

# Written on Mud: Some more Brick Inscriptions from Mesopotamia

H. Hameeuw, E. Gorris, J. Tavernier\*

*Abstract:* This contribution comments on the five building bricks, inscribed with cuneiform text, belonging to the Ancient Near Eastern section of the archaeological collections of the Leuven University (Belgium). These bricks date to the periods of Amar-Suen (c. 2046-2038 BC), Shalmaneser III (858-824 BC) and Nebuchadnezzar II (605-562 BC) and are remnants of building projects commissioned by these Mesopotamian kings. All of them were studied and are presented here with the help of images made with the Portable Light Dome technology.

*Keywords:* brick inscriptions, Amar-Suen, Shalmaneser III, Nebuchadnezzar II, imaging techniques.

## INTRODUCTION

The Ancient Near Eastern section of the archaeological collections of the Leuven University<sup>1</sup> holds five Mesopotamian cuneiform brick inscriptions. Two of them are still more or less intact; the others are in a severe fragmentized state. Three were added to the Leuven collections after an archaeological survey in the central Mesopotamian plain in 1969 (bricks 1, 2 & 5), the two other exemplars entered the collection thanks to gifts (brick 3 & 4). For all five of them, a certain, or more or less certain, provenance is known or could be established thanks to the content of the inscriptions: Eridu/Ur, Nimrud, Tell Abū Qubūr, Jemdet Nasr and the Sippar area. Four of the bricks (nos. 1-3 & 5) hold a stamp inscription. The fifth one (brick 4) is inscribed with a stylus. Below, the bricks and their inscriptions have been listed chronologically.

For each brick and their inscription(s) a set of differently visualized images (objective representations), a transliteration, a translation and a general commentary is presented. The images were produced by digitizing the bricks with the Portable Light Dome system (PLD) of the KU Leuven.<sup>2</sup> Ancient Near Eastern bricks mostly consist of rude, unfiltered mud, which is intentionally mixed with organic matter. As a consequence, manually made inscriptions and stamp impressions in particular are often rough and/or have left behind only vague

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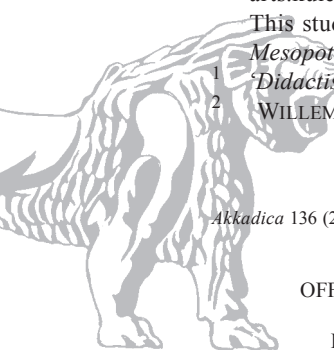
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<sup>1</sup> *Didactisch Museum Archeologie, Faculteit Letteren*.

<sup>2</sup> WILLEMS *et al.* 2005; HAMEEUW and WILLEMS 2011.



traces. In order to maximize the readability based on the unbiased original material, a set of 3 to 4 images of the same inscribed surface has been generated based on the data provided by the PLD-system. These variations are:

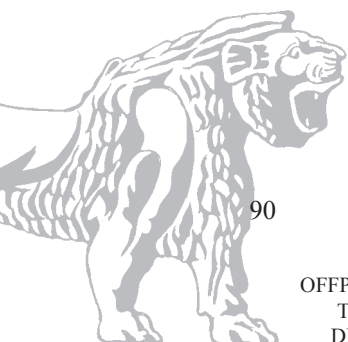
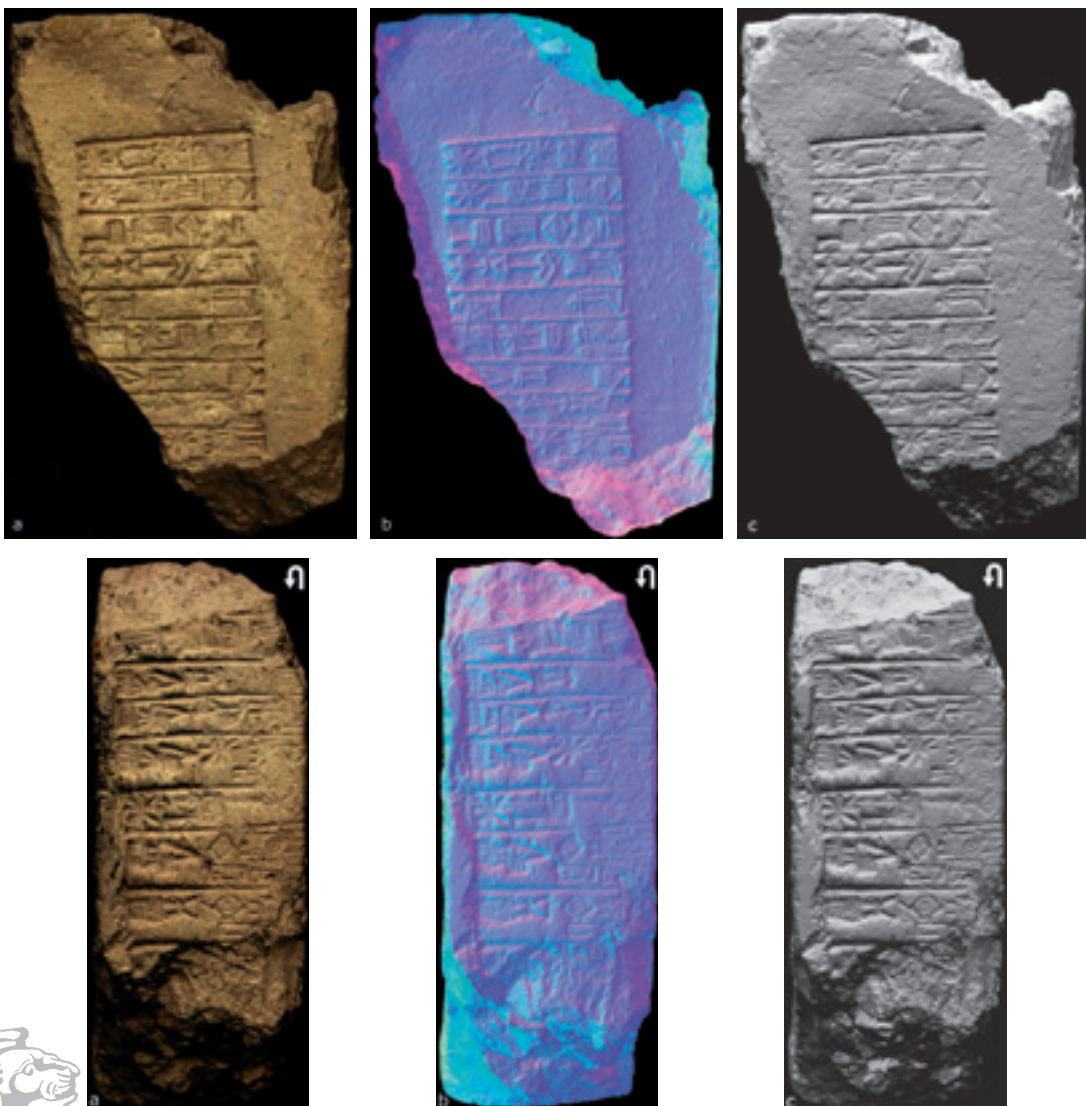
- (a) Image with the original 'texture' (color).
- (b) The 'normal map' in which each attributed RGB variation corresponds to the X-Y-Z coordinates of the surface (i.e. a sort of 2D representation of the 3D information).
- (c) Image without 'texture'.
- (d) Extraction of a so-called 'line drawing' or 'sketch' in which all V-shaped depressions into the surface are accentuated in grey-black.

