

A Brick Inscription of Nabonidus from Harran

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Two fragmentary inscriptions of Nabonidus were unearthed at Harran in 1985 and were published by me in 1987.¹ One of these two poorly-preserved finds (Hr.85/75) is said to have been found in the debris of the later Islamic settlement (36 GG). It is a fragment of a partially baked brick bearing an incomplete four-line inscription.² During the 1989 season approximately 100 additional inscribed bricks were discovered in the Islamic layer, at a spot near the 35 DD trench not far from the stamp inscription previously found. The inscription on Hr.85/75, which had hitherto been unattested, can now be restored. All of the bricks bear the same unique, short inscription,³ revealing Nabonidus' profound interest in the construction of the Ehulhul temple at Harran, no doubt situated on the spot where the present mound lies.⁴ Judging from a sampling of the brick inscriptions, there are two types of bricks stamped with the inscription: square bricks measuring 33.5×33.5×7 cm and rectangular bricks measuring 33.5×16.5×7 cm.⁵ In most cases the negative inscription was impressed very faintly. It is evident that four different moulds of equal size were utilized in the preparation of the bricks. Perhaps several groups of workers were assigned the task of producing the

bricks. Of course, one is reminded of Nabonidus' three-column cylinder inscription in which he is ordered by Marduk to bring sun-dried bricks and build the temple of Ehulhul.⁶ The bricks examined are all partially baked. The inscription attests to Nabonidus' rebuilding of Ehulhul at Harran, which had been destroyed by the Umman-manda, a fact he repeatedly mentions in his other inscriptions.⁷

The brick inscription shows that his father's name was spelt ^{md}PA.KU.TIN-su-iq-bi, whereas other inscriptions indicate that his father's name begins with ^dPA/AG and never with ^dPA.KU.⁸ It looks as though his father's name was at times spelt as *Nusku-balaṭ-su-iqbi*,⁹ since this could not be confused with ^dPA- by which his own name was inscribed. Nevertheless, C.J. Gadd points out that *Nabû* and *Nusku* were essentially the same gods.¹⁰

The four-line inscription on Hr.85/75 measures 24×6 cm. The restored inscription presented below was compiled from over 100 different bricks; therefore, there is no inventory number. Further, it was reported to me that in the 1990 season similar finds were again unearthed at deeper layers of the same find-spot.

¹ V. Donbaz, 'Deux nouvelles Inscriptions de Nabonide, roi de Babylone', in *Anatolia Antiqua Eski Anadolu* (= *Varia Anatolica* 1) pp. 15-21.

² See the transcription and the copies, *ibid.* pp. 19-21.

³ I am at present unable to quote inventory numbers since the bricks have not yet been catalogued; 'near 35 DD trench' is as specific as I can be.

⁴ For a brief discourse concerning the city of Harran, see my article in *Anatolia Antiqua Eski Anadolu*.

⁵ The square bricks have small variations of 1-3 cm; the rectangular bricks have variations of only 1 cm in length, width, or thickness.

⁶ S. Langdon, *NBK* (= *VAB* 4) Nabonid no. 1 p. 222 i 18-22 (BM 83-7-14,1025).

⁷ *NBK* Nabonid no. 1 pp. 218-24 i 8 - ii 46, no. 8 pp. 284-86 x 1-51, and no. 9 p. 290 ii 12-19; and C.J. Gadd, *AnSt* 8 (1958) H2.A-B p. 56 i 11-12 and p. 64 iii 21-30 and H1.B p. 48 ii 4-21.

⁸ *NBK* Nabonid no. 1 p. 218 i 6; no. 2 p. 230 i 13; no. 6 p. 252 i 9; no. 7 p. 262 i 16; and p. 294 no. 10 line 3, no. 11 line 5, and no. 12 line 3. L. Messerschmidt, *VAS* 1 no. 53 i 6 has *DUMU* ^{md}AG-TIN-su-iq-bi and additionally no. 37 v 4 has ^{md}PA-TIN-su-iq-bi; and C.B.F. Walker, *CBI* no. 110 line 3 has ^{md}NA-TIN-su-iq-bi.

