; this may have been to complete the military operations started two years earlier (557) by Neriglissar. Despite the poor state of preservation of the account of the year 555 in the Nabonidus Chronicle, it is certain that the campaign was successful since Nabonidus placed 2,850 prisoners from Ḥumê in the service of the gods Marduk, Nabû, and Nergal during an *akītu*-festival held at the very beginning of his second regnal year (554).³⁸ In 554, Nabonidus' troops may have attacked Hamath, an important city located in modern day Syria.³⁹ Early in his third year as king (553), despite health issues, Nabonidus campaigned against the city Ammanānu, a place that reportedly had many orchards; that city might have been located in northern Beqaa or in the Anti-Lebanon.⁴⁰ Afterwards, he conquered the kingdom of Edom.⁴¹

³³ Strassmaier, Liverpool nos. Nbn 9, 50, 184, 270, and 688.

³⁴ Beaulieu, Nabonidus pp. 90–93.

³⁵ This is not mentioned in the inscriptions of Nabonidus. The part of the Nabonidus Chronicle recording the events of this year is currently not preserved, but the Verse Account explicitly states that a mercenary army was given to the crown prince Belshazzar and that he was entrusted with the "kingship" of Babylon (Verse Account ii 18'–20'). Because Belshazzar is never called "king" in contemporary and later sources, his "rule" should be referred to as a "regency," rather than a "kingship." The fact that the Verse Account refers to Belshazzar's authority by the Akkadian term *šarrūtu*, instead of *bēlūtu*, highlights the biased and negative attitude of that text towards Nabonidus.

³⁶ For details, see Beaulieu, Nabonidus pp. 185–203; and D'Agostino, Nabonidus pp. 27–31.

³⁷ Nabonidus 3 (Babylon Stele) ix 31'–41'a and 47 (Ḥarrān Stele) i 45b–ii 2. The Nabonidus Chronicle and the Royal Chronicle are translated on pp. 25–28. For the Verse Account, see Schaudig, Inschriften Nabonids pp. 563–578 P1. Note that there are significant gaps in the Nabonidus Chronicle. Accounts of the events of the accession year (556), as well as the fourth (552), fifth (551), twelfth (544), thirteenth (543), fourteenth (542), and fifteenth (541) regnal years are completely missing, and the accounts of the events of the first (555), second (554), third (553), sixth (550), eleventh (545), and sixteenth (540) regnal years are fragmentarily preserved.

³⁸ Nabonidus 3 (Babylon Stele) ix 31'–41'a.

³⁹ The account of the events of Nabonidus' second regnal year are not sufficiently preserved in the Nabonidus Chronicle to be certain that the king undertook a campaign during that year. As far as that passage is preserved, it states that it was cold in Hamath.

⁴⁰ Nabonidus Chronicle lines 9–10 and Royal Chronicle iv 24–40 (see pp. 25–28 below). R. Zadok (Rép. Géogr. 8 p. 22) places Ammanānu in the northern Beqaa region, while M. Cogan (IEJ 34 [1984] p. 259) places it in the Anti-Lebanon region. See also Bagg, Rép. Géogr. 7/1 pp. 8–9.

⁴¹ Lemaire, Judah and the Judeans pp. 290–291. The campaign against Edom took place late in Nabonidus' third regnal year (553). It is possible that the rock relief at Sela' (Nabonidus 55 [Sela' Inscription]) commemorated Nabonidus' victory over Edom. Unfortunately, that inscription

At the beginning of his fourth year (552), immediately after his conquest of Edom, Nabonidus and his army marched south and captured the city Dadānu.⁴² Tēmā and other Arabian towns in the Hījāz were also taken and/or destroyed early in 552.⁴³ Archaeological evidence supports the fact that the Babylonian army undertook military action in the region around this time.⁴⁴

Nabonidus' Sojourn in Arabia

Near the start of his reign, most likely during his third regnal year (553), Nabonidus handed over the day-to-day management of the empire to his son Belshazzar and left Babylon, and, early in his fourth year as king (552), the Babylonian king took up residence in the Arabian oasis city Tēmā, an important caravan stop on the principal trade route linking Arabia to the Levant.⁴⁵ Exactly why Nabonidus decided to stay in Arabia for ten years is unknown,⁴⁶ but it may have been a combination of economic, political, religious, and strategic factors; many conjectures have been made about this period of Mesopotamian history, but none are entirely convincing.⁴⁷

Little is known about Nabonidus' activities during this ten-year span of time. In his own words, he "walked the road between the cities Tēmā, Dadānu, Padakku, Hībrā, Yadiḥu, and (then) as far as Yatribu."⁴⁸ It is not entirely clear what that statement implies. According to the Verse Account, he set up a royal residence in Tēmā, from which he oversaw the administration of the region.⁴⁹ Archaeological and epigraphical evidence attest to Nabonidus' semi-permanent stay at Tēmā.⁵⁰ Belshazzar ruled Babylonia on Nabonidus' behalf, but, the Babylonian New Year's (*akītu*) festival could not be celebrated due to the king's absence.⁵¹ For whatever reason, Nabonidus returned to Babylon, probably in his thirteenth (543) regnal year, and resumed direct control over Babylonia and its territorial holdings.⁵²

is so badly weathered that most of its contents are no longer legible.

⁴² Royal Chronicle v 1–24 (see pp. 27–28 below).

⁴³ P.-A. Beaulieu (Nabonidus p. 169) dates the conquest of Tēmā at the beginning of Nabonidus' fourth year as king (552), proposing that "the Arabian campaign began in January or February 552, the conquest of Dadanu took place in March or April, and the capture of Teima and the other Arabian cities in the first months of Nabonidus' fourth regnal year." The Verse Account ii 20'–27' (Schaudig, *Inschriften Nabonids* p. 568 P1), however, states that Nabonidus took Tēmā by force at the beginning of his third regnal year (553); Nabonidus 47 (Harrān Stele) i 45b–ii 2 also alludes to military action against the Arabs. Given the available, albeit limited, textual evidence (Nabonidus Chronicle, Royal Chronicle, and archival records), it seems unlikely that the Arabian campaign could have started before Nabonidus' fourth year (552) as king. The Verse Account's statement about Nabonidus handing over the reins of power to Belshazzar and setting out west in the third year likely reflects the fact that Nabonidus and his troops did not return to Babylon after the conquests of Ammanānu and Edom and before taking up residence in Tēmā.

⁴⁴ See Macdonald, *PSAS* 40 Suppl. pp. 10–11.

⁴⁵ As P.-A. Beaulieu (Nabonidus p. 169) has already pointed out, Nabonidus 47 (Harrān Stele) "does not specifically say that Nabonidus lived ten years in Teima, but only that he 'wandered' ten years in Arabia." Therefore, the Verse Account is correct in stating that Nabonidus departed Babylon in 553 but is misleading since the text fails to report that the Babylonian army did not conquer Tēmā until his fourth year (552). Beaulieu (Nabonidus pp. 169 and 197), therefore, proposes that Nabonidus' sojourn started in his fourth year (552). H. Schaudig (*Inschriften Nabonids* pp. 18–19), however, suggests that it began already in his third year (553). M. Dandamayev (*RLA* 9/1–2 [1998] p. 8) and R. Da Riva (*GMTR* 4 p. 17) do not commit to a precise date and suggest that Nabonidus' sojourn could have begun anytime between his third (553) and sixth (550) regnal years and P. Michalowski (*Studies Stolper* p. 208) thinks that a departure between the third and the fifth is possible. For longer, more detailed studies of Nabonidus' stay in Arabia, see, for example, Beaulieu, Nabonidus pp. 149–185; and Schaudig, *Inschriften Nabonids* pp. 18–19.

⁴⁶ According to Nabonidus 47 (Harrān Stele) i 24–26a and ii 10b–11a, Nabonidus was in Arabia for ten years. According to a later Qumran text, the Prayer of Nabonidus (Levine and Robertson, *COS* 1 pp. 285–286), he stayed in Tēmā for only seven years.

⁴⁷ According to Nabonidus' own account from Harrān (Nabonidus 47 [Harrān Stele] i 14b–27a), he left Babylon because the citizens of Babylonia's most important cult centers, including Babylon, were impious (specifically, they had neglected the cults of the moon-god Sīn) and disease and famine broke out inside them as a result. These statements cannot be confirmed from other documentary evidence and, thus, should be taken with a grain of salt. Scholars have offered various suggestions, hypothesizing that the move was politically or strategically motivated, for religious reasons (linked with his purported preference for the god Sīn, which put him in opposition with the Marduk priesthood in Babylon), or on account of a conflict with his son Belshazzar. For a summary of the various proposals, see Beaulieu, Nabonidus pp. 178–185 (§3.2.3).

⁴⁸ Nabonidus 47 (Harrān Stele) i 24–26a.

⁴⁹ Schaudig, *Inschriften Nabonids* p. 568 P1 ii 27'.

⁵⁰ For example, see Eichmann, Schaudig, and Hausleiter, *AAE* 17 (2006) pp. 163–176; and Müller and al-Said, *Neue Beiträge zur Semitistik* pp. 105–122.

⁵¹ For details about Belshazzar's administration during his father's stay in Tēmā, see Beaulieu, Nabonidus pp. 185–202 (§3.3). The Nabonidus Chronicle (see pp. 25–27 below) records that no *akītu*-festivals were held in Babylon while Nabonidus was living in Tēmā.

⁵² Beaulieu, Nabonidus pp. 163–165 (§3.1.3); and Schaudig, *Inschriften Nabonids* p. 20. Note that R. Da Riva (*GMTR* 4 p. 18) suggests that Nabonidus returned to Babylon in 541, his fifteenth regnal year. According to Nabonidus 47 ([Harrān Stele] ii 13), Nabonidus returned to Babylon on the seventeenth day of the month Tašrītu (VII).

Nabonidus' Building Activities

It is known from extant textual and archaeological sources that Nabonidus sponsored construction in no fewer than fifteen Babylonian cities (Agade, Babylon, Borsippa, Cutha, Dilbat², Kissik, Kish, Larsa, Marad, Seleucia, Sippar, Sippar-Anunītum, Ubassu, Ur, and Uruk), one major cult center on the border of modern-day Syria and Turkey (Ḥarrān) and one important trading center in present-day Saudi Arabia (Tēmā).⁵³ His workmen undertook work on numerous religious (temples, shrines, ziggurats) and non-religious (palaces, city walls) structures.

General Comments

Nabonidus' inscriptions record that he sponsored the restoration, renovation, or complete rebuilding of a number of important temples and sanctuaries in Babylonia, as well as several city walls. Those self-aggrandizing sources regularly state that he instructed his workmen to carefully and painstakingly search for the original foundations of buildings in order to ensure that the buildings were constructed anew precisely on their original, divinely-sanctioned sites, thereby ensuring that structures endured for a long time and did not prematurely collapse. Some texts record that the king entrusted these important matters to his advisors, learned and experienced men (*emqūti rāš ṭēmi*) from Babylon and Borsippa.⁵⁴ Like many of his predecessors, Nabonidus frequently mentions that the temples and sanctuaries that required his attention were in a woeful, dilapidated state, sometimes because a king of the past failed to construct the building on its ancient foundations and, occasionally, on account of divine wrath. To avoid missteps in building and to guarantee success, Nabonidus regularly consulted the gods, especially the sun-god Šamaš and the storm-god Adad, the lords of divination, through extispicy, often recording the (positive as well as negative) outcomes of those haruspical queries in his inscriptions.⁵⁵ In addition, he also claims to have initiated building projects after having been instructed to do so through a dream, one acceptable means for a king's divine patron to impart information to his/her earthy representative.⁵⁶

Another recurring trope of Nabonidus' building reports is the boast of discovering (ancient) inscribed objects (for example, statues or foundation documents) that had been deposited within the (original) structure of the building by a(n) important former king. References to selected, famous rulers of the past not only highlighted the special relationship that the divine occupant of the temple under construction/renovation had had with important men from the (distant) past, but also gave Nabonidus' pious deeds legitimacy since his workmen were able to uncover these records of the past, especially since those relics were found together with the temple's original foundations deep in the earth.⁵⁷ Extant inscriptions record that Nabonidus discovered inscriptions of the following former Mesopotamian kings:

City	Building Project	Named King of the Past	Text No.
Agade	Eulmaš (temple of Ištar)	Narām-Sîn of Agade, Kurigalzu, Esarhaddon, Ashurbanipal, and Nebuchadnezzar II	10–12, 27
Babylon	Imgur-Enlil (inner city wall)	unnamed ruler	1
Larsa	Ebabbar (temple of Šamaš)	Ḥammu-rāpi of Babylon	16, 27
Sippar	Ebabbar (temple of Šamaš)	Narām-Sîn of Agade	26, 28–30
Sippar-Anunītu	Eulmaš (temple of Anunītu)	Šagarakti-Šuriaš	27–28
Ur	Egipar (residence of the <i>ēntu</i> -priestess)	Nebuchadnezzar I, unnamed former kings, and princess Enanedu (a former <i>ēntu</i> -priestess)	34
Ur	Elugalgalgasisa (ziggurat)	Ur-Namma and Šulgi	32–33

⁵³ For previous studies on Nabonidus' building activities, see, for example, Dandamayev, RLA 9/1–2 (1998) pp. 8–10; Da Riva, GMTR 4 p. 113; and Schaudig, *Inschriften Nabonids* pp. 61–65.

⁵⁴ For example, see Nabonidus 22–25.

⁵⁵ See Nabonidus 16, 21–25, 27, and 34. Twice, Nabonidus recorded the entire oracular report in his official inscriptions; see Nabonidus 3 (Babylon Stele) and 25 (Tiara Cylinder).

⁵⁶ See Nabonidus 3 (Babylon Stele), 17, 27–29, 47 (Ḥarrān Stele), and 53.

⁵⁷ See Schaudig, *Studies Kienast* pp. 447–497, for a study of Nabonidus actively digging up ancient foundation documents to legitimize his kingship.

Babylonia

The capital Babylon, the city of the god Marduk that Nebuchadnezzar II had transformed and expanded into a spectacle to behold, received some attention from Nabonidus. From extant sources, this king states that he renovated and reinforced (sections of) the city wall *Imgur-Enlil* (“Enlil Has Shown Favor”); renovated and refurbished some of the principal gateways of *Esagil* (“House whose Top Is High”), the temple of Marduk, and installed copper(-plated) statues of *mušhuššu*-dragons as gateway guardians, just as they had been in the reign of Nerglissar, as well as statues of goat-fishes (*suhurmāšū*); and rebuilt *Emašdari* (“House of Animal Offerings”), the temple of the goddess *Ištar* of *Agade* at Babylon, which was reported to have been in ruins for a long time.⁵⁸ Nabonidus might have also sponsored construction on a royal residence located near the *Šamaš Gate*, in the southwestern part of the city, assuming that the text in question actually dates to this time and records work in Babylon.⁵⁹ Bricks bearing his name discovered at Babylon confirm that Nabonidus actually had work carried out in that city.⁶⁰

Nabonidus claims to have made generous donations to Babylon’s temples and their divine residents. In addition to installing new wooden doors in *Esagil*, inscriptions of this king state that he made two large censers from reddish gold; had new ceremonial garments made for the deities *Ea*, *Nabû* and *Tašmētu*; and had a new *arattû*-throne installed for the god *Ea* in the *Ekarzagina* (“Quay of Lapis Lazuli”) shrine.⁶¹ Moreover, he provided the *akitu*-house, *Esiskur* (“House of the Sacrifice”), and the gods *Marduk*, *Nabû* and *Nergal* with a rich gift of “100 talents and 21 minas of *si<lver>*, 5 talents and 17 minas of gold in addition to the gifts for an entire year, which (come) from *homage-gifts*, the wealth of all of the lands, the yield of the mountain, the income from all of the settlements, the rich gifts of kings, the extensive possessions that the prince, the god *Marduk* had entrusted to me,” as well as 2,850 prisoners of war, who were made to perform *corvée* labor throughout Babylonia.⁶²

At *Agade*, the capital city of the third-millennium-BC ruler *Sargon* whose location is still not known today, Nabonidus had his workmen restored *Eulmaš*, the temple of the goddess *Ištar* there.⁶³ The precise location of the original temple in the sixth century BC, if Nabonidus’ accounts are to be believed, were not easy to locate and it took a great deal of time (three years) and effort to find them;⁶⁴ the king states that not one of his predecessors — including a Kassite king (one of the *Kurigalzus*), the Assyrian kings *Esarhaddon* and *Ashurbanipal*, and the famous *Nebuchadnezzar II* — had discovered these foundations and that a few of them openly admitted to such failure.⁶⁵ So that future kings would have no problems locating the true, divine-approved, original foundations of the *Eulmaš* temple at *Agade*, Nabonidus records that he had the new temple built at ground level, on a high brick infill, constructed precisely over the Sargonic foundations “not (even) a fingerbreadth outside or inside (of them).”

