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THE HARRAN INSCRIPTIONS OF NABONIDUS

By C. J. GAAD

Discovery and Present Location

The three stelae bearing the inscriptions here published were discovered by Dr. D. S. RICE at Harran in August-September 1956, while he was engaged in examining the architecture of the ruined Great Mosque at that place. A preliminary account of his work, which is sufficient to convey the essential information about the positions and arrangement of these stelae in the paving or steps of the Mosque, has been given by the discoverer in the Illustrated London News of 21st September, 1957, pp. 466 ff. All readers of this must admire the acumen which enabled Dr. Rice to "turn but a stone", where so many "estranged faces" had missed its promise. The original monumena are stated to be kept for the present at a school-house in Urfâ until arrangements have been made for their permanent conservation.

Nomenclature

Four monuments of the reign of Nabonidus having now been found at (or near) Harran, it will be convenient to give them the short title NABON. H (i.e. Harran): These four monuments carry two different inscriptions, there being two copies of each. It appears possible that one monument stood originally somewhere on each of the four sides of the Moon-god's temple, and thus we may be in possession of all the memorials set up there by Nabonidus; in that event it would be enough to number them 1, 2, 3, 4. But on the contrary, yet other copies or even other inscriptions may have existed 1 and may be found in the future. Therefore, at the cost of a little more complication, numbers will be reserved for each of the two inscriptions: 1 for that of the royal Mother and 2 for that of the King himself. The two copies of each will then be distinguished as A and B:—

NABON. H 1, A, the stela discovered by H. Pognon in 1906 at Eski Harran, and now in the Archaeological Museum at Ankara. Inscription of the Royal Mother.

H 1, B, the stela discovered by D. S. Rice, 1956, in the pavement of the North entrance to the Great Mosque at Harran. Same inscription as preceding.

1 One such is already extant in the long-known fragment of a stela in the British Museum, no. 90837: see L. W. King, Babylonian Boundary Stones, etc., Pt. XCVIII, pp. 148 ff. (reproduced here, Plate III(a)), and for later references R. Zenger, Die Inschriften Assyriologica (A.O. Benheil), 9, p. 191. Owing to absence of all direct information of provenance for this important object, which will several times be mentioned in the succeeding pages, I do not venture to give it the designation Nabon. H 3, although its inscription was clearly different from the two here in question, and that origin from Harran must be considered probable. It had already been acutely assigned to Nabonidus by Professor B. Landsberger, in his study to be named immediately.
THE HARRAN INSCRIPTIONS OF NABONIDUS

NABONIDUS H 1, B

TRANSLATION

Col. I.

1. I (am) the lady Adda-guppu', mother
2. of Nabium-na'id, king of Babylon,
3. voutress of the gods Sin, Nusgal, Nusku,
4. and Sadarunna, my deities;
5. who, from my childhood, have sought after
6. their godheads. Whereas in the 89th year of Nabopolassar,
7. king of Babylon, Sin, king of the gods, with his city
8. and his temple was angry and went up to heaven—the city and
9. the people that (were) it went to ruin.
10. (Now) forasmuch as the shrines of Sin, Nisgal, Nuska,
11. and Sadarumasu I sought after and was worshiper of their godhead,
12. (and) that I laid hold on the hem of the robe of Sin, king of the gods,
13. night and daytime
14. I had ever in mind his great godhead—daily, without ceasing,
15. of Sin, Šamaš, Ištar, and Adda, so long as I am alive,
16. (and) their votaries (both) in heaven and earth. My blessings,
17. the goodly things which they gave me, I (too) by day, night, nocturne,
18. year, gave (back) to them.
19. I laid hold on the hem of the robe of Sin, king of the gods, night and daytime
20. my two eyes were with him, in prayer and humility of face
21. was I bowed before them (and) thus (I prayed), "May thy return
22. to thy city be (vouchsafed) to me, that the people, the black-headed,
23. may worship thy great godhead." For calming
24. the heart of my god and my goddess, a dress of fine wool, jewels,
25. silver, gold, a new shift, perfumes, sweet oil,
26. I applied not to my body, (but in) a torn shift
27. I went clothed, my goings-out were noiseless, I proclaimed
28. their praises: the glory of my city and of my goddess
29. was (ever) set in my heart, I kept watch upon them,
30. anything good of mine I did not omit, but carried it (ever) before them.

