

## The Royal Inscriptions in the Museum of Ancient Cultures at Macquarie University, Sydney\*

Luis Robert Siddall  
 Shore School (SCEGS), North Sydney

§0. The Museum of Ancient Cultures at Macquarie University, Sydney, houses five royal inscriptions, which date to the reigns of Gudea of Lagash, Ur-Ningeszida of Ešnunna, Shalmaneser III of Assyria, and Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylonia. Two of the brick inscriptions, MU 2148 and MU 2145, were purchased for the Museum by Professor Edwin Judge from Charles Ede Ltd. in London during September 1983. The other brick inscription (MU 4704), is the most recent addition to the collection and was purchased by the Museum from Bonhams auction house, London, in May 2012. One of the cones (MU 4128) was purchased by the Museum from Collector Antiquities, London, in March 2008. Finally, the other cone (MU 4028) is on permanent loan to the Museum from a private collection.

### §1. MU 4028 (cone)

RIME 3/1.1.7.63

Reign of Gudea, ca. 2100 BC

Girsu

92mm

#### Transliteration

1. <sup>d</sup>nin-geš-zi-da
2. dingir-ra-ni
3. gu<sub>3</sub>-de<sub>2</sub>-a
4. ensi<sub>2</sub>
5. lagaš<sup>ki</sup>
6. teš<sub>2</sub><sup>d</sup>ga<sub>2</sub>-tum<sub>3</sub>-du<sub>10</sub>-ke<sub>4</sub>

#### Translation

*For Ningeszida,  
 his god,  
 did Gudea,  
 governor  
 of Lagaš,  
 together with Gatumdu,*

7. e<sub>2</sub> gir<sub>2</sub>-<sup>r</sup>su<sup>ki</sup>-ka<sup>l</sup>-ni
  8. mu-na-du<sub>3</sub>
- his house of Girsu  
 build.*

### §1.1. Commentary

The Macquarie artifact is the 99<sup>th</sup> known exemplar of this inscription on either clay cones or bricks.<sup>1</sup> The pointed end of the cone is broken off just after the end of the inscription. The inscription itself is, however, in excellent condition and with the exception of the middle of line six the whole inscription is perfectly preserved. The inscription commemorates Gudea's construction work on a temple in Girsu for Ningeszida, which suggests that Girsu (modern Tello) is the provenience of this cone.

### §2. MU 4128 (Cone)

RIME 3/1.1.7.37

Reign of Gudea, ca. 2100 BC

Probably Girsu

122mm

#### Transliteration

1. <sup>d</sup>nin-gir<sub>2</sub>-su
2. ur-sag kal-ga
3. <sup>d</sup>en-lil<sub>2</sub>-la<sub>2</sub>-ra
4. gu<sub>3</sub>-de<sub>2</sub>-a
5. ensi<sub>2</sub>
6. lagaš<sup>ki</sup>
7. nig<sub>2</sub>-ul-e pa mu-na-e<sub>3</sub>
8. e<sub>2</sub>-ninnu anzu<sub>2</sub><sup>mušen-</sup>  
 babbar<sub>2</sub>-ra-ni
9. mu-na-du<sub>3</sub>
10. ki-be<sub>2</sub> mu-na-gi<sub>4</sub>

#### Translation

*For Ningirsu,  
 mighty warrior  
 of Enlil,  
 did Gudea,  
 governor  
 of Lagaš,  
 make primordial things  
 shine, (and)  
 the E-ninnu-anzû-babbar  
 build  
 and restore.*

\* The author would like to thank the Museum of Ancient Culture's Management Committee for granting permission to publish the cuneiform documents. An extra special thanks goes to the Museum's Director, Karl Van Dyke, for offering his time and every available resource to ensure the completion of this project. Thanks too go to Chris Angwin who improved greatly the quality of the figures.

<sup>1</sup> See the table in Edzard 1997: no. 3/1.7.63; Steible 1991: 331-332; de Genouillac 1936: 129, pl. 46.

### §2.1. Commentary

This is the most common inscription from Gudea's reign and is found on bricks, blocks, tablets, door sockets and, as is the case here, cones.<sup>2</sup> Copies of the inscription have been recovered from Girsu, Adab, and modern Madā'in.<sup>3</sup> The inscription commemorates Gudea's rebuilding and refurbishment of the E-ninnu-anzu-babbar, "The House of Fifty White Anzû-birds."<sup>4</sup>

### §3. MU 4704 (Brick)

RIME 4.5.8.1

Reign of Ur-Ningezida, ca. 1800 BC

Ešnunna,

327×330mm

#### Transliteration

1. ur-<sup>d</sup>nin-geš-zi-da
2. na-ra-am
3. <sup>d</sup>tišpak
4. ensi<sub>2</sub>
5. aš<sub>2</sub>-nun-<sup>Γ</sup>na<sup>ki</sup> <sup>Γ</sup>

#### Translation

*Ur-Ningezida,*  
*beloved*  
*of Tišpak,*  
*governor*  
*of Ešnunna.*

### §3.1. Commentary

MU 4704 is another exemplar of Ur-Ningezida's standard brick inscription recovered from Ešnunna, and should be added to those listed in RIME 4.5.8.1.<sup>5</sup> While the brick is complete, there is some superficial damage to the inscription. This damage has affected signs in the center and right of the inscription. The inscription comprises Ur-Ningezida's basic title and epithet.