Borsippa also received some attention from Nabonidus, who occasionally referred to himself as *muddiš esagil u ezida* “the one who renovates *Esagil* and *Ezida*.” Few extant texts record work on *Ezida* (“True House”), the temple of the god *Nabû* there. A cylinder inscription states that the king focused his attention on the temple complex’s enclosure walls. The new, reinforced walls improved the security of *Ezida* and the ziggurat *Eurmeiminanki* (“House which Gathers the Seven *Mes* of Heaven and Netherworld”).⁶⁶ Nabonidus also planned

⁵⁸ Nabonidus 1–2 and 4 (Babylon Stele). A brick found near the bank of the Euphrates (Nabonidus 7) might have been associated with this king’s work on the stretch of *Imgur-Enlil* that ran alongside the Euphrates river between the *Ištar Gate* and the *Uraš Gate*, a part of Babylon’s city wall that regularly required renovation and reinforcing due to damage caused by the Euphrates. On the other hand, that brick might have been from another, as-of-yet unattested building enterprise of Nabonidus.

⁵⁹ Nabonidus 1001 (Palace Cylinder). The attribution to Nabonidus is not absolutely certain and the connection of the building account of that fragmentarily preserved inscriptions to Babylon is also not firmly established; *Borsippa*, *Dilbat*, *Sippar*, and *Uruk* have also been suggested as possible locations for the palace referred to in that text.

⁶⁰ Nabonidus 7–9.

⁶¹ Nabonidus 3 (Babylon Stele) vii and ix, and 4 frgm. 13 col. ii’. A censer for *Marduk* is also mentioned in the fragmentary inscription written on the stele found at *Tēmā* (Nabonidus 56 [Tēmā Stele] line 22). It is uncertain if the two references to the censer on that stele refer to one and the same object or to two different censers given to *Marduk*.

⁶² Nabonidus 3 (Babylon Stele) ix 3’b–41’a.

⁶³ For example, see Nabonidus 10–12 (*Eulmaš Cylinders*), 27, and 29 (*Ehulḫul Cylinder*).

⁶⁴ According to Nabonidus 27, the original, third-millennium foundations were discovered through divine providence, after torrential rains created a gully in the ruins of the temple, thereby exposing the foundations of *Narām-Sîn* of *Agade*.

⁶⁵ Compare *Schaudig*, *Studies Kienast* pp. 474–478. According to Nabonidus 27, one of the *Kurigalzus*, perhaps the second of that name, recorded “I searched day and night for the (original) foundation(s) of *Eulmaš*, but I did not reach (them)”; and *Esarhaddon* and *Ashurbanipal* wrote down “I sought out the (original) foundation(s) of that *Eulmaš*, but I did not reach (them). I cut down poplar(s) and *maštû*-tree(s) and (then) built a replacement *Eulmaš* and gave (it) to the goddess *Ištar* of *Agade*, great lady, my lady.” Such admissions are never included in Mesopotamian inscriptions and, therefore, it can be confidently assumed that these statements were drafted by Nabonidus’ scribes.

⁶⁶ Nabonidus 13 (*Ezida Cylinder*). That text also records that *Nerglissar* started construction on that wall but never completed it. This building enterprise of *Nerglissar* is not known from his own inscriptions.

to renovate Ezida's processional way, but unfortunately no details about that building enterprise survive today, apart from the king's intent to carry out the work.⁶⁷ Parts of the interior of Nabû's temple were renovated.⁶⁸ Following in the footsteps of the Assyrian kings Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal, Nabonidus had metal(-plated) statues of wild bulls (*rīmū*) set up in prominent gateway(s) of Ezida.⁶⁹ In addition, he had the wooden doors of Tašmētu's cella plated with silver.

At Cutha and Kish, this Babylonian king states that he sponsored construction on those two cities' walls, respectively Ugal-amaru ("Great Storm, (which) Is a Deluge") and Melem-kurkurra-dulla ("(Whose) Radiance Spreads over (All) Lands"), both of whose superstructures Nabonidus boasts that he had raised as high as mountains.⁷⁰ At Dilbat, Nabonidus rebuilt the *akītu*-house of the god Uraš, the patron deity of that city⁷¹ and, at Kissik, he had Eamaškuga ("House, Pure Sheepfold"), the temple of the goddess Ningal/Nikkal, constructed anew.⁷²

As he did at Sippar (see below), Nabonidus appears to have taken a deep interest in completely renovating the temple of the sun-god Šamaš at Larsa.⁷³ Nabonidus' inscriptions state that Larsa, the Ebabbar ("Shining House") temple, and the ziggurat Eduranna ("House, Bond of Heaven") had lain in ruins for such a long time that their original ground plans had been forgotten and that when Nebuchadnezzar II had had Šamaš' temple renovated that king (wrongly) constructed Ebabbar anew on the earliest foundations that his workmen could find, those of the Kassite king Burna-Buriaš. Because the temple fell into ruins too quickly according to Nabonidus, who was often looking for ways to discredit the pious works of some of his predecessors (Nebuchadnezzar II in particular) and to bolster his own legitimacy, the temple's 'premature' demise was attributed to the fact that Ebabbar had not been on its original foundations and this negligent act angered Šamaš, who let that earthly residence of his become dilapidated. Therefore, Nabonidus had his workmen seek out the older remains of the temple, which they eventually discovered, or so we are told. In his tenth regnal year (546), the foundations of Ebabbar that the Old Babylonian king Ḫammu-rāpi had laid were uncovered, as well as the (original) site of the ziggurat Eduranna. In rhetoric typical of Nabonidus, several inscriptions report that the king had the new temples constructed precisely over their divinely-approved, Old Babylonian foundations, "not (even) a fingerbreadth outside or inside (of them)." Despite Nabonidus' biased, ideological account of construction at Larsa, which presumably contains some factual information, it is certain that this Neo-Babylonian king actually carried out work on that Šamaš temple since bricks of his were discovered at Larsa.

Following in the footsteps of Nebuchadnezzar II, Nabonidus restored the temple of the god Lugal-Marda, Eigikalama ("House, Eye of the Land"), at Marad.⁷⁴ In addition, he states that he had an enclosure wall constructed around that holy building, something that had reportedly never been done before. Moreover, he refurbished and ornately decorated Lugal-Marda's chariot, parts of which were supposedly discovered among the ruins of the Eigikalama when the ruins of the dilapidated mudbrick superstructure were being cleared away.

Bricks discovered at Seleucia and Uruk (in the vicinity of Eanna) likely attest to Nabonidus having undertaken work in those two cities.⁷⁵ Since no textual sources record the details of projects in the former city, it is uncertain which structure(s) Nabonidus worked on in Seleucia. At Uruk, however, it is clear from the bricks themselves and archival records that he restored Eanna ("House of Heaven"), the temple of the goddess Ištar.

Of Nabonidus' numerous building activities, those at Sippar, the principal cult center of the sun-god, are perhaps the best known today. No less than ten inscriptions of his record numerous details about the long and extensive rebuilding of Ebabbar ("Shining House"), the temple of Šamaš, its cellas, and its ziggurat Ekunankuga ("House, Pure Stairway of Heaven").⁷⁶ Nabonidus' accounts of building at Sippar include information about every stage of construction, from start to finish, and, in typical Mesopotamian fashion, those texts narrate events in a manner that is more concerned with royal ideology rather than historical reality. Thus, according to these self-aggrandizing reports, Nabonidus had Ebabbar completely rebuilt anew since the temple constructed by

⁶⁷Nabonidus 44.

⁶⁸Nabonidus 4 frgm. 7.

⁶⁹Esarhaddon had four apotropaic bull statues placed in Borsippa's main temple and Ashurbanipal set up four, and later six, wild bulls in Ezida. See, for example, Leichty, RINAP 4 p. 117 Esarhaddon 54 (Smlt.) rev. 10b-16a; and Novotny and Jeffers, RINAP 5/1 p. 216 Ashurbanipal 10 (Prism T) ii 1-6 and p. 267 Ashurbanipal 12 (Prism H) i 4'-6'.

⁷⁰Nabonidus 19 (Eigikalama Cylinder). Both walls are also known from an explanatory temple list; see George, House Most High no. 6.

⁷¹Nabonidus 19 (Eigikalama Cylinder)

⁷²Nabonidus 15 (Eamaškuga Cylinder).

⁷³Nabonidus 16 (Larsa Cylinder) and 27.

⁷⁴Nabonidus 19 (Eigikalama Cylinder)

⁷⁵Respectively Nabonidus 18 and 20. It is unclear if Nabonidus actually built at Seleucia or if he sponsored construction at Opis (ancient Uḫi; Tullūl al-Mujailī), which is only a short distance away from Seleucia, and those bricks were later transferred from Opis to Seleucia.

⁷⁶Nabonidus 19, 21-26, 27-29, and 1008.

Nebuchadnezzar II forty-five years earlier had (prematurely) collapsed, something that had happened because that ruler failed to construct Šamaš' temple on its original, divinely-approved foundations.⁷⁷ After receiving divine confirmation through favorable responses to questions posed through extispicy and after much time and effort searching the ruins of the (allegedly) collapsed temple, Nabonidus' specialists from Babylon and Borsippa claim to have discovered the earliest foundation, the ones purportedly laid by the Sargonic king Narām-Sîn.⁷⁸ So not to incur the anger of the sun-god, as Nebuchadnezzar II had done, the king's workmen were instructed to lay Ebabbar's new foundations precisely over the Sargonic-period foundations, "not (even) a fingerbreadth outside or inside (of them)." Once that arduous task had been accomplished, the new mudbrick superstructure was built, 5,000 beams of cedar were stretched out as its roof, new wooden doors were hung in its prominent gateways, and the most important rooms of the temple were lavishly decorated. In addition, Nabonidus states that he rebuilt (or renovated) the ziggurat Ekunankuga; constructed Ekurra ("House of the Mountain"), the temple of the god Bunene, Šamaš' vizier; and made repairs to (parts of) the enclosure wall of the Ebabbar temple complex. Moreover, Nabonidus had a new golden crown, one apparently with something called *zarinnu*,⁷⁹ commissioned and dedicated to Šamaš; according to the inscription recording the manufacture of that sacred object, Nabonidus had a great deal of trouble obtaining divine consent to make that crown, and it was only after multiple haruspical queries that he was permitted to fashion the desired object for the sun-god.⁸⁰

In the vicinity of Sippar, at Sippar-Anunītu, Nabonidus had Eulmaš, the temple of the goddess Anunītu, rebuilt since it was reportedly destroyed by the Assyrian king Sennacherib (704–681).⁸¹ The temple, which shares a name with the Ištar temple at Agade (see above), was constructed anew on top of the foundations of Šagarakti-Šuriaš (1245–1233), a Kassite king of Babylon.

One inscription of Nabonidus states that the king undertook work at Ubassu, a town situated between Babylon and Borsippa. The exact nature of the project(s) there is uncertain as the passage recording the king's construction activities in that town is rather vague. Nevertheless, it seems that Nabonidus renovated/rebuilt a sanctuary of the goddess Nanāya.⁸²

Lastly, Nabonidus commissioned several large-scale building projects at Ur, one of the principal cult centers of the moon-god Sîn.⁸³ In that important city, he made (extensive) repairs to the ziggurat Elugalgalgasisa ("House of the King who Lets Counsel Flourish"); rebuilt Enunmaḥ ("House of the Exalted Prince"), the *bīt-ḫilši* of the goddess Ningal/Nikkal, the consort of Sîn; and constructed Egipar, the traditional residence of the *ēntu*-priestess of the moon-god, anew for his daughter En-nigaldi-Nanna, after he had appointed her as Sîn's *ēntu*. Bricks bearing short inscriptions of Nabonidus, as well as an inscribed door socket, attest to this king actually carrying out work on these three important buildings at Ur. In addition, Nabonidus claims to have "made possessions (and) property copious inside Ekišnugal" and to have exempted temple personal from obligatory state service, including corvée labor, thereby, bestowing a highly coveted 'tax exempt' status upon Ur and its temples.⁸⁴

Ḥarrān

One of the most important and extensive building projects undertaken by Nabonidus was the rebuilding of Eḫulḫul ("House which Gives Joy"), the temple of the moon-god Sîn at Ḥarrān,⁸⁵ which had been in ruins since 610, the year the Babylonian king Nabopolassar and his Median allies captured, plundered, and destroyed that city and its temples, thereby, bringing the once-great Assyrian Empire to an end once and for all.⁸⁶ Probably after

⁷⁷ For a study of Nabonidus criticizing Nebuchadnezzar II, in particular for failing to build temples on their original foundations, see Schaudig, *Studies Ellis* pp. 155–161.

⁷⁸ These ancient foundations of Ebabbar were said to have been found at a depth of eighteen cubits and to have been laid 3,200 years before Nabonidus. According to middle chronology (for example, Brinkman in Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia* p. 335), Narām-Sîn, who is erroneously referred to as the son of Sargon, reigned ca. 2254–2218, which is only 1,663 years from the end of that Sargonic king's reign to Nabonidus' accession to the throne. For a discussion of this passage (Nabonidus 28 [Eḫulḫul Cylinder] ii 55b–60a), including the free interchangeability of the names of Sargonic kings in Nabonidus' inscriptions, see Schaudig, *Studies Ellis* pp. 157–159.

⁷⁹ The meaning of the Akkadian word *zarinnu* is unclear; see the note on p. 127 of this volume for further details.

⁸⁰ Nabonidus 25 (Tiara Cylinder).

⁸¹ Nabonidus 28–29 (Eḫulḫul Cylinders). For the rebuilding of Eulmaš, see Frame, *Mesopotamia* 28 (1993) pp. 21–50; and Bartelmus and Taylor, *JCS* 66 (2014) pp. 113–128.

⁸² Nabonidus 19 (Eigikalama Cylinder) ii 5–7 records "As for the city Ubassu, (which is) between Babylon and Borsippa, I raised up its superstructure with bitumen and baked brick(s) and (then) had the goddess Nanāya, the supreme goddess, enter her cella."

⁸³ Nabonidus 19 (Eigikalama Cylinder) and 32–39.

⁸⁴ Nabonidus 34 (En-nigaldi-Nanna Cylinder) ii 19 and 21–28, and Nabonidus 36.

⁸⁵ Nabonidus 3 (Babylon Stele), 28–29 (Eḫulḫul Cylinders), 46–52, and 2001 (Adad-guppi Stele). For a study of earlier Assyrian building activities at Ḥarrān, see Novotny, Eḫulḫul.