EDITION

*I. Amar-Suen (c. 2046-2038 BC): Leuven brick no. 3*

Tell Abu Shahrain (Eridu) or Tell el-Muqayyar (Ur)

Dimensions: 185x124x65mm



### Description

The brick has two identical stamp impressions on the obverse and on the right edge (the left edge being completely broken off). The two impressions have a 180° different orientation, implying that they are stamped upside down in relation to each other. On the other side of the obverse traces of bitumen are still preserved.<sup>3</sup> The first set of three images displays the obverse, with lines 1-9 preserved. The second set of three images shows the right edge, where (parts of) lines 5-13 are still visible.

The text is well known from impressed stamps proclaimed to be found or excavated at Ur and Eridu and can be attributed to the reign of Amar-Suen.<sup>4</sup> The brick, although damaged, seems to be of the rectangular type (with average measurements of 260x135x75mm).<sup>5</sup> Several stamps with the same texts are known, but the manner in which the signs are arranged in the thirteen lined registers may vary, meaning that several of these stamps have been produced in the time of Amar-Suen. Interestingly, we have not found an exact copy for this Leuven exemplar. There are a few small variations known for the composition, the most particular being the switch of lines 2 and 3.<sup>6</sup>

### Composite transliteration and translation of both stamp inscriptions

1. <sup>d</sup> amar- <sup>d</sup> EN.ZU	Amar-Suen
2. <sup>d</sup> en.líl.le	by the god Enlil
3. en.líl <sup>ki</sup> .a	in Nippur
4. mu.pàd.da	named,
5. sag.ús	patron
6. <sup>r</sup> é <sup>r</sup> . <sup>d</sup> en.líl / .ka	of the Enlil temple,
7. lugal.kalag.ga	mighty king,
8. lugal.uri(m) <sub>5</sub> / <sup>ki</sup> .ma	king of Ur
9. lugal. <sup>an</sup> .ub.da / . <sup>l</sup> ímmu.ba.ke <sub>4</sub> <sup>r</sup>	king of the four world quarters,
10. <sup>d</sup> en.ki	(for) Enki,
11. lugal.ki.ág / .gá.ni.[ir]	his beloved lord,
12. abzu ki.ág.gá.ni	his beloved abzu,
13. <sup>r</sup> mu <sup>r</sup> .[na.dù]	he built.

### General commentary

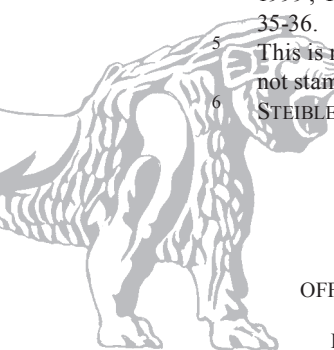
This Sumerian composition (lines 1-6) places king Amar-Suen under the protection of Enlil and hails his protective task over the Enlil temple in Nippur. This firmly establishes his hegemony

<sup>3</sup> The Maurits Sabbe Library of the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies at the KU Leuven keeps two as good as identical exemplars of this Amar-Suen brick-series; one is partly damaged, the other intact. To the latter sticks a reasonable amount of bitumen, see also NASTER and SAUREN 1973, 68.