### §4. MU 2148 (Brick)

Reign of Shalmaneser III, ca. 800 BC

Kalhu/Nimrud

254×153mm

#### Transliteration

1. [1] <sup>Γ</sup> <sup>d</sup>silim-ma<sup>Γ</sup>-nu-maš man gal-[u<sub>2</sub> man dan-nu]
2. <sup>Γ</sup> man <sup>Γ</sup> šu<sub>2</sub> man kur aš a <sup>1</sup>aš-pap-[a man gal-u<sub>2</sub>]
3. man dan-nu <sup>Γ</sup> man <sup>Γ</sup> šu<sub>2</sub> man kur [aš a <sup>1</sup>tukul-maš]
4. man šu<sub>2</sub> man kur aš-ma ri-[šip-tu<sub>2</sub>]
5. <sup>Γ</sup> ša<sub>2</sub> u<sub>6</sub>-nir <sup>Γ</sup> [ša<sub>2</sub> <sup>iri</sup>kal-<sup>hi</sup>]

<sup>2</sup> Edzard 1997: 135. However, the reading of the temple name follows that of George 1993: 134.

<sup>3</sup> Edzard 1997: 135.

<sup>4</sup> On the history of the patronage of this temple see George 1993: nos. 897-898.

<sup>5</sup> Frayne 1990: 516-517.

#### Transcription

1. *salmānu-ašarēd šarru rabû šarru dannu*
2. *šar kiššati šar māt aššur apil aššur-nāšir-apli šarru rabû*
3. *šarru dannu šar kiššati šar māt aššur apil tukultī-ninurta*
4. *šar kiššati šar māt aššur-ma rišiptu*
5. *ša ziqqurrati ša <sup>al</sup>kalhi*

#### Translation

*Shalmaneser, great king, strong king, king of the totality, king of Assyria, son of Assurnasirpal, great king, strong king, king of the totality, king of Assyria, son of Tukultī-Ninurta, king of the totality, king of Assyria, (who built) the construction of the ziqqurat of Kalhu.*

### §4.1. Commentary

MU 2148 can confidently be identified as another exemplar of Walker's CBI no. 159, and should be added to those listed in RIMA 3.0.102.111.<sup>6</sup> The brick is heavily damaged. The top-left corner is broken off, and the damage to the right side and bottom edge of the brick has affected the inscription. It appears that up to three or four signs are missing on the right side of the brick. Much of the face of the brick has been worn away, more so on the right side than the left. Despite this, much of the inscription can still be read. The inscription commemorates Shalmaneser's construction of the ziqqurat, which was likely to have been initiated by his father, Assurnasirpal II.<sup>7</sup>

### §5. MU 2145 (Brick)

Reign of Nebuchadnezzar II, , ca. 550 BC

Borsippa

215×162mm

#### Transliteration

1. <sup>d</sup>na<sub>3</sub>-<sup>Γ</sup>ku<sup>Γ</sup>-du-ur<sub>2</sub>-ri-uri<sub>3</sub>
2. lugal babila<sub>2</sub> <sup>Γ</sup>ki<sup>Γ</sup>
3. za-ni-in e<sub>2</sub>-sag-il<sub>2</sub>
4. u<sub>3</sub> e<sub>2</sub>-zi-da
5. ibila <sup>Γ</sup>a<sup>Γ</sup>-ša-re-du
6. ša <sup>d</sup>na<sub>3</sub>-ibila-uri<sub>3</sub>
7. lugal babila<sub>2</sub> <sup>[ki]</sup>

#### Transcription

1. *nabû-kudurri-ušur*
2. *šar bābili*
3. *zānin e-sagila*
4. *u e-zida*

<sup>6</sup> Walker 1981: no. 159; and Grayson 1996: 166-168. See also the exemplar in al-Rawi 2008: 126 and fig.15-h.

<sup>7</sup> See Oates and Oates 2006: 106.

5. *aplu ašarēdu*
6. *sa nabû-apli-ušur*
7. *šar bābili*

*Translation*

*Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, who provides for the E-sagila and the E-zida, foremost son of Nabopolassar, king of Babylonia*

**§5.1. Commentary**

The edges of MU 2145 are damaged on all sides; fortunately, the inscription is complete. However, the

right hand side of the inscription is quite faint. This is the standard brick inscription from Nebuchadnezzar's reign with numerous examples in collections throughout the world, though some with different arrangement of lines.<sup>8</sup> The brick's provenience would, based on its mention of the Ezida and the fact that no neo-Babylonian finds have been made at Kalḫu/Nimrud, appear to be Borsippa (Birs Nimrud),<sup>9</sup> although we cannot with certainty rule out one of the Babylonian cities of Babylon, Kutha, Isin, Sippar, Seleucia, Susa and Tell ed-Der.