⁸⁶ Grayson, *Chronicles* p. 95 Chronicle 3 lines 63–64. Note that Nabonidus 3 (Babylon Stele) x 14' credits only the Medes with this sacrilege, and not the Babylonian king.

his return to Babylon, after his long sojourn in Arabia, Nabonidus started rebuilding the long-dilapidated Eḫulḫul temple and its sanctuaries. He claims to have rebuilt it directly on top of the foundations of Ashurbanipal (668–ca. 631), who is implied to have done the same since that Assyrian king had seen the earlier foundations of the ninth-century ruler Shalmaneser III (858–824).⁸⁷ As one expects from an account of construction in a Mesopotamian royal inscription, the king boasts that he completed the brick superstructure of the temple, lavishly decorated it, and returned newly-refurbished statues of its divine occupants (Sîn, Ningal/Nikkal, Nusku, and Sadarnunna) to their proper places in their home town.⁸⁸ It is unknown if construction on Sîn's temple at Ḫarrān had been completed or not by the time Cyrus captured Babylon and Nabonidus in 539.

Tēmā

Nabonidus, during his extended sojourn in Arabia, appears to have undertaken construction on a royal residence at Tēmā, as well as on other important structures in that oasis city. A few, rather vague details are recorded in the later, pro-Cyrus Verse Account. The relevant passage of that propagandistic text reads: “[He] made the city resplendent (and) buil[t a palace]. He built it (just) like the palace of Babylon, ... [... He constantly placed] the treasures of the city and l[and inside it]. He surrounded it with a garris[on ...].”⁸⁹ Recent Saudi-German excavations at Tēmā have unearthed direct proof that Nabonidus actually lived in that important Arabian city.⁹⁰

Nabonidus' Veneration of the Moon-god Sîn

According to the now-famous Cyrus Cylinder, as well as the ‘propaganda’ text known as the Verse Account,⁹¹ Nabonidus is ‘accused’ of **(a)** promoting the moon-god Sîn to Marduk's long-held and pre-eminent rank of “king of the gods” (Akk. *šar ilī*) and “Enlil of the gods” (Akk. *Enlil ilī*), **(b)** altering the (traditional) rites and rituals of Babylonian cults (especially those in the venerated city of Babylon), **(c)** building a temple in Ḫarrān that rivaled the most important temple at Babylon (Esagil), and **(d)** oppressing the people of Sumer and Akkad (Babylonia). These alleged sins and cruel behavior of this Babylonian king are reported to have led to his quick downfall.⁹² Because the pious, downtrodden Babylonia population were ready to throw their support behind a ruler who would not only respect them, but also treat Babylonian cults with the utmost respect and venerate the god Marduk above all other deities, and because Cyrus II of Persia was seen as the savior who would restore Babylon's tutelary deity to his rightful place in the pantheon, at least according to these two biased sources, Nabonidus was effortlessly removed from power. These post-539, anti-Nabonidus sources have had a great deal of influence on modern researchers, some of whom have completely bought pro-Cyrus rhetoric. Thus, one easily finds today numerous references to Nabonidus being an unwavering, fanatical devotee of the moon-god who neglected Marduk and Babylonia's cults in his solitary quest to make Sîn the supreme god of the Empire. The full extent of the impact that the pro-Cyrus propaganda had in ancient times is uncertain, but it is clear that this anti-Nabonidus rhetoric has left its mark in modern scholarship.⁹³

⁸⁷ According to J. Novotny (Eḫulḫul *passim*), Ashurbanipal did not necessarily rebuild Eḫulḫul precisely on earlier foundations since it is clear from several of that king's inscriptions that Eḫulḫul was substantially enlarged and that Nusku's temple Emelamana might have been built as an attached twin of the newly-enlarged Eḫulḫul temple. Based on extant textual and archaeological evidence, it is clear that Assyrian kings regularly moved and changed the plans of temples. Therefore, it was not problematic, generally speaking, for a Mesopotamian king to not build precisely on the original foundations of a temple. For some details, see Novotny, JCS 66 (2014) pp. 103–109; and Novotny, Kaskal 11 (2014) pp. 162–165.

⁸⁸ It is certain from contemporary inscriptions discovered at Ḫarrān, including numerous inscribed bricks, that work was indeed carried out on Eḫulḫul. Like Ashurbanipal, Nabonidus claims to have stationed metal(-plated) statues of wild bulls (*rīmū*) and long-haired heroes (*laḫmū*) in prominent gateways of the temple. A partially intact bowl (Nabonidus 52) and a bead (Nabonidus 53) attest to this Neo-Babylonian king dedicating some (cult) utensils to Eḫulḫul, in particular, a *kallu*-bowl, a *šulpu*-vessel, and (most likely) an ornamental dagger.

⁸⁹ Schaudig, *Inschriften Nabonids* p. 568 P1 ii 28'–31'.

⁹⁰ See, for example, Eichmann, Schaudig, and Hausleiter, *AAE* 17 (2006) pp. 163–176.

⁹¹ Schaudig, *Inschriften Nabonids* pp. 550–556 and 563–578. An annotated (lemmatized) online version of the Cyrus Cylinder is also available via the ‘Babylon 8’ subproject of the Royal Inscriptions of Babylonia online (RIBO) project; see <http://oracc.org/ribo/babylon8/Q006653/> [2020].

⁹² See the section ‘End of Nabonidus' Reign: Cyrus' Conquest of Babylonia’ below for further details.

⁹³ See, for example, Beaulieu, *Nabonidus* pp. 43–65; Schaudig, *Inschriften Nabonids* p. 21; and Tadmor, *Studies Landsberger* pp. 362–363. H. Tadmor was the first modern scholar to propose that Nabonidus actively promoted the god Sîn over Babylon's tutelary deity Marduk, something he felt could be clearly demonstrated in Nabonidus' own texts through the study of epithets. The most detailed study of the moon-god's elevation at this time is presented by P.-A. Beaulieu in his seminal study of Nabonidus' reign. That well-researched and detailed study has had a major impact on scholarship since its publication. A new study of the god Sîn by A. Hänen (The Theologies and the Cults of the Moon God Sîn in Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian Times) is in an advanced state of preparation and will soon appear. That book will present a comprehensive analysis of the available first-millennium-BC sources for that important god.

In more recent years, this view of Babylon's last native king has been increasingly scrutinized. A. Kuhrt was the first to re-examine the modern, perceived image of Nabonidus as a pro-Šîn adversary of the Marduk priesthood at Babylon.⁹⁴ In that study, Kuhrt convincingly demonstrated that modern explanations for Nabonidus' speedy downfall that are deeply rooted in the image of the Babylonian king presented by later pro-Cyrus sources⁹⁵ and Nabonidus' perceived elevation of the moon-god in favor of Marduk in his own inscriptions are not supported by contemporary Babylonian sources. In the latter case, she correctly notes that references to Šîn as "king of the gods" (Akk. *šar ili*) and "Enlil of the gods" (Akk. *Enlil ili*) are generally limited to texts and passages recording work on the Eḫulḫul ("House which Gives Joy") temple at Ḥarrān and, thus, suggests that these few pieces of contemporary evidence fail to provide a strong case for Nabonidus being a fanatic devotee of the moon-god who sought to replace Marduk with Šîn as the national god of Babylon.⁹⁶ Therefore, we should abandon the notion that this king of Babylon actively sought to promote the moon-god outside of that deity's cult centers, as the Cyrus Cylinder and the Verse Account would have us believe.⁹⁷

End of Nabonidus' Reign: Cyrus' Conquest of Babylonia

The last native dynasty of Babylon came to a quick and abrupt end. The Persian king Cyrus II (559–530), the very man who had 'liberated' the city Ḥarrān from the Medes when he defeated Astyages shortly after Nabonidus had become king, eventually set his eyes on Babylonia, once he had successfully concluded his war with the wealthy kingdom of Lydia and its famous king Croesus.⁹⁸ In 539, Nabonidus' seventeenth regnal year, the Persian king marched on Babylonia.⁹⁹ The beginning of that year, if the Nabonidus Chronicle is to be believed, started off as normal, that is, the king held the New Year's festival. However, by the middle of the year, the Babylonian king was on the defensive and started transferring Babylonia's gods and goddesses from their home cities into the fortified walls of the capital Babylon. Not all of the deities, including the revered gods of Borsippa and Sippar, made it to Babylon before the first clash between the Babylonian and Persian armies took place.

The war, as most textual sources seem to report, was very short and lasted less than thirty days. In the month Tašritu (VII), on an unspecified day, Nabonidus' forces fought Cyrus' troops at Opis, a city located near the eastern bank of the Tigris River, where its course is not very far from that of the Euphrates River.¹⁰⁰ On the 14th

⁹⁴ Kuhrt, *Pagan Priests* pp. 119–155. Note that already in 1960, P. Garelli (*Dictionnaire de la Bible* 6 [1960] pp. 283–284) had given a well-rounded, carefully-considered evaluation of the impact of Nabonidus' reverence of the moon-god. Garelli concluded that the elevated position of Šîn was confined to texts/passages concerning activities at Ḥarrān and, therefore, had little/no impact on Marduk's position in the pantheon, thus, Nabonidus' veneration for the moon-god was not seen as a threat to the influence of the priests in Babylon.

⁹⁵ M. Jursa (*PBA* 136 [2007] pp. 74–76) has stressed that Babylonian temples, including Esagil at Babylon, were probably not strong or independent enough to have played a significant role in Nabonidus' downfall. Moreover, contemporary cuneiform sources seem to show Babylonia as an internally stable country at this time. Extant sources do not support the idea that the clergy strongly opposed Nabonidus' policies or actively sought to have him removed as king; for this opinion, see Jursa, *Imperien und Reiche* p. 125; and Jursa, *Tempel im Alten Orient* p. 162.

⁹⁶ P.-A. Beaulieu (*Nabonidus* p. 43) has noted that no Neo-Babylonian religious text providing a theological explanation for Šîn as the supreme deity — for example, compositions comparable to the elevation of Marduk in the Babylonian myth of creation, *Enūma eliš*, or the elevation of the goddess Ištar by the kings of Agade — has yet come to light. This might simply be a coincidence or provide further proof that Nabonidus (and his mother Adad-guppi) made no attempt to elevate the moon-god outside of his well-established cult centers at Ḥarrān and Ur.

⁹⁷ For a recent study on the matter, see Da Riva, *Concepts of Kingship in Antiquity* pp. 45–46. In that study, Da Riva demonstrated that in Nabonidus' inscriptions mentioning Šîn and Šamaš (texts mostly found at Sippar) the glorification of the moon-god never exceeds that of the sun-god. Moreover, she also notes that Šamaš is venerated in those same texts (from Sippar) as if he was the most important god in the pantheon, that is, like Marduk. Since pro-Cyrus compositions do not depict Nabonidus as a Šamaš fanatic, modern scholars have never proposed that that Babylonian king sought to supplant Marduk with Šamaš.

⁹⁸ For the translations of the primary sources dealing with the events of Cyrus' reign, see Kuhrt, *Persian Empire* pp. 56–103. For Cyrus' war against Astyages of Media, see *op. cit.* pp. 56–60 §C nos. 6–11; for his conquest of Lydia and western Asia Minor, see *op. cit.* pp. 60–70 §D nos. 12–20; and for the Persian conquest of Babylonia, see *op. cit.* pp. 70–87 §E nos. 21–28. A. Kuhrt divides the sources dealing with Cyrus' defeat of Nabonidus into three broad categories: (a) the Babylonian evidence (the Cyrus Cylinder [no. 21], the Verse Account [no. 23], the Dynastic Prophecy [no. 24], Berossus' *Babyloniaca* [no. 25 = FGrH 680 F10a]); (b) Old Testament writers (Isaiah 41:1–5, 25, 42:1–7, 28–45:7 [no. 26]; and Ezra 6:2–5 [no. 27]), and (c) Greek sources (Herodotus 1 177–178 and 188–192). The Nabonidus Chronicle (see pp. 24–25) also records the details of the end of Nabonidus' reign. The fall of Babylon is also mentioned by Xenophon in his *Cyropaedia* (VII 5). For a detailed analysis of the accounts of the classical authors, see Heller, *Spätzeit* pp. 212–220; and Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander* pp. 41–43.

⁹⁹ Hostilities between the two kings may have begun already in 540, Nabonidus' 16th regnal year, as the Nabonidus Chronicle (iii 1'–4') might indicate. That passage in the Nabonidus Chronicle is not sufficiently preserved for scholars to be able to properly analyze its contents. For interpretations of the events of 540, see, for example, Beaulieu, *Nabonidus* pp. 219–220; Heller, *Spätzeit* p. 208; and Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander* pp. 42–43. According to the Dynastic Prophecy, an Akkadian text written in the Hellenistic Period, Cyrus is portrayed as the aggressor/instigator of the war. For a translation of that text, which 'foresaw' Cyrus' victory, see, for example, Kuhrt, *Persian Empire* p. 80.

¹⁰⁰ The city of Opis is where the Assyrian king Sennacherib famously had Syrian-built ships dragged overland on rollers from the Tigris River to the Euphrates River in 694 (Grayson and Novotny, *RINAP* 3/1 p. 12, with n. 23). Sippar and Sippar-Anunitu are situated between the Tigris and Euphrates at the point where those two rivers are the closest.

of that same month, not far from Opis, the Persian army is reported to have captured the important city Sippar, the revered cult center of the god Šamaš, without a fight; Nabonidus is said to have fled (south).¹⁰¹ Two days later, on the 16th of Tašritu, Ugbaru, the governor of Gutium, an important ally of Cyrus, together with (part of) the Persian army, took Babylon, also allegedly without battle.¹⁰² Nabonidus was captured, but it is unclear where this took place; the Nabonidus Chronicle states that it was in Babylon, whereas the much later account of Berossos records that the on-the-run king of Babylon surrendered near Borsippa.¹⁰³ According to Berossos, the captured Babylonian king was exiled to Carmania, in southern Iran, where Nabonidus is said to have eventually died.¹⁰⁴ As to the fate of Belshazzar, that is unknown since no sources record it; he might have died in battle, been executed, or been exiled together with his father. Cyrus II ruled Babylonia until his death in 530 and, as far as we can tell, there was peace throughout Babylonia during that time.

Texts Included in RINBE 2

As is evident from its title, this volume includes editions of all of the known royal inscriptions of the Neo-Babylonian kings Amēl-Marduk, Neriglissar, and Nabonidus. Since no official inscriptions of Lâbâši-Marduk have yet been discovered, no texts of his are edited in RINBE 2; this is also why his name is not included in the book's title.

In total, eighty-seven Akkadian inscriptions are included here. The majority of these texts have been carefully edited in two scholarly monographs: Da Riva, *SANER 3* and Schaudig, *Inschriften Nabonids*. Since the publication of those books, eighteen additional inscribed objects of Nabonidus, including a badly damaged stele from Tēmā (Nabonidus 56) and a heavily weathered rock relief from Padakku (Nabonidus 54), have come to light. Five of these have already been published, while the others (Nabonidus 11–12, 21, 30, 41–42, 58–61, 1002, and 1006–1007) have not.¹⁰⁵ All of these new inscriptions are edited here. For further details about the inscriptions included in this volume, see the Survey of the Inscribed Objects section below.