<sup>4</sup> WALKER 1981, 31-32 : 26; STEIBLE 1991, 226-228 : Amarsuen 5; FRAYNE 1997, 260-262 : E3/2.1.3.15; PAPPI 1999; TYBOROWSKI 2001; TOHRU 2002, 66; VANDERROOST 2007; EVERLING 2008, 178-181; GEORGE 2011, 35-36.

<sup>5</sup> This is not absolutely certain. There are examples of squared bricks, on which the inscription on the obverse is not stamped in the middle but towards the edge, see e.g. BM 114225.

<sup>6</sup> STEIBLE 1991, 226-228.



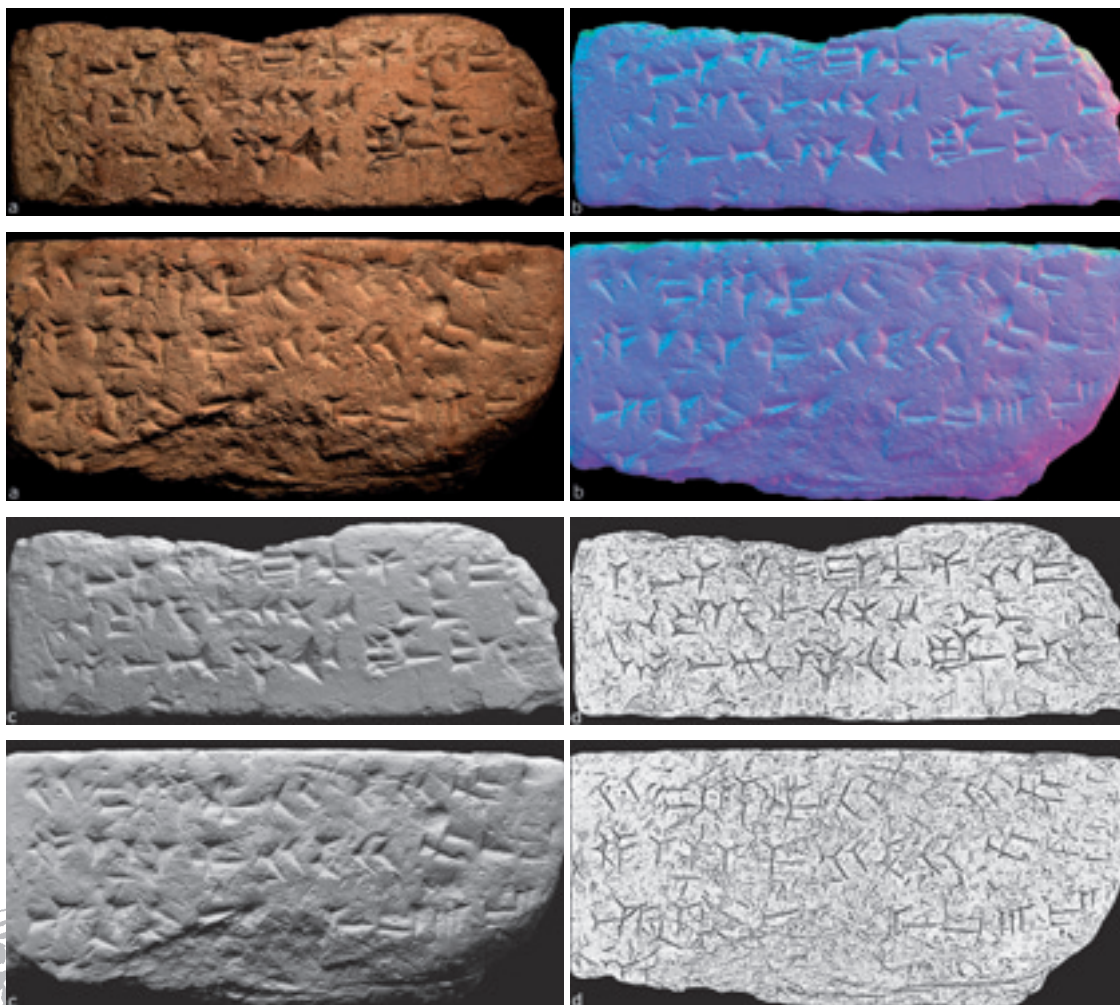
over the most important religious center of Mesopotamia. Thereafter, the standard royal formula (lines 7-9) is given, confirming his Ur kingship and his all-including power over the ‘four quarters’. In the final passage, the actual purpose of the composition is written, the construction of ‘the/an’ ABZU for Enki. Although not mentioned in the text, this ABZU is most probably the, or a, part of the É.ABZU (a sacred basin can be suggested), i.e. the temple of Enki at Eridu.

The fact that all the known inscriptions of this text are reported and catalogued as found or excavated at Ur or Eridu only (see the lists by STEIBLE 1991: Amarsuen 5; FRAYNE 1997: E3/2.1.3.15) confirms the location for these building activities at Eridu. Most of these stamped bricks were gathered and excavated during the British-led missions in Ur and Eridu, but before and later, an unknown number of these bricks has ended up in both public and private collections. As such, also for this Leuven exemplar an Ur/Eridu provenance can be suggested. Unfortunately, no records were found in the archives of the Leuven University revealing information or a registration date on when this brick entered the collection.