**§6. Photographs of the royal inscriptions**

**§6.1. MU 4028**



**§6.2. MU 4128**

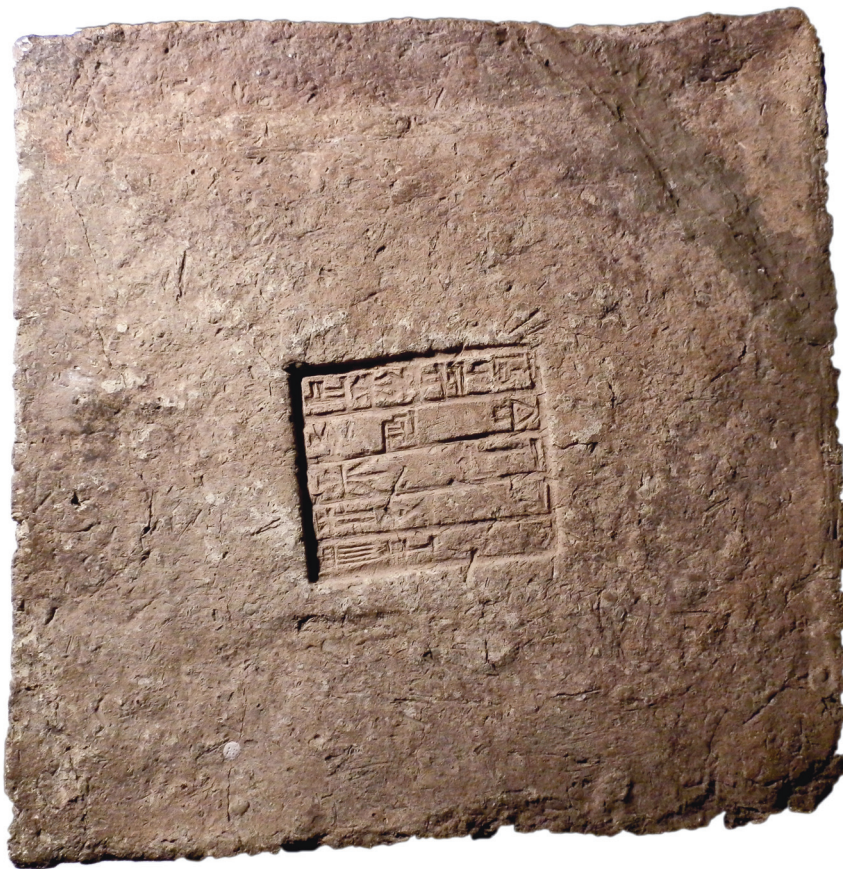


<sup>8</sup> Walker 1981: no. 101; Langdon 1912: no. 40; and ML 2.8 in Frame, et al. 1989: no. 43, p. 47.

<sup>9</sup> Personal communication, E. Robson; cf. Walker 1981: 81.



§6.3. MU 4704



§6.4. MU 2148





#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- al-Rawi, Farouk N. H.  
2008 'Inscriptions from the Tombs of the Queens of Assyria.' In Curtis, J. E. , et al., eds., *New Light on Nimrud: Proceedings of the Nimrud Conference 11th–13th March 2002*. London: British School of Archaeology in Iraq, pp. 119–138
- de Genouillac, Henri  
1936 *Fouilles de Tello*, volume 2. Paris: Guethner
- Edzard, Dietz O.  
1997 *Gudea and His Dynasty*. RIME 3/1. Toronto: University of Toronto Press
- Frame, Grant, Frayne, Douglas R. & McEwan, Gilbert J. P.  
1989 "Cuneiform Texts in the Collection of McGill University, Montreal." *ARRIM* 7, 1–54
- Frayne, D. R.  
1990 *Old Babylonian Period (2003–1595 BC)*. RIME 4. Toronto: University of Toronto Press
- George, A. R.  
1993 *House Most High: The Temples of Ancient Mesopotamia*. *Mesopotamian Civilizations* 5. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns
- Grayson, A. Kirk  
1996 *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC II (858–745 BC)*. RIMA 3. Toronto: University of Toronto Press
- Langdon, Stephen  
1912 *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*. VB 4. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs
- Oates, Joan & Oates, David  
2006 *Nimrud: An Imperial City Revealed*. London: British School of Archaeology in Iraq
- Steible, Horst  
1991 *Die neusumerischen Bau- und Weihinschriften: Teil I Inschriften der II. Dynastie von Lagaš*. FAOS 9,1. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag
- Walker, Christopher B. F.  
1981 *Cuneiform Brick Inscriptions in the British Museum, the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, the City Museum of Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, the City of Bristol Museum and Art Gallery*. London: British Museum Publications