

# ANOTHER EXEMPLAR OF ESARHADDON'S URUK B CYLINDER (NBC 2511)

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## Abstract

The Yale Babylonian Collection contains a partial cylinder, NBC 2511, that preserves a hitherto unknown example of Esarhaddon's Uruk B inscription. While this exemplar does not deviate in translation from those already published in *RINAP* 4, there are some orthographic variations. This article presents an edition of NBC 2511 with some comments regarding its differences from the published exemplars and its parallels with other Esarhaddon Uruk cylinders.

A partially preserved cylinder in the Yale Babylonian Collection, NBC 2511 (YPM BC 005484 = CDLI P505883), is a previously unpublished exemplar of Esarhaddon's Uruk B inscription.<sup>1</sup> Uruk B is already known from three other examples, (1) YBC 2147 (YPM BC 016775), (2) NBC 2509 (YPM BC 005482), and (3) W 856, all edited together in *RINAP* 4, pp. 273–75 as text 134 (previously *RIMB* 2, pp. 184–86). This inscription chronicles Esarhaddon's renovations in the Enirgalana cella of Ištar's Eanna temple in Uruk. This version does not change the translation in the published edition, so a new one is not provided here, but variants are noted in the commentary. These are largely orthographic variants that do not affect the meaning of the text. Photographs of this text (fig. 1) and of the two other exemplars mentioned above can be found on the webpage for the Yale University Peabody Museum under their respective YPM BC numbers.<sup>2</sup>

NBC 2511 preserves around 13 lines of texts, representing lines 1–5 and 13–25 of the *RINAP* 4 edition. The Yale Babylonian Collection notes on this fragment record that it joins with NBC 2509 and, at first glance, this appears to be true for the beginning lines (1–5) but with significant portions missing from the middle of the lines starting with 1'. When new photographs were taken of NBC 2511 and 2509, however, it became apparent that there was no direct physical join; for instance, the signs *mu-ra-* in line 4 were visible in full on NBC 2509 and in traces on NBC 2511.<sup>3</sup> So it seems that NBC 2511 is a piece of a previously unknown exemplar of Uruk B. The object is part of the collection of James B. Nies and was donated to the Yale Babylonian Collection as part of his bequest so unfortunately no information is available concerning its acquisition or origins.

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1. I am grateful to Agnete Lassen of the Yale Babylonian Collection for permission to publish this text and to Klaus Wagensonner for the photographs of this exemplar as well as the two others housed in the Yale Babylonian Collection, and for his comments and confirmations regarding the cylinder itself and the join. I also thank Enrique Jiménez-Sánchez for bringing this text to my attention. Finally, I am indebted to Michael Jursa, who kindly assisted me with this edition and corrected some of my readings. Remaining mistakes are my own.

2. <http://peabody.yale.edu/collections>

3. This observation was made by Klaus Wagensonner when he was taking the photographs.

The cylinder is damaged on both ends, with some lines fairly eroded. The line rulings for the beginning of the text are so faint as to not appear on the photographs;<sup>4</sup> more visible line rulings start with 1' and the lines roughly correspond to the *RINAP* 4 edition until line 11', which contains two lines, and the conclusion of the text, line 12'', is followed by a double ruling. There are also what seem to be traces of a vertical ruling at the end of the lines. All of this would be consistent with the rulings of the better preserved YBC 2147, which shows rulings at the ends of the cylinder and between each line, with a double ruling after the final line in the inscription.