*II. Shalmaneser III (858-824 BC): Leuven Brick 4*

Nimrud (Kalhu)

Dimensions: 165x349x117mm



### Description

The partially preserved mud brick is inscribed on two faces. The first three lines of the text are written on the upper edge of the brick. The text continues with four additional lines on the front face. Most cuneiform signs have a height of about 25mm. Since the brick is broken off, with partial damages to the last line, the original shape of the brick cannot be determined.

It is uncertain how this brick entered the Leuven collection. Based on the contents (see below) a Nimrud provenance seems certain. In the slide collection (diapositives) of the department a trip made by Paul Naster to Nimrud is documented. It is the only lead which might explain how this brick ended up in the Leuven University collection.

### Transliteration and translation

#### *Edge*

1. <sup>md</sup>šùl-ma-nu-maš man ᵀgalᵀ-[ú]
2. man *dan-nu* man šú man <sup>kur</sup>aš
3. a <sup>ma</sup>aš-pap-a man gal-ᵀúᵀ

#### *Face*

4. man *dan-nu* man šú man <sup>kur</sup>aš
5. a <sup>mtukul</sup>.maš man šú man <sup>kur</sup>aš-ma
6. *ri-šip-tú* u<sub>6</sub>.nir
7. ᵀšaᵀ [<sup>uru</sup>kal-ḫi]

1. Shalmaneser (III), the great king,
2. the strong king, the king of the world, the king of the land of Assur,
3. son of Ashurnasirpal (II), the great king,
4. the strong king, the king of the world, the king of the land of Assur,
5. son of Tukulti-Ninurta (II), king of the world, king of the land Assur.
6. Construction of the ziggurat
7. of the city of Kalhu.

### General commentary

On the PLD images one can clearly see a superfluous vertical wedge in the beginning of the sign A “son, descendant” (lines 3 and 5), providing A with an unusual orthography (LABAT 1988, n. 579). Alternatively, this wedge could be read as *diš*. A tiny determinative *diš*, only visible at the line drawing image (d), is collated in line 3 before the personal name Ashurnasirpal. This vertical wedge is attached to the preceding sign A.

The sign GAL (LABAT 1988, n. 343) at the end of line 3 also has a slightly modified orthography, probably the result of scribal confusion. An additional vertical wedge is added, while there are only three horizontal wedges in the front. The latter characteristic seems to be attested in the first occurrence of GAL in line 1 as well, but this remains difficult to verify since this sign is partially broken.



In line 6, *rišiptu* can be restored thanks to the standard formula of the Shalmaneser III building bricks (RIMAP 3 A.0.102.111). In other copies of the same text (e.g. HULIN 1971; JEAN 2007), an additional sign ŠÁ is positioned between *rišiptu* and U<sub>6</sub>.NIR (*ziqqurati*). It seems doubtful that ŠÁ ought to be restored here, despite the somewhat large space between TÚ and U<sub>6</sub>.

Only the upper part of the sign ŠÁ is preserved in line 7. Based on various other copies of this text (e.g. BM 90225 or VS 23 109), one can safely restore <sup>uru</sup>kal-*hi* after the sign ŠÁ.

In the inscriptions of Shalmaneser III, the sumerogram U<sub>6</sub>.NIR is exclusively used as a reference to the ziggurat of Ninurta in Kalhu (see also RIMAP 3 A.0.102.56). This corroborates the restoration of the name Kalhu in line 7, despite the lack of information of the brick's provenance. Other temples are always indicated by É.

It is known that Shalmaneser III conducted several large building projects, mainly situated at Assur (RIMAP 3 A.0.102.53.55.99-106.108-110) and Kalhu (RIMAP 3 A.0.102.56, A.0.102.111). Some smaller structures were constructed in Tell Billa (RIMAP 3 A.0.102.58) and Nineveh (RIMAP 3 A.0.102.107), where a smaller amount of bricks connected with Shalmaneser III's projects was found. His most significant building construction, however, was the erection of the ziggurat in Kalhu, dedicated to the god Ninurta, already initiated by his predecessor Ashurnasirpal II, but for the greater part built by him (SCHRAMM 1973, 97; POSTGATE and READE 1976-1980, 308; BAKER 2006-08, 584). The ziggurat was made of baked clay bricks on which a building inscription, like the one studied here, was applied.

In sum, 79 copies of the same inscription, which one could perhaps coin the Shalmaneser III Ziggurat Inscription, have been found.<sup>7</sup> Yet these copies are not identical, as not all exemplars have the same line distribution. In total, six different types can be distinguished, of which the first one is clearly the most frequent one.<sup>8</sup>

The numbers preceded by cat. refer to the list of copies made up by Grayson (1996, 166-167).

(1) Seven lines, all on the face (cat. 1, 4, 10, 14-41, 43-49, 55, 57-58, 63, 71-72, 75): Ash. 1922.200, BCM 225\*63, BM 90224, BM 90227, EVERLING 2012 (not in cat.), IA 5.032a,<sup>9</sup> LEHMANN-HAUPT 1907 no. 13, ND 281, ND 286A-B, ND 823-826, ND 829-830, ND 1131A-B, ND 3495A-B, OLP 2 104, RT 26 26 no. 3, UM 84-26-31,<sup>10</sup> YOS 9 135. Total: 46.