Texts Excluded from RINBE 2

One inscription attributed to Neriglissar and edited in Da Riva, *SANER 3* (VA 2659) is not included here because that text is actually a duplicate of an unpublished inscription of Nebuchadnezzar II recording his and his father's

¹⁰¹ It is difficult to know whether or not Sippar was actually seized without bloodshed since many of the extant sources recording Cyrus' conquest of Babylonia are biased, anti-Nabonidus pieces of propaganda or later works inspired or influenced by them, for example, the Cyrus Cylinder (<http://oracc.org/ribo/babylon8/Q006653/> [2020]). Since those sources want their intended audience to believe that Babylonia's deities and people abandoned Nabonidus completely and allowed Cyrus, the god Marduk's new earthly representative, to take control of Babylon and all of its territory without having to resort to violence, it is difficult for modern historians to be certain which 'facts' are authentic and which are not. Therefore, even with a source such as the Nabonidus Chronicle, which is supposed to be an unbiased witness to the events that unfolded in Babylonia at that time, we cannot be absolutely certain that Sippar, and later Babylon, were taken without a fight.

¹⁰² Nabonidus Chronicle iii 15'–16' and Cyrus Cylinder line 17 ("without a fight or battle, he (Marduk) allowed him (Cyrus) to enter Šuanna"; <http://oracc.org/ribo/babylon8/Q006653/> [2020]). Herodotus (I 191) states that the city was taken without a fight because Cyrus had his army redirect the course of the Euphrates River and had his army secretly enter Babylon via the dried-out river bed. For a study of Herodotus' account, see Rollinger, *Herodots Babylonischer Logos* pp. 19–28.

¹⁰³ Nabonidus Chronicle iii 16' and Cyrus Cylinder line 17 ("He (Marduk) delivered Nabonidus, the king who did not revere him, into his (Cyrus') hands"). According to early third-century-BC Babylonian scholar Berossos (*Babyloniaca* = FGrH 680 F10a), Nabonidus surrendered to Cyrus at Borsippa, after the Persian king is said to have razed Babylon's walls. A. Kuhrt (*Persian Empire* p. 82 n. 4) suggests that Borsippa is a mistake for Sippar, however, this need not be the case since that city was captured by Persian forces before Nabonidus retreated. A likely scenario, if Berossos' account is correct about where Nabonidus surrendered to Cyrus, is that the Babylonian king fled south from Sippar on the 14th of Tašritu (VII) to Babylon, but failed to reach Babylon before its capture by Ugbaru on the 16th. With nowhere to run, Nabonidus fled to the nearest city, Borsippa. Since Nabonidus was well aware that Borsippa was not as well fortified as Babylon, he chose to surrender rather than to endure a siege. The text of the Cyrus Cylinder does not record where Nabonidus was captured. Furthermore, the sources contradict one another on the order of events. The Nabonidus Chronicle states that the Babylonian king was captured in Tašritu (sometime after the 16th and before the end of the month) and that Cyrus only entered Babylon on the 3rd of Arahsamna (VII). The Cyrus Cylinder (line 17) and Berossos both record that the Persian king entered Babylon and then captured Nabonidus.

¹⁰⁴ The Dynastic Prophecy (Kuhrt, *Persian Empire* p. 80) also reports that Cyrus had Nabonidus exiled, although the place where this Babylonian king spent his final days is not recorded in that text. U. Moortgat-Correns (*SMEA* 38 [1996] pp. 153–177) has argued that Nabonidus was buried in the South Palace in Babylon. As H. Schaudig (*Inschriften Nabonids* pp. 16–17) has already pointed out, Moortgat-Correns' proposed location for Nabonidus' grave is highly unlikely.

¹⁰⁵ For the published texts, see Frame in Spar, *CTMMA* 4 no. 176; Schaudig, *AAE* 17 (2006) pp. 169–174; Hausleiter and Schaudig, *ZORA* 9 (2016) pp. 224–240; and in Hausleiter, *ATLAL* 25 (2018) pp. 99–100 and pl. 2.20 figs. c–e. Some of the previously unpublished Babylonian inscriptions were mentioned in Da Riva, *GMTR* 4 (p. 131). Four soon-to-be-published inscriptions from Tēmā were included here courtesy of H. Schaudig (Schaudig in Eichmann and Hausleiter, *Tayma* 2 nos. 3–6).

reconstruction of Ekunankuga (“House, Pure Stairway of Heaven”), the ziggurat at Sippar, now in the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin (VA 8410).¹⁰⁶ That inscription will be edited in RINBE 1/2, with the inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar II from Sippar.

Two texts written on multi-column clay tablets attributed to Nabonidus and edited in Schaudig, *Inschriften Nabonids* (BM 68234 and BM 68321) are not included in the present volume since A. Bartelmus and J. Taylor have convincingly demonstrated that these two tablets are not inscribed with copies of royal inscriptions of Babylon’s last native king.¹⁰⁷ BM 68321 joins BM 67673 + BM 71553 (+) BM 73514¹⁰⁸ and the new BM 67673+ is a virtually complete clay tablet inscribed with a Neo-Babylonian copy (probably dating to the time of Nabonidus) of Sumerian inscriptions of the Kassite kings Kurigalzu I and Šagarakti-Šuriaš recording their restorations of the E(ul)maš temple at Sippar-Anunītu, together with an Akkadian translation.¹⁰⁹ BM 68234 appears to be a Neo-Babylonian copy of the statue inscription of Šagarakti-Šuriaš that Nabonidus quotes verbatim in his inscriptions.¹¹⁰ Because these two tablets do not contain inscriptions of Nabonidus, they are excluded from RINBE 2. Two cylinder fragments cited in *Catalogue of the Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum 4–5* as possibly being attributed to Nabonidus, K 10066 and Sm 486, are not included in the present volume since the authors are not convinced that the inscriptions written on these two pieces were composed in the name of Nabonidus, despite the mention of Agade and Eulmaš in K 10066. Lastly, a damaged multi-column cylinder discovered at Babylon, VA Bab 611 (BE 43333), might bear an inscription of Nabonidus or Nebuchadnezzar II. Because the authors tentatively think that the text inscribed on that cylinder likely recorded Nebuchadnezzar’s, not Nabonidus’, restoration of Eḫursagsikilla (“House, Pure Mountain”; the temple of the goddess Ninkarrak) or Esabad (“House of the Open Ear”; the temple of Gula) at Babylon, that inscription is excluded from RINBE 2; it will be edited as a 1000-number of Nebuchadnezzar II in RINBE 1/2.

Some famous historical texts concerning Amēl-Marduk and Nabonidus are not edited in this volume since they are not royal inscriptions. These are the four ‘propaganda’ texts edited in Schaudig, *Inschriften Nabonids* (pp. 563–595 P1–P4):¹¹¹ the first two, the Verse Account (= P1) and the King of Justice [Account] (= P2), present Nabonidus in a rather negative way, while the last two, a fragmentarily preserved chronographic text (= P3) and the so-called Royal Chronicle (= P4), offer positive images of Nabonidus’ seventeen-year-long reign. The style of the fourth text, the Royal Chronicle, closely resembles a royal inscription and, like texts classified as chronicles, it is written in the third person; Neo-Babylonian inscriptions are usually written in the first person. Unlike Nabonidus’ own inscriptions, the Royal Chronicle records campaigns against the city Ammanānu in Syria and against cities in Arabia; accounts of military achievements are generally not found in Neo-Babylonian inscriptions.¹¹² That text also narrates the consecration of Nabonidus’ daughter En-nigaldi-Nanna as *ēntu*-priestess of the moon-god Sîn at Ur and the rebuilding of the temple of the sun-god Šamaš at Sippar, topics known from several of Nabonidus’ inscriptions. A translation of that text, however, is provided below, on pp. 27–28.

Unlike Schaudig, *Inschriften Nabonids*, the inscriptions of the Persian king Cyrus II, including the famous Cyrus Cylinder, a text that negatively portrays Nabonidus and that has shaped the image of that Babylonian king

¹⁰⁶ Da Riva, *SANER* 3 pp. 138–140.

¹⁰⁷ See Bartelmus and Taylor, *JCS* 66 (2014) pp. 113–128. BM 68234 and BM 68321 were edited respectively in Schaudig, *Inschriften Nabonids* as text no. 2.15^a (p. 467) text no. 2.16 (pp. 468–469).

¹⁰⁸ BM 68321 does not indirectly join BM 68234, as H. Schaudig (*Inschriften Nabonids* pp. 467–468) had tentatively suggested.

¹⁰⁹ A. Bartelmus and J. Taylor (*JCS* 66 [2014] pp. 114 and 124) propose “that the Sumerian inscriptions [on BM 67673+] are copies of originals, that the compilation of them onto a single tablet is the work of a Neo-Babylonian scribe, and that the Akkadian version is a translation made at that same time” and conclude that “BM 67673+ is not the Šagarakti-Šuriaš text that Nabonidus claims to have found” in his inscriptions.

The temple is called Emaš, rather than Eulmaš, in these inscriptions. As already pointed out by A. Bartelmus and J. Taylor (*ibid.* pp. 124–125), it is unclear “whether Emaš is another name for Eulmaš or is distinct.” They further state that “it is in principle possible that Emaš could be the name of a shrine within Eulmaš or even another building altogether.”

¹¹⁰ A. Bartelmus and J. Taylor (*JCS* 66 [2014] p. 124) conclude that “BM 68234 appears to give that text [=the Šagarakti-Šuriaš text that Nabonidus claims to have found], matching exactly. It is presented as a copy of an old inscription in the classical style, written in suitably archaizing characters, and in monolingual Akkadian form, no less. ... it must be either a careful copy of an original monolingual Akkadian text or a forgery in part (i.e., a translation put into archaizing characters) or in whole (i.e., a tablet created to act as a ‘copy’ of the inscription quoted by Nabonidus). The orthography of the text suggests that it may be a careful copy of an original. We may question whether BM 68234 was produced directly or indirectly as a consequence of Nabonidus’ excavations, in exactly the same way as for BM 67673+. The information reproduced on BM 68234 was nevertheless available to, and deemed important by, Nabonidus.”

¹¹¹ See also, for example, De Breucker, *Political Memory* pp. 75–94; and Waerzeggers, *Exile and Return* pp. 181–222.

¹¹² The Wadi Brissa inscription (and possibly the Nahr el-Kelb inscription) of Nebuchadnezzar II and an inscription of Neriglissar record campaigns; the former describes military expeditions in Lebanon, while the latter describes a campaign in Cilicia. See respectively Da Riva, *Twin Inscriptions*; and Neriglissar 7.

in modern scholarship for a very long time, are not included in RINBE 2 since Cyrus was not a native king of Babylon.¹¹³

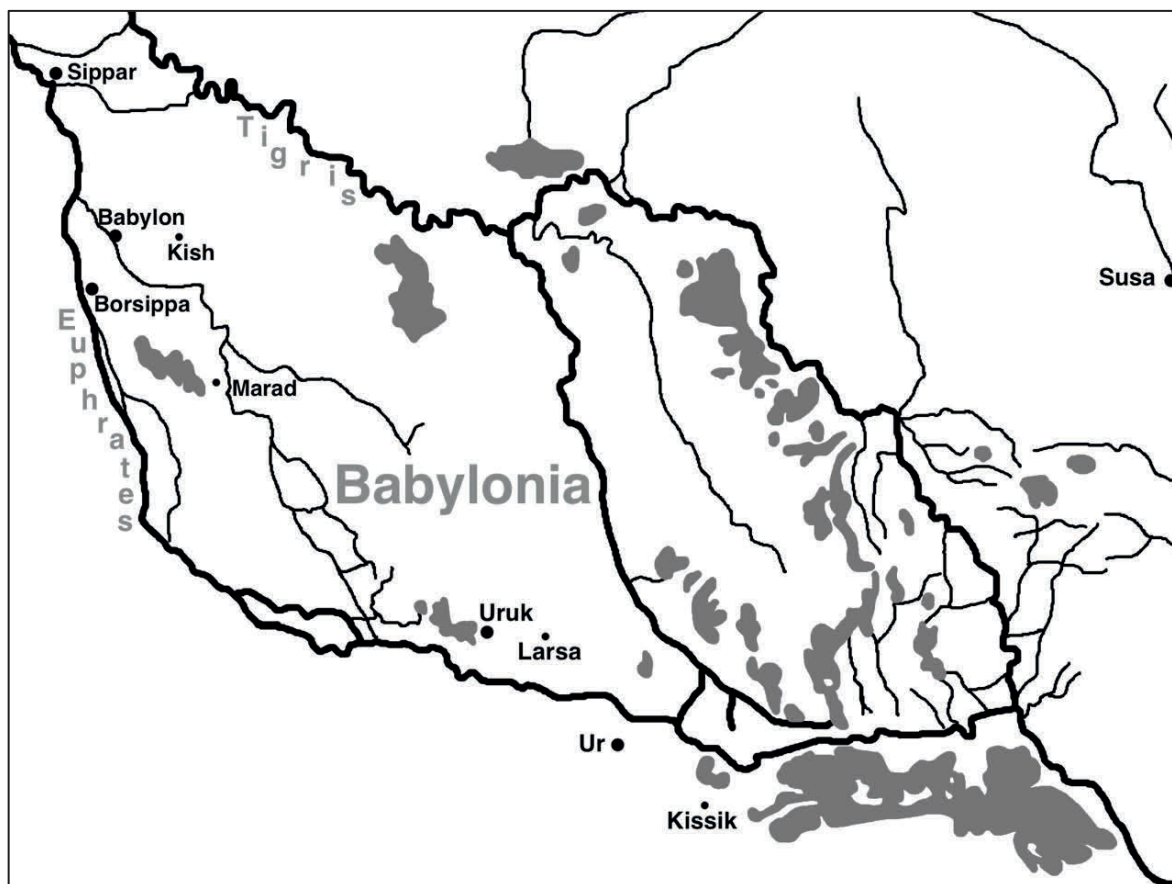


Figure 1. Map showing the most important sites in Babylonia where the inscriptions of Amēl-Marduk, Neriglissar, and Nabonidus were found.

Survey of the Inscribed Objects

Compared to the dynasty's most famous ruler Nebuchadnezzar II, relatively few inscriptions of the last four native kings of Babylon exist today; there are far fewer texts for all four rulers combined than there are for Nebuchadnezzar alone. At present, eighty-seven inscriptions for the period from 561 to 539 are known: six from the time of Amēl-Marduk, eight from the reign of Neriglissar, and seventy-three from when Nabonidus sat on the throne; unsurprisingly, not a single inscription from the short, two- to three-month reign of Lâbâši-Marduk has come to light. These Akkadian compositions,¹¹⁴ which are written in the Standard Babylonian dialect and in contemporary and archaizing Neo-Babylonian script, are known from approximately 280 clay and stone objects, which originate from no less than sixteen different sites in Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey. These objects come from archaeological excavations, as well as from antiquities markets. Many are now housed in museum collections, while some are either kept in private collections, were left in the field (or in situ), or have been lost forever. The majority of the still-accessible pieces are in the British Museum (London) and the Vorderasiatisches Museum (Berlin).

¹¹³ New editions of Cyrus' Akkadian inscriptions from Babylon, Ur, and Uruk, with English translations, are available online via the Babylon 8 project of RIBO; see <http://oracc.org/ribo/babylon8/> [2020].

¹¹⁴ To date, no Sumerian or bilingual Akkadian-Sumerian texts for the Neo-Babylonian dynasty have been discovered. However, Aramaic is sometimes used on bricks; see the commentaries of Nabonidus 7 and 8 for further details. For information about the language of the inscriptions (with references to earlier literature), see, for example Da Riva, GMTR 4 pp. 89–91; and M.P. Streck, *Semitic Languages* pp. 381–382 (for further bibliographical references).