The text is characteristically Babylonian: the object is a clay barrel cylinder, the script and language are Babylonian, and the content aligns with other Babylonian royal inscriptions. For instance, the text itself is dedicated to Ištar of Uruk, written as <sup>d</sup>INANNA rather than as <sup>d</sup>15 or <sup>d</sup>*iš-tar*, which are much more common in Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions. While not exclusive to the Babylonian inscriptions, the Sumerogram suggests a type of archaizing quite at home in the context of Uruk, Inanna/Ištar's oldest cult center. The subject of the Uruk cylinders—construction reports rather than military campaigns or conquests—is also typical of Babylonian royal inscriptions. This text and many of the others that Esarhaddon commissioned for a Babylonian audience, particularly the Uruk cylinders, were probably written by a Babylonian scribe. Of the already-published exemplars of Uruk B, YBC 2147 (exemplar 1 in the *RINAP* edition) was written in Assyrian script while the others were inscribed in Babylonian.

NBC 2511 is very similar to several of the other Esarhaddon Uruk cylinders, particularly Uruk A, C, and D (*RINAP* 4, 133, 135, and 136, respectively). Uruk A is similar in content, as it is dedicated to Ištar of Uruk, though it concerns the king's renovation works on the Eanna in general, rather than the Enirgalana in particular. Uruk C (*RINAP* 4, 135) is closer to Uruk B in structure, as there are several identical lines between Uruk B and Uruk C, despite Nanāya and construction work on her cella in the Eanna (the Eḫiliana) being the focus of Uruk C. The similarities include spelling differences found in both this exemplar of Uruk B and exemplar 1 (AO 6772) of Uruk C. It is possible that both were written by the same scribe, but this is speculative. Uruk D is also dedicated to Nanāya and tells of the reconstruction of the same cella, containing a few similar or identical phrases to Uruk B but these are largely restricted to standardized conventions such as royal titulary or common construction-related phrases.

## Edition

- 1 [...] *qa-rit-ti* DINGIR.MEŠ <sup>r</sup>*šir-ti*<sup>1</sup>
- 2 [... *na*]-*gab šu-luḫ-ḫu šu-up-qu-du qa-tuš-šá*
- 3 [...-*r*]*u-ḫu zik-ru-šá*
- 4 [...] <sup>r</sup>*mu-ra-as<sup>1</sup>-si-bat ga-re-šú*
- 5 [...] <sup>r</sup>GAŠAN<sup>1</sup>-šú

The lines that correspond to lines 6–12 the *RINAP* 4 edition are missing, but significant portions of them are preserved in exemplar 2 (NBC 2509). This exemplar resumes with line 13.

- 1' (= Line 13) [...] -*er*
- 2' (= Line 14) [...] -*a(?)*]-*ti [u/ú]*-<sup>r</sup>*šar<sup>1</sup>-me*
- 3' (= Line 15) [...] *i-gar-šá*
- 4' (= Line 16) [...] -<sup>r</sup>*ḫa<sup>1</sup>-diš ina a-šá-bi-i-ki*

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4. I thank Klaus Wagensonner for confirming that there are, in fact, fragmentary rulings.

- 5' (= Line 17) [...] *a-mat* MUNUS.SIG<sub>5</sub>-*ia* [...] *šap-tuk-ki*  
 6' (=Line 18) [...] *ḥu-ud ŠĀ-bi šī-i-mi šī-ma-ṛti(?)*<sup>1</sup>  
 7' (= Line 19) [...] *i-tas-ḥar-ṛma*<sup>1</sup> [...] *lu-me-es kul-ba-ṛbi-iš*<sup>1</sup>  
 8' (= Line 20) [...*p*]*a-pa-ḥi šu-a-ti in-na-ḥu* [...*u*]*s-su lu-ud-diš*  
 9' (= Line 21) [...*li*]*p-šu-uš* UDU.SISKUR BAL-ṛ*q*<sup>1</sup> [...]  
 MU.SAR-*e-šú liš-kun*  
 10' (= Line 22) [...] [*ni-ki*]-*il-ti i-pa-áš-ši-tu*  
 11' (= Line 23–24)[...] *ú-nak-ka-ru* [...] HUL-*tìm li-šim-šú*  
 12' (= Line 25) [... *ir-ši*]-*iš re-e-me*

### Commentary

Line 2: This line preserves *šu-up-qu-du* instead of *šu-up-qu-ud-du* in (1).