(2) Seven lines, two along the edge, five on the face (cat. 3, 5, 7, 50): *Art of the Ancient World* 15, 64 (not in cat.; the two bottom lines on the face are broken off), Ash. 1957.184, BM 90226, BM 90355, BM 90744, O.2677 (not in cat.; O.2677 is a brick kept in the Royal Museum of Art and History in Brussels; cf. JEAN 2007). Total: 6.

<sup>7</sup> During the fifties, complete or broken bricks of this type were still to be found «in numbers ... upon the site» (GADD 1957-1958).

<sup>8</sup> See WALKER (1981, 113) for the texts kept in the British Museum (BM), the Ashmolean Museum. (Ash.) and the Birmingham City Museum (BCM). Photographs of some of the BM texts can be found at the online collection website of the British Museum. For the Nimrud texts (ND), see WISEMAN (1950, 197; 1952, 67; 1953, 149) and WISEMAN and KINNIER WILSON (1951, 119).

<sup>9</sup> This brick is kept in the Australian Institute of Archaeology at Melbourne. A photograph was kindly sent to us by Christopher Davey, the Director of the Institute.

<sup>10</sup> A photograph of this text is available at <http://www.penn.museum/collections/object/283215> (November 2013).



- (3) Seven lines: three along the edge, four on the face (cat. 6, 11-13, 60, 64): BM 90705, LEHMANN-HAUPT 1907 no. 14, LEHMANN-HAUPT 1907 no. 15 (not in cat.), Leuven Brick 4 (not in cat.), ND 282, ND 283A-B, VS 23 109. Total: 8.
- (4) Six lines: two along the edge, four on the face (cat. 2): BM 90225. Total: 1
- (5) Four lines, all along the edge (cat. 42, 65): LEHMANN-HAUPT 1907 no. 17, ND 1127. Total: 2.
- (6) Five lines, all on the face (cat. 9, 56, 59, 61-62, 66-70, 73-74, 76-77): Assur 1/4 p. 8, BM 98068, BOISSIER 1912 nos. 97-99, FALES 1989 p. 229 no. 71, LE GAC 1907 p. 202 no. 4B, LEHMANN-HAUPT 1907 no. 16 (not in cat.), MU 2148,<sup>11</sup> OECT 1 Pl. 29 W.-B. 199, RT 26 25 no. 1, Studium Biblicum Franciscanum. Museum 4 Pl. 15, VS 1 68, VS 23 108, WESZELI 2013 (not in cat.), YOS 9 134. Total: 16.

Of one text (BM 90751 = cat. no. 8) it cannot be said with certainty to which group it belongs. The brick inscription has traces of three lines along the face, but most probably had seven lines in total.

Finally, it is useful to mention some necessary other modifications to Grayson's catalogue (1996).

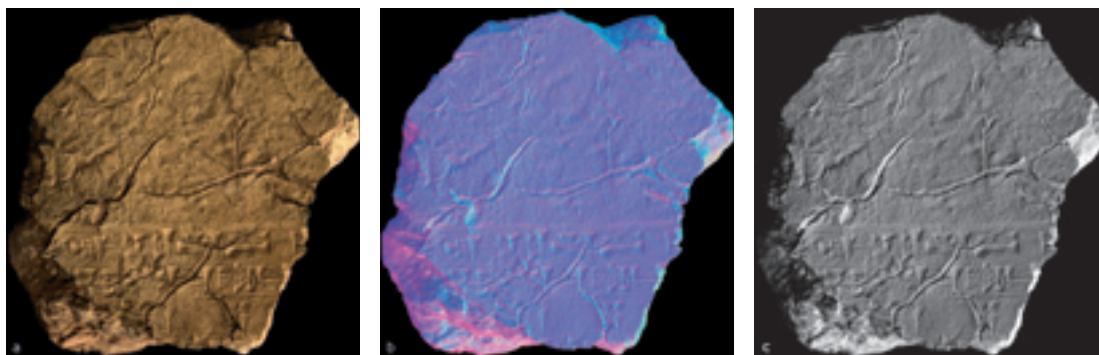
- ND 3497A-B (cat. nos. 51-52). According to WISEMAN (1953, 149), the 3-lined inscription begins with 'Palace of Shalmaneser' and thus cannot be identical to our brick. Consequently, this text should be transferred from Grayson's catalogue entry A.0.102.111 to A.0.102.105, A.0.102.106 or A.0.102.109.
- ND 3498A1 and ND 3498A2 (cat. nos. 53-54) are wrongly given in Grayson's catalogue and must accordingly be deleted from it. The excavation number ND 3498 in fact refers to a carnelian bead with a dedicatory inscription (beginning with 'a-na <sup>d</sup>EN-[ ] be-li-šu'; cf. WISEMAN 1953, 149).
- The inscriptions published by LEHMANN-HAUPT (1907 no. 15-16) are not mentioned in Grayson's catalogue, despite the fact that they too are exemplars of the inscription published here.