Provenances of the inscriptions of Amēl-Marduk, Neriglissar, and Nabonidus

Provenance	Text nos.
Babylon	Amēl-Marduk 1–3; Neriglissar 1–5; Nabonidus 1 (ex. 2), 2–4, 5, 7, 8 (exs. 1–6), 9–12, 26 (ex. 2), 28 (exs. 51–53), 43, 1001, 1003
Borsippa	Nabonidus 13, 1002
Ḫarrān	Nabonidus 46–53, 2001
Kish	Nabonidus 8 (ex. 8 [Tell Bender]), 14, 1004
Kissik	Nabonidus 15, 1005
Larsa	Nabonidus 16 (exs. 1–2 and 7), 17, 18 (exs. 1–6, 8, and 21–22)
Marad	Nabonidus 19, 1006
Nasiriyeh	Nabonidus 39 (ex. 6)
Padakku	Nabonidus 54
Sela'	Nabonidus 55
Seleucia	Nabonidus 8 (ex. 7), 20
Sippar	Neriglissar 6; Nabonidus 21–25, 26 (ex. 1), 26, 27 (exs. 2–4), 28 (exs. 1–50), 29–31, 1007–1011
Susa	Amēl-Marduk 4–6; Neriglissar 8
Tēmā	Nabonidus 56–61
Ur	Nabonidus 27 (ex. 1 and possibly exs. 2–3), 32–38, 39 (exs. 1–5 and 7–9)
Uruk	Nabonidus 16 (exs. 1–6), 18 (exs. 7, 9–20), 40

Types of objects upon which the texts of Amēl-Marduk, Neriglissar, and Nabonidus are inscribed¹¹⁵

Object Type	Text No.
Bricks	Amēl-Marduk 1; Neriglissar 4–5; Nabonidus 7–9, 18, 20, 31, 37–39, 51, 1005
Clay Cylinders	Neriglissar 1–3, 6–7; Nabonidus 1–2, 10–16, 19, 21–26, 27 (exs. 1–3), 28–29, 32–35, 41–42, 46, 1001–1002, 1004, 1006–1010
Clay Tablets	Nabonidus 5, 27 (ex. 4), 30, 44–45, 1011
Cliff Faces	Nabonidus 54–55
Door Socket	Nabonidus 36
Paving Stones	Amēl-Marduk 2
Pearl	Nabonidus 53
Pedestal	Nabonidus 57
Steles	Nabonidus 3–4, 17, 40, 43, 47, 56, 1003, 2001
Stone Fragments	Nabonidus 48–50, 58–61
Stone Vessels	Amēl-Marduk 3–6; Neriglissar 8; Nabonidus 52

Script of the inscriptions of Amēl-Marduk, Neriglissar, and Nabonidus

Script	Text no.
Contemporary Neo-Babylonian	Amēl-Marduk 3–6; Neriglissar 2–3, 6, 8; Nabonidus 1, 5, 10–12, 14–17, 19, 21–24, 26–30, 32–34, 40–61, 1002, 1004, 1006–1007, 1010–1011, 2001
Archaizing Neo-Babylonian	Amēl-Marduk 1–2; Neriglissar 4–5, 7; Nabonidus 3–4, 7–8, 13, 18, 20, 25, 31, 35–39, 1001, 1003, 1008–1009
Contemporary and Archaizing Neo-Babylonian	Neriglissar 1; Nabonidus 2

The extant texts are inscribed or stamped on eleven different types of clay and stone objects: bricks, clay cylinders, clay tablets, cliff faces, door sockets, paving stones, steles, stone beads (pearls), stone fragments (original object type uncertain), stone pedestals (for steles or anthropomorphic statues) and stone vessels (vases

¹¹⁵ Da Riva discusses the different material supports of Neo-Babylonian royal inscriptions in GTMR 4; see pp. 33–43 of that book.

and bowls). Bricks and clay cylinders are the best attested media of Neo-Babylonian kings; these two object types make up approximately sixty-three percent of the corpus.¹¹⁶

Six inscriptions of Amēl-Marduk are known today. They were inscribed on a paving stone and several alabaster vases, as well as stamped on a couple of bricks. The objects were discovered at Babylon and Susa. There are slightly more official texts for his immediate successor Neriglissar. To date, eight distinct inscriptions of his have been identified. These are known from bricks, clay cylinders, and an alabaster vase. Some of the objects bearing inscriptions of Neriglissar were discovered at Babylon, during R. Koldewey's excavations, while others originate from other sites, including Sippar and Susa.

There is little surprise that more inscriptions are known for Nabonidus than for his three immediate predecessors since Babylon's last native ruler sat on the throne for seventeen years, giving his scribes ample time to write numerous texts on his behalf. Sixty-one inscriptions can be certainly attributed to Nabonidus, while another nine might have been composed in his name. In addition, one further inscription was written in his mother Adad-guppi's name. In total, seventy royal inscriptions from 555–539 are currently known. These self-aggrandizing texts were written (or stamped) on several bricks, numerous clay cylinders (of various shapes, sizes, and formats), several single- and multi-column clay tablets, two cliff faces, a door socket, a few paving stones, several steles, a pearl, and a stone bowl. Most of the objects bearing his name come from modern-day southern Iraq (Babylon, Borsippa, Kish, Kissik, Larsa, Marad, Nasiriyeh, Seleucia, Sippar, Ur, and Uruk) and a handful come from Jordan (Sela'), Saudi Arabia (Padakku, Tēmā), and Turkey (Ḥarrān).

Clay Cylinders

The clay cylinder was the most widely used medium for inscribing narrative inscriptions of Babylonian kings.¹¹⁷ Although they are less numerous than inscribed or stamped bricks, inscribed cylinders are attested for most of the kings of the Neo-Babylonian Empire; five inscriptions of Neriglissar and at least thirty-two inscriptions of Nabonidus are known to have been written on this versatile medium.¹¹⁸ Babylonian cylinders are generally 'barrel-shaped,' rather than being a true 'cylinder,' they vary in both size and format, and can be hollow, pierced, or solid.¹¹⁹ Cylinders, depending on the length of the inscription written on them, distribute the text over one, two, three, or four columns. At present, only the two- and three-column formats are attested for Neriglissar's and Nabonidus' inscriptions.¹²⁰ Most of those texts were written in contemporary Neo-Babylonian script. A few, however, were inscribed using archaizing sign forms or using both contemporary and archaizing scripts.¹²¹

Some texts are known from a single exemplar, while other inscriptions are attested in several or numerous exemplars. For example, only one copy of the Tiara Cylinder of Nabonidus (text no. 25) has come to light, while

¹¹⁶ Respectively, inscriptions written on bricks and cylinders make up approximately seventeen and forty-five percent of the known texts of Amēl-Marduk, Neriglissar, and Nabonidus.

¹¹⁷ This is in contrast to late Neo-Assyrian kings (721–612), who preferred clay prisms since that medium was better suited for inscribing long, detailed accounts of their military and building activities. To date, only one prism bearing an inscription of a Neo-Babylonian king is extant. For the Nebuchadnezzar II prism, see Da Riva, ZA 103 (2013) pp. 196–229.

¹¹⁸ These are Neriglissar 1–3 and 6–7; and Nabonidus 1–2, 10–16, 19, 21–26, 27 exs. 1–3, 28–29, 32–35, 41–42, and 46. In addition, five more fragmentarily preserved cylinder might preserve inscriptions of Nabonidus; these are Nabonidus 1001–1002, 1004, and 1006–1010. Ten cylinder inscriptions of Nabopolassar have been published and over fifty cylinder inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar II have been positively identified; see Da Riva, GMTR 4 pp. 116–117 §1.2 and pp. 118–122 §2.2. No cylinder inscriptions from the reigns of Amēl-Marduk and Lābāši-Marduk have been discovered or identified.

¹¹⁹ For a summary of the various shapes and formats of cylinder, as well as the scholarly terminology for them, see Da Riva, GMTR 4 pp. 37–38; and Taylor, BBVO 26 pp. 44–59. CDLI refers to these objects as both barrels and cylinders. On the shape, R. Da Riva (GMTR 4 p. 37) states: "From a strictly geometrical point of view, the general term 'cylinder' does not correspond to the physical appearance of the objects, for none of them is a cylinder. As noted above, they are rather barrel-shaped objects: symmetrical or asymmetrical ovoids with more or less flattened ends." Da Riva has pointed out (GMTR 4 p. 38) that hollow cylinders were made on a wheel and were "probably placed on wooden(?) supports inserted in a pole which was disposed horizontally, so that the cylinder could be rolled on its axis to be read"; cylinders pierced on one side were "placed on a pole disposed either vertically or horizontally"; and solid cylinders might have been "placed standing on one end, or in some other structure."

¹²⁰ All of the known cylinders of Neriglissar are of the two-column format, while Nabonidus inscriptions were written on both two- and three column cylinders. Cylinders with four columns of text are known only from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II. The single column format is used by Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar II; note that the one attested one-column cylinder of Nebuchadnezzar might have been a scribal exercise (Da Riva, GMTR 4 p. 39).

¹²¹ Neriglissar 1 (Esagil Inscription) and Nabonidus 2 (Emašdari Cylinder) are known from copies written in both contemporary Neo-Babylonian and archaizing Neo-Babylonian scripts. It has been suggested that the Old Babylonian monumental script of the Codex Hammurāpi, even though it had been carried off to Susa by the Elamites in the twelfth century, had a strong influence on the script used for writing out Neo-Babylonian royal inscriptions; see, for example, Berger, NbK p. 95; Schaudig, Inschriften Nabonids p. 32 n. 133; and Da Riva, GMTR 4 p. 77 n. 77. As R. Da Riva has pointed out, the use of Old Babylonian sign forms is an archaism that diminishes that over the course of the Neo-Babylonian period. During the reigns of Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar II, archaizing scripts was more commonly used to write out royal inscriptions than it was during the reigns of their successors.

approximately fifty-three copies of that same king's Eḫulḫul Cylinder (text no. 28) have been discovered.¹²² Although cylinders could differ considerably in size and format,¹²³ cylinders bearing the same inscription tended to be homogeneous.¹²⁴ Given the uniformity of most Neo-Babylonian royal compositions — although numerous orthographical variants, scribal errors, omissions, additions, and other textual variations can be shared by more than one exemplar — it is difficult to determine with any degree of certainty which copy (or copies) of an inscription should be regarded as the 'principal' or 'original' version of the composition, especially when more than one exemplar was found in situ, that is, deposited within the brick structure of a building.¹²⁵ The distribution of text, the choice of individual signs, and grammatical forms vary from copy to copy. As far as we are aware, no two exemplars of any cylinder inscription are one hundred percent identical.

Cylinder inscriptions provide us with the most contemporary information about the numerous building activities of Neo-Babylonian kings (see above).¹²⁶ Without these texts, a great deal of what we know about the reigns of these rulers would be lost as that information is often not recorded in other (contemporary and later) sources. However, since reports of construction in Neo-Babylonian building inscriptions are, as one expects, more concerned with royal ideology than with historical reality, their contents should not be taken at face value. Because construction projects are always presented as a *fait accompli* and because the details provided in the texts can be ambiguous, scholars often have to make assumptions about the nature and extent of a given building activity, especially when a king's claims cannot be confirmed from the archaeological record. Thus, it is not always clear whether a ruler is simply making minor repairs to part of the building or rebuilding it in its entirety from top to bottom and whether or not a project was actually carried out in full or whether only part of the work had been finished by the end of the king's reign. Despite the inherent problems with this genre of text, cylinder inscriptions nevertheless provide information on construction enterprises of Neriglissar and Nabonidus in no less than seventeen cities, including the capital of the Empire, Babylon.¹²⁷ Bricks, paving stones, and door sockets support the claim that the former king sponsored construction at Babylon and give proof that the latter ruler undertook building at Babylon, Ḫarrān, Larsa, Seleucia (or Opis), Sippar, Ur, and Uruk, thereby giving credibility to some of the claims made by Neriglissar and Nabonidus in inscriptions written on multi-column clay cylinders.¹²⁸

Clay Tablets

Few Neo-Babylonian inscriptions are preserved on clay tablets and all of these were either drafts of new inscriptions, models of texts to be copied on other objects (i.e., cylinders and steles), archival copies of foundation records and monuments, or scribal exercises.¹²⁹ Five or six tablets are inscribed with official inscriptions of Nabonidus.¹³⁰ A short, ten-line text recording the fashioning and dedication of an inscribed *musukkannu*-wood offering table to the goddess Iṣtar written on an *u'iltu*-tablet, a 'pillow-shaped' tablet, is a good example of a draft

¹²² Respectively Nabonidus 25 (Tiara Cylinder) and 28 (Eḫulḫul Cylinder). H. Schaudig (Inscripfen Nabonids pp. 412–414) catalogued seventy-five exemplars of the latter text, but that number of witnesses has been greatly reduced by joins made by the present authors (primarily Weiershäuser).

¹²³ The cylinders edited in the volume range in size from 9.5 cm in length and 4.7 cm in diameter (Nabonidus 32 [Elugalgalgasisa Cylinder] ex. 4) to 24.7 cm in length and 15.4 cm in diameter (Nabonidus 27 ex. 2). The thickness of the clay of hollow cylinders vary from 6 mm to more than 2 cm.

¹²⁴ As noted already by R. Da Riva (GMTR 4 p. 39).

¹²⁵ Approximately one-third of the now-extant Neo-Babylonian cylinders originate from a secure archaeological context; seventy-five percent of those come from the early-twentieth century German excavations at Babylon. Given the general lack of a find spot, it should be stressed here that not all cylinders were intended to be 'foundation documents,' that is, to be deposited in the palace, temple, or wall whose construction they commemorate. R. Da Riva (GMTR 4 pp. 38–39) has already noted that some cylinders were clearly inscribed by an inexperienced scribe or student, as can be inferred from the high number of mistakes, that some were written to serve as an archival copy, and that others cylinders might have been displayed publicly.

¹²⁶ As mentioned above, few Neo-Babylonian inscriptions record the military activities. See n. 112 above.

¹²⁷ In alphabetical order, these are Agade, Babylon, Borsippa, Cutha, Dilbat, Ḫarrān, Kissik, Kish, Larsa, Marad, Seleucia, Sippar, Sippar-Anunitum, Tēmā, Ubassu, Ur, and Uruk.

¹²⁸ For example, Nabonidus' work on the ziggurat at Ur, Elugalgalgasisa ("House of the King who Lets Counsel Flourish"), described in cylinder inscription Nabonidus 32 (Elugalgalgasisa Cylinder), can be confirmed from not only twenty-three bricks found in the structure of that building (Nabonidus 38), but also from the fact that five cylinders inscribed with that text were found in situ, buried upright in a brick capsule, in all four corners of the second tier of Ur's temple-tower. According to some scholars (for example, Da Riva, GMTR 4 p. 39), the upright orientation of these small, two-column cylinders indicates that they were intended to be read vertically.

¹²⁹ Da Riva, GMTR 4 pp. 24–25 n. 111. As R. Da Riva (*ibid.*) has already pointed out, these tablets were never written to function as royal inscriptions, that is, to be placed into the foundation or the structure of a building or to be displayed publicly like a monument.

¹³⁰ These are Nabonidus 6, 27 ex. 4, 30, 44–45, and 1011. Given the short duration of the reigns of Amēl-Marduk and Neriglissar, it comes as little surprise that no clay tablets bearing inscriptions of those two kings are presently known. A handful of inscriptions of Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar II on clay tablets are extant.

or scribal exercise.¹³¹ A multi-column clay tablet bearing an inscription recording Nabonidus' restoration of temples in Sippar, Larsa, Agade, and Sippar-Anunītu, a text also preserved on three clay cylinders, might have served as a model for the copies of that text written on foundation documents or was an archival copy of that inscription. The other tablets bearing Nabonidus inscriptions are not sufficiently preserved to comment on their precise nature or function.