Line 4: This line has *murassibat* instead of *muraššibat* (*mu-ra-áš-ši-bat*) in (1). I thank Klaus Wagensonner for the collation of the line and his observation that traces of *mu-ra* are preserved. Ashurbanipal Babylonian 15 (also from Uruk) has the writing *mu-ra-si-bat* as well (*RINAP* 5, Asbpl 114: 4).

Line 2' (= Line 14): Instead of *-ti* like (1), this exemplar has *-te*, a minor but consistent change. This line is identical with *RINAP* 4, 135: 14; exemplar 1 (AO 6772) even uses *-ti* instead of a *-te* in exemplar 2 (BM 113204) of that text.

Line 3' (= Line 15): Unlike in (1), the writing here spells out *šigarša* instead of *sigarša* (*ši-gar-šá* instead of *si-ga-ar-šá*). Both writings are attested in other royal Neo-Assyrian inscriptions. Most importantly, *RINAP* 4, 135 (Uruk C) has *ši-gar-šá* in line 15, which is an identical line, but only in exemplar 1 (AO 6772), while exemplar 2 (BM 113204) has *si-ga-ar-šá*, just as in Uruk B (1).

4' (= Line 16): In contrast to (1), this exemplar gives a plene writing for *ašābiki* and a variant writing for *ḥadiš* (instead of *ḥa-di-iš*). Again, these are relatively minor changes, but the writing used here for *ašābiki* is unusual, as the plene writing is usually *a-šá-a-bi-ki*. To this point, this is an identical line with Uruk C line 16, in which exemplar 1 has the expected *ḥa-di-iš* writing but has the alternative writing *a-šá-a-bi-ki* (exemplar 2 has *ḥa-di-iš ina a-šá-bi-ki*, like Uruk B exemplar 1). It is possible that the scribe, having contracted *ḥadiš*, needed to make up one sign's length to get the proper spacing for the line but had already neglected to add the lengthening *a* and so resorted to adding an *i* sign.

6' (= Line 18): This exemplar uses *mi* instead of *mī* of (1). Uruk C has an identical line here and, as with the lines above, exemplar 1 has the same writing as the current exemplar (*ši-i-mi*) while exemplar 2 is different, here *ši-i-mī* as in Uruk B (1).



7' (= Line 19): This prism has *lu-me-es* instead of *lu-mi-iš* and *kul-ba-bi-iš* instead of *kul-ba-biš*. The first word, from *mêsu*, is fairly rare but appears in several contexts: in Neo-Babylonian letters, Middle Assyrian perfume texts, the *Erra Epic*, one of Sargon's inscriptions (*TCL* 3), an Ashurbanipal inscription, in *Lugal-e*, and in several Nebuchadnezzar inscriptions.<sup>5</sup> This term is also found in another of Esarhaddon's Babylonian inscriptions.<sup>6</sup> The word *kulbābiš* is very rare; the *CAD* notes only this text and *STT* 136.<sup>7</sup> In addition, the form *ittasharma* is defective but preserved in more than one exemplar.

8' (= Line 20): This exemplar uses *-ti* instead of *-te* as in (1). This line is identical in Uruk C.