### *III. Nebuchadnezzar II (605-562 BC): Leuven Bricks 1, 2 and 5*

#### 1) Leuven Brick 1

Tell Abū Qubūr

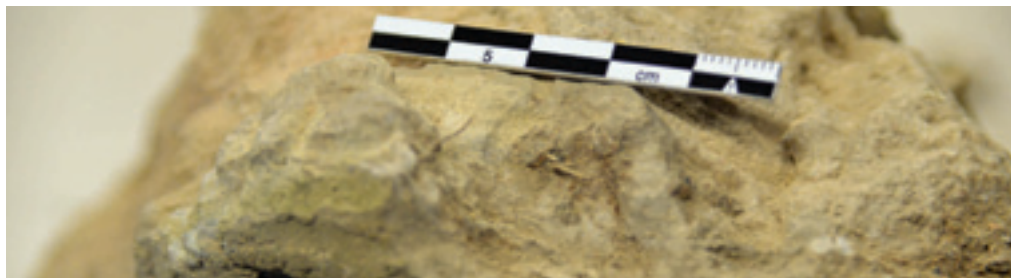
Dimensions: 128x133x73mm



<sup>11</sup> This brick is housed at the Museum of Ancient Cultures at Macquarie University (Sydney). See Cuneiform Digital Library Bulletin 2013 :001 ([http://cdli.ucla.edu/pubs/cdlb/2013/cdlb2013\\_001.html](http://cdli.ucla.edu/pubs/cdlb/2013/cdlb2013_001.html)).

Description

Lump of a large brick consisting of crude ‘clay’ with a more softened surface in which the rather vague and shallow traces of a stamp impression are visible. In the brick’s interior, multiple inclusions of floral particles may be observed (see illustration just below). The inscription of the stamp is composed in the typical archaized *ductus* common for Neo-Babylonian inscriptions. The partly preserved lines are the remnants of one of the well-known royal standard inscriptions by Nebuchadnezzar II. KOLDEWEY (1913, 79) already observed this type and catalogued this 4-lined text in his main excavation report on Babylon as inscription E.<sup>12</sup> Earlier on, this type of stamped brick was picked up or excavated by several travellers to the Orient and pioneer archaeologists at various central and southern Mesopotamian sites.



In the middle, plant fibers are visible in the mud structure of Leuven Brick 1

Former KU Leuven professor Paul Naster collected the KU Leuven exemplar in 1969 (see also bricks 2 & 5) during a survey in the region south-southeast of Baghdad,<sup>13</sup> in case of brick 1, more specifically at Tell Abū Qubūr (Ghabur, northwest of Tell ed-Dēr). This site has a particular interest with regard to building activities commissioned by Nebuchadnezzar II. Tell Abū Qubūr is situated on the trajectory of the Ḥabl aš-Šaḥr, the remains of a cross-country defensive wall built during Nebuchadnezzar’s reign.<sup>14</sup> This mega-construction project stretched between the Euphrates and Tigris just north of Sippar. It was the discovery, the systematical excavation and the study by the Belgian-British Expeditions to Iraq in the early 1980’s which finally and indisputably identified the “Wall of Media” since long known from classical sources and the Nebuchadnezzar II wall known from cuneiform sources as one and the same. Thanks to a 30m wide levee in the landscape and the finds of the ‘ubiquitous presence of broken baked bricks’, the trajectory of this wall can be easily followed through the landscape.<sup>15</sup> As such, archaeological investigation along the Ḥabl aš-Šaḥr concluded as follows: “Virtually every brick excavated on the southern structure of the wall bears the stamp of Nebuchadnezzar”.<sup>16</sup> Because of this mass production, the excavations at Tell Abū Qubūr revealed a large amount of these bricks reused for the constructions of post-Nebuchadnezzar

<sup>12</sup> See also VS 1 48; BERGER (1973, 185-187) speaks of ‘Nebukadnezar Backsteine A(b’)<sub>4</sub> /Ap(b’)<sub>4</sub>’; WALKER (1981) lists this variant as ‘100. Nebuchadnezzar II no. 39’; PETTINATO 1970-71 : Type C; BLACK *et al.* 1987 catalogue the inscription as the first ‘4-lined stamp’ type on bricks found at the Ḥabl aš-Šaḥr.

<sup>13</sup> De Meyer *et al.* 1971, 7.

<sup>14</sup> Killick 1984; Black *et al.* 1987; Gasche 1989a.

<sup>15</sup> Killick 1984, 125.

<sup>16</sup> Black *et al.* 1987, 25.



II structures.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, it is difficult to establish whether Leuven brick 1 was found at Abū Qubūr itself or directly along the path of the defensive wall in the vicinity of Tell Abū Qubūr.