Baked Bricks

Given the number of known building activities of Babylon's last native kings, it comes as no surprise that brick inscriptions are attested for every ruler of the 'dynasty,' with the exception of Lâbâši-Marduk, whose tenure as king lasted only two or three months. Approximately two hundred bricks bearing one inscription of Amēl-Marduk, two texts of Neriglissar, and at least ten different inscriptions of Nabonidus have been published.¹³² These originate not only from the capital Babylon, but also from Ḥarrān, Kissik, Larsa, Seleucia, Sippar, Ur, and Uruk, and these objects, like door sockets and paving stones, provide physical proof of some of the construction projects recorded in inscriptions written on clay cylinders and tablets. Most of the brick inscriptions edited in this volume were written in an archaizing script; the Nabonidus bricks from Ḥarrān were stamped using contemporary Neo-Babylonian sign forms. In general, the bricks from this time are inscribed in a stamped and ruled frame; in scholarly literature, these brick inscriptions are sometimes referred to as 'stamped bricks,' which is correct with regard to the inscribed area of the brick, but wrong when referring to the inscription itself, which is written. These texts were placed on the face or on the edge of the bricks.¹³³

Unlike the brick inscriptions of Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar II, whose inscriptions on bricks could be quite lengthy, brick inscriptions of Amēl-Marduk, Neriglissar, and Nabonidus tended to be short, usually between three to six lines in length. In general, inscriptions on bricks during this time just contain the king's name, his titles and epithets (most often, *muddiš esagil u ezida* "the one who renovates Esagil and Ezida") and the name of his father and, therefore, provide no chronological information or details about the structure in which they were placed.¹³⁴ A few of Nabonidus' brick inscriptions from Ḥarrān and Ur, however, provide some information about the king's building activities. The Ḥarrān bricks mention the rebuilding of Eḫulḫul, while the Ur bricks state that the king worked on Egipar (the residence of the *ēntu*-priestess), Elugalgalgasisa (the ziggurat), and Enunmah (a building inside the Ekišnuḡal complex).

Stone Paving Slabs

Very few Neo-Babylonian paving stones outside of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II were discovered during the German excavations at Babylon.¹³⁵ At present, only one such object is presently attested and it bears a short, two-line proprietary inscription of Amēl-Marduk.¹³⁶

Stone Door Sockets

At present, only one inscribed Neo-Babylonian door socket has come to light and it is engraved with an inscription of Nabonidus discovered at Ur.¹³⁷ This door socket commemorates the rebuilding of the Egipar temple, the age-old, traditional residence of the *ēntu*-priestess at Ur, and its discovery provides physical proof that this Neo-Babylonian king undertook construction on that building. The inscription itself is unusual since the cuneiform signs are not only written in an archaizing script, but the text is engraved on the door socket in

¹³¹ Nabonidus 5. For some details on the *u'iltu*-tablet format (1:2 ratio), see Radner, *Nineveh 612 BC* pp. 72–73 (with fig. 8). As has been already pointed out by H. Schaudig (*Inscriften Nabonids* p. 476), this short text contains two scribal errors and, therefore, unlikely served as a model for the inscription that was physically engraved on the metal plating of that offering table.

¹³² These are Amēl-Marduk 1; Neriglissar 4–5; Nabonidus 7–9, 18, 20, 31, 37–39, 51, and 1005. The exact number of known bricks is currently not known since the actual count of the Nabonidus bricks discovered in the debris of the Islamic settlement of Ḥarrān has never been provided; V. Donbaz (*ARRIM* 9 [1991] pp. 11–12) indicates that about one hundred bricks and brick fragments bearing a four-line cuneiform inscription had been found. The excavation number of only one of those bricks has been published. Many more bricks of Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar II are known. For a survey of the seven Nabopolassar brick inscriptions and thirty-one brick inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar II, see Da Riva, *GTMR* 4 pp. 116–117 §§1.1 and 2.1.

¹³³ Inscriptions on the face of the brick, unlike those on the narrow edge, were not visible after the brick had been set in place.

¹³⁴ Da Riva, *GTMR* 4 p. 37.

¹³⁵ Da Riva, *GTMR* 4 p. 124 §2.13.

¹³⁶ Amēl-Marduk 2. The authors would like to thank O. Pedersén (personal communication, September 10th and October 14th, 2019) for pointing out that the object bearing the excavation number BE 41580 is actually inscribed with a well-attested inscription of Nebuchadnezzar II, rather than a hitherto, unpublished inscription of Nabonidus. See the introduction of Nabonidus 6 for further information.

¹³⁷ Nabonidus 36. The Nebuchadnezzar door socket mentioned by R. Da Riva (*GTMR* 4 p. 124 §2.11) is actually a paving stone.

an archaizing orientation, that is, the lines of the inscription are written vertically from top to bottom and horizontally from right to left; this was probably inspired by the ancient monuments known to Nabonidus' literary craftsmen.¹³⁸

Stone Steles and Pedestals for Monuments

Relatively few Neo-Babylonian steles are known today and all but one of them come from the reign of Nabonidus.¹³⁹ The ten steles firmly attributed to Nabonidus, including two written in the name of his mother Adad-guppi, as well as one fragmentarily preserved monument comprising sixteen fragments, were discovered at various sites in Babylonia (Babylon, Larsa, and Uruk), at Ḥarrān in Turkey, and at Tēmā in Saudi Arabia.¹⁴⁰ Nabonidus' steles, as far as we can tell, all had a rounded top and an image of the king, usually facing to the right,¹⁴¹ standing before symbols of the moon (Sîn), sun (Šamaš), and the planet Venus (Ištar) engraved on the top of the obverse face.¹⁴² Some of the monuments had curved, semi-circular backs, while others had flat backs.¹⁴³ The former type was inscribed on the flat obverse face and the curved reverse surface and the latter stele type was generally only engraved on the obverse, although text was occasionally written on the narrow sides of the monument.¹⁴⁴ In all instances, the inscription is divided into columns. Flat-back steles generally had three columns of text, while rounded-back monuments could have had as many as eleven columns of text. Like inscriptions written on cylinders, Nabonidus' steles usually provide information on the king's building activities; the Babylon Stele (Nabonidus 3) also gives information about historical events that took place before Nabonidus became king, starting at least in the time of the Assyrian king Sennacherib (704–681). In the case of the monuments of the king's mother, those steles give a pseudo-autobiographical account of the centenarian Adad-guppi.

Recently, two fragments of a rounded or oblong pedestal for a stele or statue were excavated at Tēmā in Saudi Arabia.¹⁴⁵ At present, this is the only known inscribed, royal monument base. This sandstone pedestal, on which a stele or anthropomorphic statue stood, bears a one-line inscription of Nabonidus written in contemporary Neo-Babylonian script.

Rock Reliefs

Given the short duration of the reigns of Amēl-Marduk and Neriglissar, it is not a surprise that no rock reliefs from these two kings are known. However, Nabonidus had at least two such monuments carved during his seventeen years as king: one at Padakku (mod. al-Ḥā'it) in Saudi Arabia and one at Sela' in Jordan.¹⁴⁶ Both rock reliefs are heavily weathered and little of their original texts survive today. The monuments were presumably commissioned to commemorate Nabonidus' activities in the region and the relief at Sela' might have recorded the king's conquest of Edom, an event mentioned in the Nabonidus Chronicle. The inscriptions are both carved in a rounded-top frame (in the shape of a stele) and are accompanied by an image of the king wearing traditional Babylonian royal attire, holding a staff, and standing before symbols of the moon (Sîn), sun (Šamaš), and the planet Venus (Ištar).

¹³⁸ For further details on the archaizing orientation of this text, see Schaudig, *Inschriften Nabonids* pp. 82–83.

¹³⁹ That stele dates to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II and most likely originates from Babylon; see Da Riva, *GTMR* 4 p. 124 §2.19. No steles of Nabopolassar, Amēl-Marduk and Neriglissar have been discovered.

¹⁴⁰ Nabonidus 3–4, 17, 40, 43, 47, 56, and 2001; Nabonidus 58–61 are probably fragments of one or more steles. It is uncertain if the fragments comprising the stele bearing Nabonidus 4 belong to one or two steles. Note that the original pieces are housed in the British Museum (London) and the Vorderasiatisches Museum (Berlin). For further information, see Schaudig, *Inschriften Nabonids* p. 537. The object edited in this volume as Nabonidus 1003 might have also been inscribed with a text of this Neo-Babylonian king. The text is not sufficiently preserved to assign this stele fragment to Nabonidus with any degree of certainty. It is tentatively included in this volume since it was edited in Schaudig, *Inschriften Nabonids*. Although the inscription written on the so-called Uruk Stele (Nabonidus 40 [Uruk Stele]) has been obliterated by a later ruler, the assignment to Nabonidus is based on the shape of the monument and the still-visible iconography.

¹⁴¹ On the two steles from Ḥarrān (Nabonidus 47 [Ḥarrān Stele]), the king faces to the left.

¹⁴² The iconography on the steles of Adad-guppi (Nabonidus 2001 [Adad-guppi Stele]) is, of course, different. The one monument whose upper portion is sufficiently preserved shows four people walking right to left, towards an altar; a similar image appears on the disk of Enḫeduana. The first two individuals are assumed to have been Nabonidus and Adad-guppi.

¹⁴³ For example, Nabonidus 3 (Babylon Stele), 4, and 40 (Uruk Stele) had rounded backs, while Nabonidus 43 (Tarif Stele), 47 (Ḥarrān Stele), and 2001 (Adad-guppi Stele) had flat backs.

¹⁴⁴ The Tarif Stele (Nabonidus 43) is inscribed on the right edge of the monument.

¹⁴⁵ Schaudig in Hausleiter, *ATLAL* 25 p. 81 [Arabic section], pl. 2.20 figs. c–e and pp. 99–100.

¹⁴⁶ Further details about the rock relief at Sela' will appear in several forthcoming publications of R. Da Riva, who examined the monument firsthand in September 2018. See Da Riva, *BAR* 45 (2019) pp. 25–32.

Vessels

A handful of fragmentarily preserved stone vases and bowls bearing inscriptions of Amēl-Marduk, Neriglissar and Nabonidus are known.¹⁴⁷ Most were discovered in the Elamite/Persian city Susa, in modern-day Iran, presumably where they were deposited after Cyrus II captured Babylon in 539,¹⁴⁸ while one is thought to have come from Babylon and another is believed to have come from Ḥarrān, as inferred from the text written on it. The Amēl-Marduk and Neriglissar vases are all inscribed with a short proprietary label, as well as the vessel's capacity. The Nabonidus bowl, however, is engraved with a longer, dedicatory inscription stating that the king had two vessels made for the moon-god at Ḥarrān.¹⁴⁹

Beads, Eyestones, and Pearls

Few inscribed beads, eyestones, and pearls from the Neo-Babylonian period are known today and most bear inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar II.¹⁵⁰ One chalcedony bead (or pearl), now in a private collection, records that the moon-god Sîn requested a dagger of Nabonidus in a dream, which the king then had made for him.¹⁵¹ It is uncertain, because the provenance of the object is unknown, if the dagger, which presumably had this bead inlaid in its handle, was given to the god Sîn at Ur or the one at Ḥarrān.

Overview of Previous Editions

Individual Neo-Babylonian royal inscriptions have been edited and published as early as 1852, when G.F. Grotefend (*Erläuterungen*) first presented an edition of Nabonidus' Tarif Stele (Nabonidus 43); note that Grotefend's translation of that badly preserved text bears little resemblance to a modern translation of that same Akkadian text. It was not until much later in the nineteenth century that more Neo-Babylonian inscriptions, including the Babylon Stele (Nabonidus 3), began to appear in scholarly publications. The first significant publication of this group of texts was in 1890, in volume 3/2 of the then-important series *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek*. C. Bezold edited the then-available inscriptions of Neriglissar and F.E. Peiser published the then-known inscriptions of Nabonidus.¹⁵²

Twenty-two years later, in 1912, S. Langdon edited all of the Neo-Babylonian inscriptions known to him in his *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*. That seminal work contained three texts of Neriglissar and fifteen inscriptions of Nabonidus. The transliterations were accompanied by German translations.¹⁵³ Despite the importance of Neo-Babylonian royal inscriptions, Langdon's 1912 edition was the last successful attempt to collect and publish all of the known texts of that genre and period in a single place.

P.-R. Berger, however, had planned to remedy that desideratum in the 1970s by publishing a three-volume edition (with up-to-date transliterations, translations, and studies) of the then-known corpus of texts. The first volume, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften: Königsinschriften des ausgehenden babylonischen Reiches (626–539 a. Chr.)*, which contained a catalogue and bibliographical information, appeared in 1973, but the planned second and third volumes were never published and, therefore, Langdon, NBK continued to be the discipline-standard edition of the inscriptions of Babylon's last native kings.

In 1989, P.-A. Beaulieu published a comprehensive study of the inscriptions of Nabonidus as part of his book *The Reign of Nabonidus, King of Babylon 556–539 BC*. Although he did not include fully-fledged editions as part of his study, Beaulieu did include transliterations and translations of key passages of Nabonidus' inscriptions, thus, updating some of the more important sections of that king's texts.

In 2001, H. Schaudig published his doctoral dissertation *Die Inschriften Nabonids von Babylon und Kyros' des Großen samt den in ihrem Umfeld entstandenen Tendenzschriften: Textausgabe und Grammatik*, and this

¹⁴⁷ Amēl-Marduk 4–6, Neriglissar 8, and Nabonidus 52.

¹⁴⁸ Da Riva, *SANER* 3 p. 32.

¹⁴⁹ Interestingly, this inscription mentions a ziggurat as part of the Eḫulḫul complex, which is rather puzzling since no other extant cuneiform sources mention or refer to a temple-tower at Ḥarrān.

¹⁵⁰ Da Riva, *GMTR* 4 p. 123 §§2.8–9.

¹⁵¹ Nabonidus 53.

¹⁵² In that same volume, H. Winckler edited the inscriptions of Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar II. French translations of a few inscriptions of Neo-Babylonian kings, including a few of Neriglissar and Nabonidus did appear in Ménant, *Babylone et la Chaldée*, which was published in 1875. That book did not, however, include transliterations of those sources.