⁹ The reading of the fragmentary inscription in *Anatolia Antiqua Eski Anadolu* was not entirely correct. From the explicit writing of the new inscription the following corrections should be made: read ^dPA and delete ^{md}na-bi-um (line 1); read *DUMU* and delete É (line 2); read *šá qé-[reb]* and delete *ku-x* and read [d]30 and delete *MEŠ* (line 3); and read *u* ^d[sa-där-nun-na] and delete *x an* (line 4).

¹⁰ *AnSt* 8 p. 40. See also H. and J. Lewy, *Orientalia* 17 (1948) pp. 146-50; A. Goetze, *JCS* 4 (1950) p. 138; and S.N. Kramer, *BiOr* 11 (1954) p. 172 n. 8.

TRANSLITERATION

- 1) ^{md}PA-na-i-id LUGAL TIN.TIR.KI za-nin é-sag-ila
 2) u é-zi-da DUMU ^{md}PA.KU-TIN-su-iq-bi NUN gít-ma-lu₄
 3) é-húl-húl É ^{d30}šá qé-reb URU ħar-ra-na a-na ^{d30}
 4) ^dNIN.GAL ^dPA.KU u ^dsa-dàr-nun-na EN.MEŠ-a lu DÙ-uš

TRANSLATION

- 1) Nabonidus, king of Babylon, provider of Esagil
 2) and Ezida, son of Nusku-balatsu-iqbi, the perfect prince¹¹ (I am).
 3-4) Ehulhul, the temple of Sin, inside the city of Harran, I indeed built for the (gods) Sin, Ningal, Nusku, and Sadarnunna, my lords.¹²

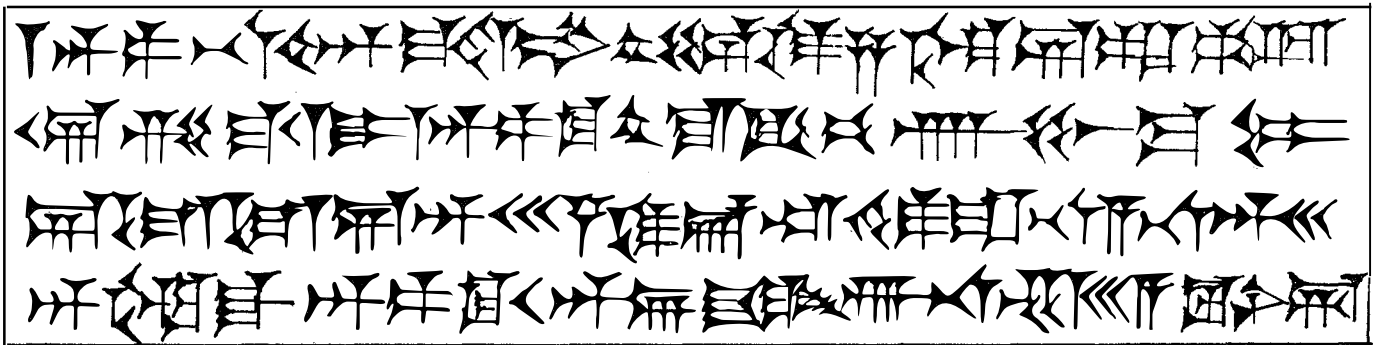


Fig. 1: Brick inscription of Nabonidus

¹¹ CBI no. 110 line 3 has NUN gít-ma-lu.

¹² EN.MEŠ-ya is expected, but note that Nabonidus uses EN.MEŠ-e-a (NBK Nabonid no. 1 p. 222 ii 19) and DINGIR.MEŠ-e-a (NBK Nabonid no. 8 p. 284 ix 40).