Transliteration and translation

- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1. <sup>ˈ</sup> d <sup>ˈ</sup> ag-ku-dúr-ri-urù ˈlugalˈ [kà.dingir.ra <sup>ki</sup> ] | Nebuchadnezzar (II), king of Babylon, |
| 2. [za-ni]-ˈinˈ é.sag.íl [ù é.zi.da]  | provisioner of the Esagil and Ezida,  |
| 3. ˈibilaˈ a-[šá-re-du]   | the first and foremost son            |
| 4. [sá] ˈ <sup>ˈ</sup> dagˈ-[ibila-urù lugal kà.dingir.ra <sup>ki</sup> ]             | of Nabopolassar, king of Babylon      |

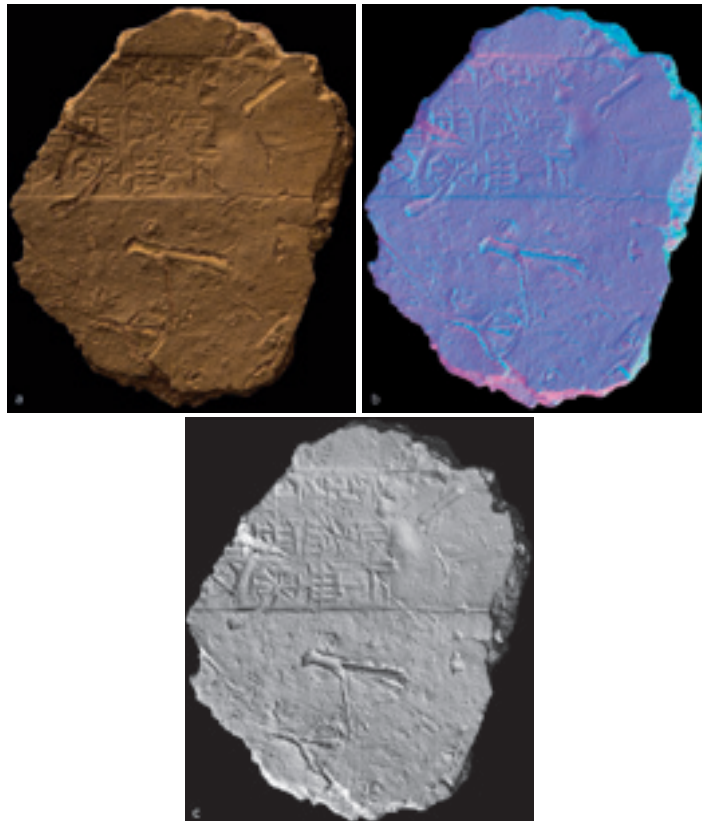
General commentary

This Babylonian composition can be seen as the shortest version of the standard royal titulary, here spread over 4 lines of text. Lines 1 and 3-4 establish king Nebuchadnezzar as king of Babylon, the rightful heir of the kingdom as the foremost son of his father Nabopolassar. His duties as guardian of the religious practice are accentuated in line 2. The Esagil and Ezida are respectively the temples of Marduk and Nabû at Babylon and Borsippa.

2) Leuven Brick 2

Jemdet Nasr

Dimensions: 118x145x39mm



<sup>17</sup> Gasche 1989b, 5; Bruschweiler 1989: ‘Tableau 2’; Gasche et al. 1991.



### Description

This lump of mud brick has an irregular upper crust of the original with a 3 lines stamp inscription impressed in its surface. A middle section of the inscription is preserved; to the left a small section has broken off, to the right the lines were either smoothed out after the impression or not properly impressed in antiquity. The text is one of the well-known standard royal compositions of Nebuchadnezzar II.<sup>18</sup>

The brick was collected and brought to the Leuven University by Paul Naster during a survey instructed by the General Directorate of Antiquities of Baghdad in the Kiš region in September 1969.<sup>19</sup> The label accompanying the brick in the Leuven collections states: ‘25/9/69 2 (uit ± 30) Đj-N: Jemdet Nasr’.<sup>20</sup> Interestingly, the excavation reports on Jemdet Nasr do not make mention of Neo-Babylonian structures built with stamped bricks. As the Leuven Brick 2 is a surface find made during a survey of a vast region, we might assume that this lump was found in the surroundings of Jemdet Nasr, not at the site itself. In this light, the only Neo-Babylonian brick inscription that the excavations by Roger Matthews came across, was brought in by a local boy (personal communications with prof. Matthews) and had most probably also a provenance in the surroundings of Jemdet Nasr.<sup>21</sup> In addition, as no Nebuchadnezzar II building is known from Jemdet Nasr itself, both the brick of the young boy and the one collected by Naster could have been brought from elsewhere. This action could have taken place in antiquity, as well as in more recent times.

### Transliteration and translation

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. [d]r̄.aḡ.niḡ.du.ʿurūʾ [lugal kà.dingir.ra <sup>ki</sup> za-nin] | Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, provisioner |
| 2. ʿé̄.saḡ.íl [ù é.zi.da ibila sag.kal]                             | of the Esagil and Ezida, the foremost son    |
| 3. ʿsáʾ d̄aḡ.a.[urū lugal kà.dingir.ra <sup>ki</sup> ]              | of Nabopolassar, king of Babylon             |

### General commentary

This Babylonian composition can be seen as the shortest version of the standard royal titles, here spread over 3 lines of text; for further comments see the remarks under brick 1.

<sup>18</sup> Inscription ‘F’ in Koldewey 1913, 79; ‘Nebukadnezar Backsteine A(b’’)3’ in Berger 1973, 197-182; ‘101. Nebuchadnezzar II no. 40’ in Walker 1981, 81-82 and ‘Type D’ in Pettinato 1970-71.

<sup>19</sup> De Meyer et al. 1971, 7; see also the comments under brick 1.