¹⁵³ Five inscriptions of Napolassar and fifty-two texts of Nebuchadnezzar II were also included in that book. No inscriptions of Amēl-Marduk were included in Langdon, NBK. The Napolassar and Nebuchadnezzar II texts were adapted from his 1905 book *Building inscriptions of the Neo-Babylonian Empire: Part 1, Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar*, which was based on his Ph.D. dissertation (Columbia University).

greatly improved matters. After nearly ninety years, Schaudig was the first person to undertake the publication of an up-to-date and authoritative treatment of Neo-Babylonian royal inscriptions. Not only did he provide carefully-prepared transliterations and German translations of fifty-five inscriptions of Nabonidus, but he also prepared a detailed grammatical analysis of that group of texts. R. Da Riva accurately remarked in 2008 that “Schaudig’s work is the only substantial improvement over Langdon that we have today.”¹⁵⁴ Apart from some of Da Riva’s own later publications, this currently holds true.¹⁵⁵

In 2008, R. Da Riva published a very informative, general study of the genre entitled *The Neo-Babylonian Royal Inscriptions: An Introduction*. Although that book does not include editions of the texts themselves, it does include a wealth of information about this important group of texts, including extensive bibliography and a comprehensive catalogue of inscriptions.¹⁵⁶ Several years later, in 2013, Da Riva performed a similar service to Assyriology by publishing up-to-date editions and studies of the known inscriptions of Nabopolassar, Amēl-Marduk, and Neriglissar. Her book *The Inscriptions of Nabopolassar, Amel-Marduk and Neriglissar* includes transliterations and translations of fifteen inscriptions of Nabopolassar, six inscriptions of Amēl-Marduk, and nine inscriptions of Neriglissar. Between Schaudig and Da Riva, a sizeable portion of Langdon’s 1912 edition of inscriptions has been updated. New, authoritative editions of the numerous texts of the dynasty’s most famous ruler, Nebuchadnezzar II, however, are yet to appear.¹⁵⁷

Since 2015, the inscriptions included in Da Riva, SANER 3 have been included on the LMU Munich-based Royal Inscriptions of Babylonia online (RIBo) Project, in its “Babylon 7” sub-project, in a lemmatized (linguistically annotated) and Open Access format.¹⁵⁸ The texts in Schaudig, *Inschriften Nabonids* were made publically available in December 2018. Thus, earlier versions of the inscriptions included in this book, as well as those in the currently in preparation RINBE 1 volume, have been available for free for several years.¹⁵⁹

Dating and Chronology

Unless it is stated otherwise, the dates given in this volume (excluding those in bibliographical citations) are all BC. Each ancient Mesopotamian year has been given a single Julian year equivalent even though the ancient year actually encompassed parts of two Julian years, with the ancient year beginning around the time of the vernal equinox. Thus, for example, the sixteenth regnal year of Nabonidus is indicated to be 540, although it actually ended in early 539 and, thus, events which took place late in the ancient year “540” actually took place early in the Julian year 539.

Texts edited in this volume occasionally mention contemporary dates and the charts in this section are intended to aid the reader in understanding those dates.

The Mesopotamian month names and their modern equivalents are:

I	Nisannu	March–April	VII	Tašrītu	September–October
II	Ayyāru	April–May	VIII	Araḥsamnu	October–November
III	Simānu	May–June	IX	Kislīmu	November–December
IV	Du’ūzu	June–July	X	Ṭebētu	December–January
V	Abu	July–August	XI	Šabātu	January–February
VI	Ulūlu	August–September	XII	Addaru	February–March
VI ₂	Intercalary Ulūlu		XII ₂	Intercalary Addaru	

The table below for the reigns of Amēl-Marduk, Neriglissar, and Nabonidus is adapted from Parker and Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology* pp. 26–27 and it attempts to precisely convert Babylonian dates to Julian ones. The dates are given as civil days, from midnight to midnight, and the dates (month/day) provided in the chart are those of the first day of each month. Intercalary months occurred in Amēl-Marduk’s second (XII₂) year on the throne, Neriglissar’s third regnal year (XII₂), and Nabonidus’ first (XII₂), third (XII₂), sixth (XII₂), tenth (VI₂), twelfth (XII₂), and fifteenth (XII₂) years on the throne.

¹⁵⁴ Da Riva, GMTR 4 p. ix.

¹⁵⁵ Especially Da Riva, *Twin Inscriptions*; Da Riva, SANER 3; and Da Riva, ZA 103 (2013) pp. 196–229.

¹⁵⁶ Of note, Da Riva, GTMR 4 p. 131 mentions seven fragments not included in Schaudig, *Inschriften Nabonids*.

¹⁵⁷ These texts are to be edited in the first volume of this series, in two parts.

¹⁵⁸ <http://oracc.org/ribo/babylon7/pager>, as well <http://oracc.org/ribo/pager> [2020].

¹⁵⁹ The Nebuchadnezzar II inscriptions to be included in RINBE 1/1 were made public in December 2019. Note that the version included on RIBo also includes German translations.

Year	BC	Nis	Aja	Sim	Duz	Abu	Ulu	U II	Taš	Ara	Kis	Kan	Šab	Add	A II
Amēl-Marduk															
1	561	4/6	5/5	6/3	7/3	8/2	9/1		10/1	10/30	11/29	12/28	1/27	2/25	
2	560	3/26	4/24	5/24	6/22	7/22	8/21		9/20	10/20	11/18	12/18	1/16	2/15	3/16
Neriglissar (and Lābāši-Marduk)¹⁶⁰															
1	559	4/14	5/14	6/12	7/11	8/10	9/9		10/9	11/7	12/7	1/5	2/4	3/5	
2	558	4/4	5/3	6/2	7/1	7/31	8/29		9/28	10/27	11/26	12/25	1/24	2/23	
3	557	3/23	4/22	5/21	6/20	7/19	8/18		9/16	10/15	11/14	12/13	1/12	2/11	3/12
4	556	4/11	5/11	6/9	7/9	8/7	9/6		10/5	11/3	12/3	1/1	1/30	3/1	
Nabonidus															
1	555	3/31	4/30	5/30	6/28	7/28	8/26		9/25	10/24	11/22	12/22	1/20	2/19	3/20
2	554	4/19	5/19	6/17	7/17	8/15	9/14		10/14	11/12	12/11	1/10	2/8	3/9	
3	553	4/7	5/7	6/5	7/5	8/3	9/2		10/2	10/31	11/30	12/29	1/28	2/26	3/28
4	552	4/26	5/25	6/24	7/23	8/22	9/21		10/21	11/19	12/19	1/18	2/16	3/17	
5	551	4/16	5/15	6/13	7/13	8/11	9/10		10/10	11/8	12/8	1/7	2/6	3/7	
6	550	4/5	5/5	6/3	7/2	8/1	8/30		9/29	10/29	11/27	12/27	1/26	2/24	3/25
7	549	4/23	5/23	6/21	7/20	8/19	9/17		10/17	11/16	12/15	1/14	2/13	3/14	
8	548	4/13	5/12	6/11	7/10	8/8	9/7		10/6	11/5	12/5	1/3	2/2	3/3	
9	547	4/2	5/2	5/31	6/29	7/29	8/27		9/26	10/25	11/24	12/23	1/22	2/20	
10	546	3/22	4/21	5/20	6/19	7/18	8/17	9/15	10/15	11/14	12/13	1/11	2/10	3/10	
11	545	4/9	5/8	6/7	7/6	8/5	9/4		10/3	11/2	12/2	12/31	1/29	2/28	
12	544	3/29	4/27	5/27	6/25	7/25	8/24		9/23	10/23	11/21	12/21	1/19	2/17	3/19
13	543	4/17	5/16	6/15	7/14	8/13	9/12		10/12	11/11	12/10	1/9	2/7	3/8	
14	542	4/6	5/6	6/4	7/4	8/2	9/1		10/1	10/30	11/29	12/29	1/27	2/26	
15	541	3/26	4/25	5/24	6/22	7/22	8/20		9/19	10/18	11/17	12/17	1/16	2/14	3/16
16	540	4/14	5/13	6/12	7/11	8/10	9/8		10/8	11/7	12/6	1/5	2/3	3/5	
17	539	4/4	5/3	6/2	7/1	7/31	8/29		9/27	10/27	11/25	12/24	1/23	2/22	

Proposed Dates of the Texts of Nabonidus

Although Nabonidus' inscribed objects are never dated, it is possible to suggest dates of composition for many of that king's official texts, as P.-A. Beaulieu and H. Schaudig have already attempted.¹⁶¹ In general, those two scholars agree in their dating,¹⁶² but disagree significantly on their proposed dates of Nabonidus 3 (Babylon Stele), 46 (Ḥarrān Cylinder), and 53.¹⁶³ The authors of the present volume more or less agree with dates proposed by Beaulieu or Schaudig, but suggest alternatives in a few cases, in particular Nabonidus 23 (Ebabbar Cylinder), which, based on a recently-published inscription (Nabonidus 22) and a text published for the first time in this book (Nabonidus 21), likely dates to the beginning of Nabonidus' seventeen-year reign, rather than to his tenth regnal year (546).¹⁶⁴ The chart below is intended to aid the reader in understanding the dates proposed by Beaulieu, Schaudig, and the present authors. The text numbers in the 'this volume' column in **bold** font indicates that the present authors propose a date that differs from those suggested by both Beaulieu and Schaudig, while the text numbers in *italics* indicates the dates of texts that were published after those two scholars' books.

Proposed Date	Beaulieu	Schaudig	This volume
Beginning of the reign	—	Nabonidus 13	Nabonidus 13
Middle of year 1 (555)	Nabonidus 3	—	Nabonidus 3
Second half of year 2 (554)	Nabonidus 34, 36, 39	Nabonidus 34, 36, 39	Nabonidus 21–22, 23 , 34, 36, 39
End of year 2 (554)	Nabonidus 24–25	Nabonidus 24–25, 1008	Nabonidus 24–25
First years of the reign	—	—	Nabonidus 41, 1002, 1006
Between years 3 (553) and 10 (546), possibly before year 6 (550)	Nabonidus 19	Nabonidus 19	Nabonidus 19
Between years 4 (552) and 13 (543), possibly year 6 (550)	Nabonidus 26	Nabonidus 26	Nabonidus 26, 54, 56, 57–61

¹⁶⁰ Lābāši-Marduk's short, two- to three-month-long reign is included with Neriglissar's 4th regnal year (556).

¹⁶¹ See Beaulieu, Nabonidus pp. 1–42; and Schaudig, Inschriften Nabonids pp. 47–48 and *passim*.

¹⁶² These two scholars differ marginally on the date of Nabonidus 27. P.-A. Beaulieu proposes that that text was composed after Nabonidus' 13th regnal year (543), probably in his 16th year as king (540), while H. Schaudig (Inschriften Nabonids pp. 48 and 447) simply indicates that it was written sometime after the king's return from Arabia in 543.

¹⁶³ P.-A. Beaulieu (Nabonidus pp. 21, 42, and 240–241) suggests that Nabonidus 3 (Babylon Stele) was composed in the middle of Nabonidus' first regnal year (555) and that Nabonidus 46 (Ḥarrān Cylinder) was written sometime between the king's third (553) and thirteenth (543) years on the throne. He proposes no date for Nabonidus 53. H. Schaudig (Inschriften Nabonids pp. 48, 472, 515, and 545) dates Nabonidus 3 (Babylon Stele) and 53 to the period after Nabonidus' thirteenth regnal year (544–539) and Nabonidus 46 (Ḥarrān Cylinder) to the king's sixteenth year (540). Further details about the dating of these texts will be treated in the commentaries of those three texts.

¹⁶⁴ See Beaulieu, Nabonidus pp. 30–31; and Schaudig, Inschriften Nabonids p. 48.

Proposed Date	Beaulieu	Schaudig	This volume
Year 7 (549) or later	Nabonidus 10	Nabonidus 10	Nabonidus 10, 11–12
Between years 9 (547) and 11 (545)	Nabonidus 18	Nabonidus 18	Nabonidus 18
Year 10 (546) or before			Nabonidus 42
Year 10 (546)	Nabonidus 15–16, 23	Nabonidus 15–16, 23	Nabonidus 15–16
Between years 3 (553) and 13 (543)	Nabonidus 46	Nabonidus 55	Nabonidus 55
After year 13 (after Nabonidus' return from Arabia; 543)	Nabonidus 51	Nabonidus 3, 27, 48–53	Nabonidus 27, 51, 2001
After year 13 (543), possibly year 14 (542) or 15 (541)	Nabonidus 43, 47	Nabonidus 43, 47, 2001	Nabonidus 43, 47–50
Between years 13 (543) and 16 (540)	Nabonidus 17	Nabonidus 17	Nabonidus 17
After year 13 (543), probably year 16 (540)	Nabonidus 27–29	Nabonidus 28–29, 40, 46	Nabonidus 28–29, 30, 46, 52
After year 13 (543), probably year 16 (540) or 17 (539)	Nabonidus 32, 37–38	Nabonidus 32, 37–38	Nabonidus 32–33, 37–38
No date possible	Nabonidus 1–2, 6–9, 44, 53, 1001, 1004, 1009	Nabonidus 1–2, 4–9, 14, 20, 31, 35, 44–45, 1001, 1003–1004, 1009–1011	Nabonidus 1–2, 4–9, 14, 20, 31, 35, 40, 44–45, 53, 1001, 1003–1005, 1007, 1008, 1009–1010, 1011

King Lists

Two king lists record that Amēl-Marduk, Neriglissar, Lâbâši-Marduk, and Nabonidus were kings of Babylon. For the convenience of the user of this volume, it has been thought useful to present translations of the relevant passages here. The entries immediately preceding and following those of the kings whose inscriptions are edited in this volume are also given when they are preserved.

1. Uruk King List

(van Dijk, UVB 18 pl. 28; Grayson, RLA 6/1–2 [1980] pp. 97–98 §3.5)

Obv. 6´)	21 year(s)	Nabopolassar
Obv. 7´)	43 [ye]ar(s)	Nebuchadnezzar (II)
Obv. 8´)	2 [ye]ar(s)	Amēl-Marduk
Obv. 9´)	3 [years], 8 month(s)	Neriglissar
Obv. 10´)	[...] 3 month(s)	Lâbâši-Marduk
Obv. 11´)	17 [year(s)]	Nabonidus
Obv. 12´)	[N year(s)]	[C]yrus (II)

2. Ptolemaic Canon

(Wachsmuth, *Alten Geschichte* p. 305; Grayson, RLA 6/1–2 [1980] p. 101 §3.8)

Ναβοπολασσάρου	κα	Nabopolassaros (Nabopolassar)	21 (years)
Ναβοκολασσάρου	μγ	Nabokolassaros (Nebuchadnezzar II)	43 (years)
Ἰλλοαρουδάμου	β	Illoaroudamos (Amēl-Marduk)	2 (years)
Νηριγασολασσάρου	δ	Nerigasolassaros (Neriglissar)	4 (years)
Ναβοναδίου	ιζ	Nabonadios (Nabonidus)	17 (years)

Chronicles

Two Mesopotamian chronicles provide useful information both on the events of the reigns of Amēl-Marduk, Neriglissar, Lâbâši-Marduk, and Nabonidus and on the order of those events. The standard edition of Mesopotamian chronicles is the edition of A.K. Grayson (*Grayson, Chronicles*), but note also the recent edition by J.-J. Glassner (*Glassner, Chronicles*) and the ongoing work by I. Finkel and R.J. van der Spek (see www.livius.org/cg-cm/chronicles/chron00.html [2020]). For an excellent study dealing with classifications and provenances of Babylonian Chronicles, see Waerzeggers, *JNES* 71 (2012) pp. 285–298. For the convenience of the user of this volume, it has been thought useful to present translations of the relevant passages here; these translations have been adapted from the aforementioned works.