The term *papāḫu* denotes a cella within a larger temple complex; here the cella is in the Enirgalana ("House, Prince of Heaven") of the Eanna complex, belonging to Ištar of Uruk. Interestingly, the term is rather rare in Assyrian royal inscriptions, especially before Sennacherib's reign, where (*w*)*atmanu* is the more commonly used term. The only pre-Sennacherib attestation is in an inscription of Adad-nērārī I during the Middle Assyrian period.<sup>8</sup> Otherwise, the term is first attested with any regularity starting with Sennacherib, though (*w*)*atmanu* is still more commonly used and Sennacherib in particular uses *kummu*.<sup>9</sup> The inscription of Adad-nērārī I and one of Sennacherib's have to do with the Aššur cult, though Sennacherib's other inscriptions concern the palace in Nineveh's citadel<sup>10</sup> or the *akītu* house that he built.<sup>11</sup> Two of Esarhaddon's inscriptions also use this term in relation to the Aššur temple<sup>12</sup> but *papāḫu* features most prominently in his Uruk cylinders B, C, and D as the focus of his reconstruction projects. Another inscription, while found in Nineveh, mentions *papāḫu* in the context of the Babylonian cults as well: in this case, the cella of Marduk.<sup>13</sup> Ashurbanipal uses the term once, referring to the temple of Šin of Ḫarrān.<sup>14</sup> In Babylonian royal inscriptions, *papāḫu* is more common; see, for instance, inscriptions of Bēl-ibni,<sup>15</sup> Marduk-zākir-šumi,<sup>16</sup> Nabû-šuma-iškun,<sup>17</sup> and Nebuchadnezzar I, with further attestations recorded in the *CAD* from Nebuchadnezzar II, Nabonidus, Anu-uballiṭ and a number of other Neo-Babylonian texts, suggesting that the appearance of *papāḫu* here instead of (*w*)*atmanu* is driven by the Babylonian context.<sup>18</sup>

9' (= Line 21): This line is identical with Uruk C line 21.

10' (= Line 22): This exemplar uses the alternative writing of *ni-ki-il-ti* instead of *ni-kil-ti* and, while this line is identical to Uruk C line 22, none of those exemplars use this writing.

11' (= Line 23–24): Lines 23–24 in (1) are combined in the same ruling in this exemplar. This exemplar moreover uses the logogram HUL with phonetic complement instead the syllabic *le-mut-tú* of (1). I thank Michael Jursa for this reading. Exemplar (3) has a further variant in this line, with <sup>r</sup>GAŠAN *šur*<sup>r</sup>-*bu-ti* instead of (1)'s <sup>i</sup>INANNA UNUG.KI, but it is unknown which one this exemplar would have preserved. These lines are identical with Uruk C 23–24 except for the insertion of Nanāya instead of Ištar; furthermore, this exemplar is more similar to Uruk B exemplar 3 because of GAŠAN *šurbūti*, which one exemplar of Uruk C omits. There are no exemplars of Uruk C that write the final two words of the line the same way as in this exemplar.

5. The Neo-Babylonian letters are mentioned in the *AHw*, see *CAD* for the other references, s.v. *mêsu*.

6. *RINAP* 4, Esarhaddon 106 v 34.

7. *CAD* s.v. *kulbābiš*.

8. *RIMA* 1, Adad-nērārī I A.0.76.16: 35.

9. See *RINAP* 3, Sennacherib 17 vi 30; 43: 25; 46: 127; 160 obv. 4; 209 obv. 4' (uncertain), obv. 6'.

10. *RINAP* 3, Sennacherib 17 vi 30; 43: 25; 46: 127.

11. *RINAP* 3, Sennacherib 160 obv. 4.

12. *RINAP* 4, Esarhaddon 57 iii 35 and 60: 24'.

13. *RINAP* 4, Esarhaddon 48 rev. 91.

14. *RINAP* 5, Ashurbanipal Assyrian Tablet 3 rev. 65

15. *RIMB* 2, Bēl-ibni B.6.26.1: 17'.

16. *RIMB* 2, Marduk-zākir-šumi I B.6.7.2 obv. 8.

17. *RIMB* 2, Nabû-šuma-iškun B.6.14.1 obv. ii 16.

18. *RIMB* 2, Nebuchadnezzar I B.2.4.9: 20, *CAD* s.v. *papāḫu*.

12' (= Line 25): As opposed to (1), this exemplar has *ir-ši-iš* instead of *ir-ši-šú*; the unusual spelling is also attested in Uruk C line 25, which has the same writing *ir-ši-iš* while exemplar 2 has a writing consistent with Uruk B exemplar 1.