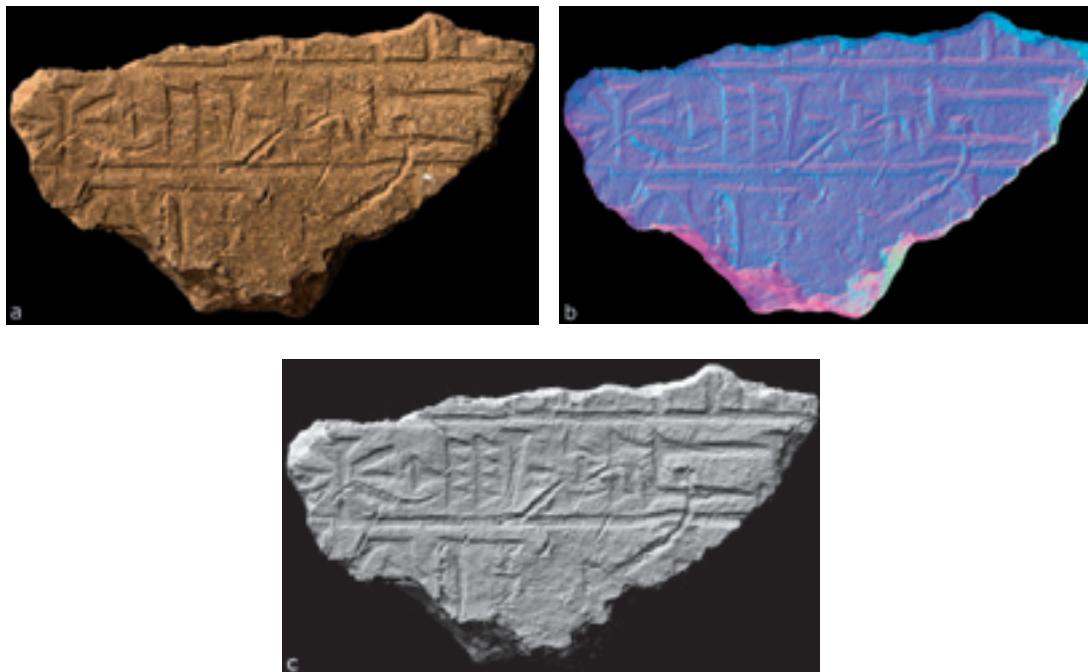
<sup>20</sup> Although the label nicely confirms the September 1969 date of the survey in the Kiš area as the De Meyer et al. (1971, 7) passage indicates, the further reading of the note accompanying the brick is somehow enigmatic. We estimate that the ‘2 (uit ± 30)’ refers to two pieces Paul Naster selected out of thirty collected surface finds made at Jemdet Nasr. The nature of that second piece is unidentified. As surface finds of baked clay sickles at Jemdet Nasr of the Ubaid period are reported as extensive (Matthews 1989, 247; 2002: fig. 47-48), this second piece might be a non-attributed blade of such a sickle kept in the Ancient Near Eastern section of the Leuven collection.

<sup>21</sup> Based on a picture of the brick that Roger Matthews sent us, the inscription counts 7 lines and can be identified as Walker 1981, 102 Nebuchadnezzar II no. 41; Berger 1973, Nebukadnezar Backsteine Ap(b’’)7, known to be found at inter alia Kish, Sippar and Seleucia.

3) Leuven Brick 5

Sippar

Dimensions: 81x44x40mm



Description

The remaining passage of the stamp inscription on this small brick fragment, a crust only, comprises the remnants of three lines. The lowest line on the fragment is most probably also the bottom of the inscription, as a horizontal line – part of the stamp design – is not visible anymore below the cuneiform signs. According to the Leuven Collection register, this brick inscription was found during the 1969 survey and handpicked by Paul Naster (see above under bricks 1 & 2). At Sippar, the vast majority of excavated bricks have been attributed to king Nebuchadnezzar II.<sup>22</sup> Unfortunately, neither the collection register nor the fragment itself allows a more precise localization than Sippar in general (so it remains unclear whether it was surveyed at Tell Abu Habbah or at Tell ed-Dēr).

Transliteration and translation

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. [d<sup>a</sup>ag-ku-dūr-ri-urù lugal kà.dingir.ra<sup>ki</sup>]</li> <li>2. [za-nin é.sag.il ù é-zi-da]</li> <li>3. [ibila sag.kal ša] d<sup>a</sup>ag.ibila. [urù]</li> <li>4. [lugal kà.dingir.ra]<sup>ki</sup> a-na<sup>7</sup>-[ku]</li> </ol> | <p>Nebuchadnezzar (II), king of Babylon,<br/>provisioner of the Esagil and Ezida,<br/>the foremost son of Nabopolassar,<br/>king of Babylon.</p> |
|--|--|

<sup>22</sup> De Meyer 1978, 157; Walker and Collon 1980, 104-105.



### General commentary

Based on the bare remnants of line 4, the text can most probably be identified as one of the Nebuchadnezzar II standard royal inscriptions (see also Leuven bricks 1& 2), i.e. a variant to the 4, 5 or 6-line version (above the inscription has been arbitrarily reconstructed as a 4-line text). Normally the final line ends with KÀ.DINGIR.RA<sup>KI</sup>, but some variants, as in this case, end with a supplemental *anāku*: *ana-ku* or *a-na-ku* (for parallels see BM 90129, BM 90130 from Babylon and BLACK *et. al* 1987, 29-35 for exemplars from the Ḫabl aš-Šaḫr).

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