1. *Chronicle of the Third Year of Neriglissar*

(Grayson, *Chronicles* pp. 103–104 no. 6; Glassner, *Chronicles* pp. 230–233 no. 25)

- 1–4) The third year (557): [*On the Nth day of the month ...*] Appuašu, the king of the land Pirind[*u, mu*]stered h[is numerous] troops and [*set ou*]t to raid and plu[n]der[er] (cities) Across the Rive[r (Syria-Palestine)]. Neriglissar muste[red his] troops [*and*] march[ed] to the city Ĥumê to oppose him.
- 5–13) Before his (Neriglissar's) (arrival), App[*u*]ašu placed the troops and mounted messengers whom he had conscripted in a gorge of the mountains for ambushes, but (when) Neriglissar reached them, he brought about th[*eir*] defeat. He killed many troops. He (Neriglissar) captured his (Appuašu's) troops and many of his horses. He pursued Appuašu for a distance of fifteen leagues of difficult mountain terrain, where the men had to walk one behind the other (lit. "man after man"), as far as the city Ura'a, his royal city. [*He capt*]ured him, seized the city Ura'a, and plundered it.
- 14) (erasure)
- 15–19) When he (Neriglissar) had marched from the city Ura'a to the city Kirši, his ancestors' royal city, a distance of six leagues of hard mountain terrain (and) difficult (mountain) pass(es), he seized the city Kirši, a fortified city, his (Appuašu's) royal city. He burned with fire its wall, its palace, and its people.
- 20–23a) By means of boats, he (Neriglissar) seized the city Pitusu, a mountain that is in the midst of the sea, and the 6,000 combat troops who had gone into hiding inside it. He *destroyed* his city. Moreover, he took its people captive.
- 23b–27) In that same year, he started fires from the (mountain) pass of the city Sallunê to the border of Lydia. Appuašu disappeared and (therefore) [*he* (Neriglissar) did] not capture him. In the month Addaru (XII), the king of Akkad returned t[o] his [land].
-

2. *Nabonidus Chronicle*

(Grayson, *Chronicles* pp. 104–111 no. 7; Glassner, *Chronicles* pp. 232–239 no. 26)¹⁶⁵

- i 1–8) [*The first year* (555): ...] ... [*...*] lifted his [*...*]. The king [*...* of] their land (whom/that) he had brought to Babylon. [*...*] were terrified, but he did not lift [*...*] their famil(ies), as many as there were [*...*]. The king mustered his troops and [*marched*] to (the city) Ĥumê. [*...*] ...
-
- i 9–10) [*The second year* (554)]: It was cold in the land Hamath during the month Ṭebētu (X). [*...*] ...
-
- i 11–22) [*The third year* (553): In the mon[*th*] Abu (V), [*he ...*] Mount Ammanānu. [*...*] the fruit orchards, as many as there were, [*...*] in their midst, [*he brought (them)*] into Babylon. [*The king* became sic]k, but recovered. In the month Kislīmu (IX), the king [*mustered*] his troops [*and ...*] ... Moreover, [*he ...*] to Nabūtattan-ušur [*...*] ... of the land Amurru to [*...*] they set up [(their) camp *against* E]dom. [*...*] and numerous troops [*...* the ci]ty gate of the city Šinṭini [*...*] he killed him. [*...*] ... [*...*] troops
- Lacuna¹⁶⁶
- ii 1–4) [*he* (Astyages) mu]stered [*his troops*] and, for conq[uest], marched against Cyrus (II), king of (the land) Anšan, and (then) [*...*]. (As for) Astyages (Ištumegu), his troops rebelled against him and he was captured. Th[*ey handed (him) over*] to Cyrus (II). Cyrus (II) <marched> to Ecbatana, his (Astyages') royal city, <and> took (back) to the land Anšan the silver, gold, possessions, property, [*...*] that he had carried off (from) Ecbatana. [*He ...*] the possessions (and) property of the troop[s of ...].
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- ii 5–8) The seventh year (549): The king (stayed) in the city Tēmā. The heir designate, his magnates, (and) his troops (stayed) in Akkad. [*The king*] did not come to Babylon [*in the month* Nisannu (I)]. The god Nabû did not come to Babylon. The god Bēl (Marduk) did not come out. The [*akītu*]-festi[*val*] did not take place]. Offering(s) in Esagil and Ezida were given to the gods of Babylon and Borsippa a[*s in normal times*]. The šešgallu-priest performed a strewn offering and oversaw the temple.
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¹⁶⁵ See also Waerzeggers, *JNES* 71 (2012) pp. 285–298; Waerzeggers, *Political Memory* pp. 95–124; and Zawadzki, *Who Was King* pp. 142–154.

¹⁶⁶ The lacuna between BM 35382 i 22 and ii 1 would have contained the rest of the description of the events of Nabonidus' third regnal year (553), accounts of that king's fourth (552) and fifth (551) regnal years, and the beginning of the account of the events of the sixth (550) regnal year.

ii 9) The eighth year (548): (contents left blank)

ii 10–12) The ninth year (547): Nabonidus, the king, (stayed) <in> the city Tēmā. The heir designate, his magnates, (and) his troops (stayed) in Akkad. The king did not come to Babylon in the month Nisannu (I). The god Nabû did not come to Babylon. The god Bēl (Marduk) did not come out. The *akītu*-festival did not take place. Offering(s) in Esagil and Ezida were given to the gods of <Babylon> and Borsippa *as in normal times*.

ii 13–15a) On the fifth day of the month Nisannu (I), the mother of the king died in (the city) Dūr-karašu, which (is on) the bank of the Euphrates River, upstream of Sippar. The heir designate and his troops *were mourning* for three days (and) an (official) mourning ceremony took place. In the month Simānu (III), an (official) mourning ceremony for the mother of the king took place in Akkad.

ii 15b–18) In the month Nisannu (I), Cyrus (II), king of the land Parsu(a), mustered his troops [a]nd crossed the Tigris River downstream of Arbela. In the month Ayyāru (II), [*he march*]ed to Ly[di]a. He killed its king, took its possessions, (and) stationed a garrison of his own [*(inside) it*]. Afterwards, the king (Cyrus) and his garrison (text: “his garrison and the king”) were inside.

ii 19–21a) The tenth year (546): The king (stayed) in the city Tēmā. The heir designate, his magnates, (and) his troops (stayed) in Akkad. The king [did not come to Babylon] in [the month Nisannu (I)]. The god Nabû did not come to Babylon. The god Bēl (Marduk) did not come out. The *akītu*-festival did not take place. Offering(s) in E[sagil and Ezida were gi]ven to the gods of Babylon and Borsippa *as in normal times*.

ii 21b–22) On the twenty-first day of the month Simānu (III), [...] of Elammya in Akkad ... [...] the provincial governor [...] in Uru[k ...].

ii 23–25) The eleventh year (545): The king was (still) in the city Tēmā. The heir designate, his magnates, (and) his troops (stayed) in Akka[d. The king did not come to Babylon in the month Nisannu (I). The god Nabû] did not come [to Babylon]. The god Bēl (Marduk) did not come out. The *akītu*-festival did not take place. Offe[ring(s) in Esagil and Ezida] were given [to the gods of Bab]ylon and Borsippa [*as in normal tim*]es.

Lacuna¹⁶⁷

iii 1’–4’) [...] killed [...]. [...] the [...] River [... *In the month*] Addaru (XII), [...] the goddess Ištar of Uruk [... *the troop*]s of the land Pa[rsu(a) ... *troo*]ps [...].

iii 5’–8’a) [The *seventeenth* year (539): The god N]abû [came] from Borsippa for the procession of [the god Bēl (Marduk). The god Bēl (Marduk) came out. In the month] Ṭebētu (X), the king entered Eturkalamma. In the *temple* [...] ... he made a libation of wine ... [... The god B]ēl (Marduk) came out. They performed the *akītu*-festival *as in normal times*.

iii 8’b–12’a) In the month [..., *the god Lugal-Marda and the god*]s of Marad, the god Zababa and the gods of Kish, the goddess Mullissu [and the gods of] Ḫursagkalamma entered Babylon. Until the end of the month Ulūlu (VI), the gods of Akkad [...], which are upstream and downstream of *Isin*, were entering Babylon. The gods of Borsippa, Cutha, and Sippar did not enter (Babylon).

iii 12’b–16’a) In the month Tašrītu (VII), when Cyrus (II) did battle at (the city) Opis, (which is) on the [*bank of*] the Tigris River against the troops of Akkad, the people of Akkad retreated. He pillaged (the city Opis and) killed (its) people. On the fourteenth day, Sippar was captured without a fight. Nabonidus fled. On the sixteenth day, Ugbaru, the governor of the land Gutium, and the troops of Cyrus (II) entered Babylon without a fight.

iii 16’b–18’a) Afterwards, after Nabonidus had retreated, he was captured in Babylon. Until the end of the month, the shield-(bearers) of the land Gutium surrounded the gates of Esagil. There was no interruption of any kind in Esagil or (in) the (other) temples. Moreover, no appointed (festival) time was missed.

iii 18’b–22’a) On the third day of the month Araḥsamna (VIII), Cyrus (II) entered Babylon. (*Drinking*) straws were filled up before him. There was peace in the city (and) Cyrus (II) decreed peace for Babylon, all of

¹⁶⁷ The lacuna between BM 35382 ii 25 and iii 1’ might have contained the rest of the description of the events of Nabonidus’ eleventh regnal year (545), reports of his twelfth (544) to fifteenth (541) regnal years, and the beginning of the account of the events of the sixteenth (540) regnal year.

it. Gubaru (Ugbaru¹⁶⁸), his governor, appointed (provincial) governors in Babylon. From the month Kislimu (IX) to the month Addaru (XII), the gods of Akkad which Nabonidus had brought down to Babylon returned to their cult centers. On the night of the eleventh day of the month Araḥsamna (VIII), Ugbaru died.

iii 22' b– 24' a) In the mon[th ...], the king's wife died.¹⁶⁹ From the twenty-seventh <day> of the month of Addaru (XII) to the third day of the month Nisannu (I), [there were] (official) mourning ceremon(ies) in Akkad. All of [the peo]ple bared their heads.

iii 24' b– 28') On the fourth day, when Cambyses (II), the son of C[yrus (II)], went to Egidrikalamasumu, (and) when he arrived (lit. “came”), the person (in charge of) the *Egidri* of the god Nabû, who [...] the scepter [...], *did not let him (Cambyses) take* the hand of the god Nabû because of (his) Elamite attire. [... sp]ears and quivers from [...] the *heir designate* [...] to the wo[rk ...] the god Nabû to Esagil ... before the god Bēl (Marduk) and the son-of-B[ēl (Nabû) ...]

Lacuna¹⁷⁰

Propaganda Texts

As mentioned in the section Texts Excluded in the present volume, four ‘propaganda’ texts provide information about the reigns of the Neo-Babylonian kings whose inscriptions are edited in this volume. For the convenience of the user of this volume, it has been thought useful to present a translation of the Royal Chronicle. The translation has been adapted from Glassner, *Chronicles*.

1. Royal Chronicle

(Glassner, *Chronicles* pp. 312–317 no. 53; Schaudig, *Inschriften Nabonids* pp. 590–595 P4)

Col. i completely broken away

Lacuna

ii 1'–6') [... an *ēntu*-priestess [... heaven] and earth [...] that he had requested of me [... “...] among the women of my land?” “Yes.”

ii 7'–9') “[Is she] a ..., who] will be born through a god?” [“Yes/No.” “Is she] a ..., who] will be born through a god?” “No.” “[...] *older* [...]?” “Yes.”

ii 10'–12') [He] wrote down [...] and [...] the god Sîn, [..., an]swered him.

Lacuna

iii 1'–5' a) [...] his face turned pale. [...] the tablets of the Series *Enūma Anu Enlil*, the scribes brought a basket (of them) from Babylon into his presence for inspection, (but) he did not heed (what the tablets said and) he did not understand anything it (*Enūma Anu Enlil*) said.

iii 5' b–12' a) A foundation document [o]f Nebuchadnezzar (I), king of Babylon, son of Ninurta-nādin-šumi, on which an image of an *ēntu*-priestess, its cultic rites, its ways, [and] its [*kid*]*udû*-rites were recorded, [was brought (from Ur) t]o Babylon with the tablets (of *Enūma Anu Enlil*), without knowledge [of what the god Sîn, the lord of king(s)], had wanted to place in his hand(s). [...] ... He inspected the tablets (carefully) and became af[raid].

iii 12' b–16' a) He was attentive to [the] great [command of the god Sîn] and [...]. He dedicated [En-nigald]i-Nanna, (his) daughter, [his] o[wn] offspring, [to] the god Sîn, the lord of kings, whose co[mmand] cannot be altered, [as] an *ēntu*-priestess.

iii 16' b–23' a) In the month of Ulūlu (VI), [... of th]at (same) [year], (with regard to) Ebabbar, the temple of the god Šamaš that is inside Si[ppar (and) whose original] foundation [the kin]gs who came before him had sought out (but) could not find, the places [...] of his royal majesty as the primordial residence of his happiness, he revealed the foundation(s) of Narām-Sîn, the (grand)son of Sargon, to him (Nabonidus), the servant who reveres him, the one who is assiduous towards his place (of worship).

iii 23' b–28') In that (same) year, in a favorable month, on an auspicious day, he firmly established the foundations of Ebabbar, the temple of the god Šamaš, (precisely) on the foundation(s) of Narām-Sîn, the (grand)son of Sargon, not (even) a fingerbreadth outside or inside (of them). He discovered an

¹⁶⁸ J.-J. Glassner (*Chronicles* p. 239) translates this passage as “He [Cyrus] installed Gubaru as governor of (all) governors in Babylon.”

¹⁶⁹ This is presumably Cyrus', not Nabonidus', wife.

¹⁷⁰ The contents of BM 35382 iv 1'–9' are not translated here because that passage records information about the reign of Cyrus II.

inscription and returned (it) to its place without altering (it), and (then) he deposited (it) with his (own) inscription.

- iii 29'-iv 5) He discovered a statue of Sargon, the (grand)father of Narām-Sîn, inside those foundation(s). Half of its head was (broken) away and it had become (so) old (that) its features were unrecognizable. Out of respect for the gods (and) esteem for kingship, he employed craftsmen who know (how to do) the work and he had the head of the statue restored and had its features made perfect (again). He did not alter the place of that statue. He made it reside inside Ebabbar (and) firmly established *taklîmu*-offering(s) for it.
- iv 6-13) For the god Šamaš, the great lord, his lord, he built that Ebabbar during joyous celebrations. He had 6,000 (beams of) strong cedar stretched out for its roof. He made that temple shine like daylight and raised its superstructure like a high mountain. At each gate, he securely fastened tall doors of cedar, threshold(s) of copper, bolts, and *nukuššû*-fittings, and (thereby) completed its construction.
- iv 14-18) [...] the god Šamaš, the gr[eat] lord, [...], in the temple and ... [...]. On the [Nth day] of the month [...], after the offer[ing(s)], ... [...] *taklîmu*-offering (for) the cultic rite(s) of h[is] divinity [...] he made (him) reside in the residence of [his happiness].
- iv 19-26) A mounted messenger from the land Ḫatti [...] (and) he reported [(his) r]eport [to me], saying: “[...] ... [.]” The] great [gods ... hear[t’s con]tent [... di]stant [...], a path through [...] mountain(s), [... a p]ath of death, he don[ned] (his) weapon(s) [... the p]eople of the land Ḫatti.
- iv 27-41) In the month Ayyāru (II) of the third year (553), [... Bab]ylon, he took command of his troops. [He] mustered [...] and, on the thirteenth day, they arrived at [...]. He cut off the [...] (and) heads the people living in the city Ammanānu and [...] in *heaps*. He hung [(their) king on a p]ole and divided the city [...] of the mountain(s). [...], which is inside the mountains, fruit orchards, [*all of them*, ...] their *shade* [...] he had [...] to their full extent [burned with] fir[e. ...] ..., whose slope(s) are far away, [...] he turned into [ruins] until far-off days. [...] ... (mountain) passes [...] day(s), he lef[t ...] ... [...]

Lacuna

v 1-4) (No translation possible)

v 5-12) He listened to [the ... of] his [...] and his [...] struck him. [...], he spoke with him. He laid a hand on [...] and [...] his cultic r]ites [... w]ith him [...].

v 13-24) [...] battle array [...] ... [h]is troops [...] he bore weapon(s) and to [..., ... lea]gues distant, difficult roads, [...], difficult [terr]ain [where access was bloc]ked (and) approach was not possible, [...] at the mention of his name [...] grass of the steppe [...] the king of Dadanu took refuge [in the] distant [...]s. He wiped clean [...] a[nd ... mi]nd ... [...] ... [...]

Lacuna

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