29. From the 30th year of Ašurbanipal, king of Assyria, that I was born (in)
30. until the 42nd year of Ašurbanipal, the 3rd year of Ašur-etil-ilii,
31. his son, the 21st year of Nabopolassar, the 43rd year of Nebuchadrezzar,
32. the 2nd year of Awd-Marduk, the 4th year of Nergilissar,
33. in 95 years of the god, Sin, king of the gods of heaven and earth,
34. (ii) which I sought after the shrines of his great godhead,
35. (for) my good doings he looked upon me with a smile
36. he heard my prayers, he granted my saving, the wrath
37. of his heart calmed. Towards Edul-ballu the temple of Sin
38. which (is) in Harran, the abode of his heart's delight, he was reconciled,
39. he had
regard. Sin, king of the gods, looked upon me and
Nabu-na'id (my) only son, the issue of my womb, to the kingship
he caled, and the kingship of Sumer and Akkad
from the border of Egypt (on) the upper sea even to the lower sea
all the lands he entrusted hisher
his hands. My two hands I lifted up and to Sin, king of the gods,
reverently only I prayed thus, “Nabu-na'id
(my) son, offpring of my womb, beloved of his mother,]

Col. II.
1. thou hast called him to the kingship, thou hast pronounced his name,
at the command of thy great godhead may the great gods
3. go at his two sides, may they make his enemies to fall,
4. forget not, (but) make good E-hul- bullying the finishing off of its foundation (?) 
5. When in my dream, his two hands had been laid on, Sin, king of the gods,
6. spoke to me thus, “With thee I will put into the hands of Nabu-
na'id, thy son, the return of the gods and the habitation of Harran;
8. He shall build E-hul- bullying, shall perfect its structure, (and) Harran
more than (it was) before he shall perfect and restore it to its place.
The hand of Sin, Nin-gal, Nusku, and Sadarmunn
11. shall clap and cause them to enter E-hul-bul ". The word of Sin,
king of the gods, which he spoke to me I honoured, and I myself saw
(it fulfilled) ;
12. Nabu-na'id, (my) only son, offpring of my womb, the rites
13. forgotten of Sin, Nin-gal, Nusku, and
14. Sadarmunn he perfected, E-hul- bullying
15. a new he built and perfected its structure, Harran more
16. than before he perfected and restored it to its place ; the hand
18. of Sin, Nin-gal, Nusku, and Sadarmunn from
19. Suanna his royal city he clapped, and in the midst of Harran
20. in E-hul- bullying the abode of their hearts' ease with gladness
21. and rejoicing he let them dwell. What from former times Sin, king of the
gods,
had not done and had not granted to anybody (he did) for the love of
me
23. who had ever worshipped his godhead, laid hold on the hem of his
robe—Sin, king of the gods,
uplifted my head and set upon me a good name in the land,
long days, years of heart's ease he multiplied upon me.
From the time of Assurbanipal, king of Assyria, until the 9th year
of Nabu-na'id king of Babylon, the son, offpring of my womb;
104 years of happiness, with the reverence which Sin, king of the gods,
29. placed in me, he made me flourish, my own self: the sight of my two eyes
30. is clear, I am excellent in understanding, my hand and both feet are sound,
31. well-chosen are my words, meat and drink
32. agree with me, my flesh is goodly, glad is my heart.
33. My descendents to four generations from me flourishing in themselves
34. I have seen, I am fulfilled (with) offspring. O Sin, king of the gods,
35. thou hast looked upon me, thou hast lengthened my days: Nabu-
36. na'īd, king of Babylon,
37. my son, to Sin my lord I have devoted him. So long as he is alive
38. let him not offend against thee; the genius of favour, genius of favour
39. which (to be) with me
40. thou hast appointed and they have caused me to attain offspring,
41. with him (too).
42. appoint (them), and wickedness and offence against thy great godhead
43. endure not, (but) let him worship thy great godhead. In the 21 years
44. of Nabopolassar, king of Babylon, in the 43 years of Nebuchadrezzar,
45. son of Nabopolassar, and 4 years of Nergilissar, king of Babylon,
46. (when) they exercised the kingship, for 68 years
47. with all my heart I reverenced them, I kept watch over them,
48. Nabu-na'id (my) son, offspring of my womb, before Nebuchadrezzar
49. son of Nabopolassar and (before) Nergilissar, king of Babylon, I caused
50. him to stand,
51. daytime and night he kept watch over them
52. what was pleasing to them he performed continually,
53. my name he made (to be) favourite in their sight, (and) like
54. [a daughter of] their [own] they uplifed my head

Col. III. (Translation of lines 1–19 is supplemented from the duplicate inscription, as rendered by B. Landsberger, loc. cit.)

1. I nourished (their spirits), and incense offering
2. rich, of sweet savour,
3. I appointed for them continually and
4. laid ever before them.
5. (Now) in the 9th year of Nabu-na'id,
6. king of Babylon, the fate
7. of herself carried her off, and
8. Nabu-na'id, king of Babylon,
9. (her) son, issue of her womb,
10. her corpse entombed, and [robes]
The inscription H 1 (of the royal Mother) gives, in its present more
complete form (B), 1 no less than three arithmetical summaries covering
the end of Assyrian rule and almost the whole of the Chaldean dynasty
in Babylonia:

Col. I, 29-35.

The narrator was born in the 20th year of Assurbanipal.
She survived the 42nd year of Assurbanipal,

3rd " " Ashur-etil-iilli, his son,
21st " " Nabopolassar,
43rd " " Nebuchadrezzar
3rd " " Evil-Merodach,
4th " " Neriglissar.
A total of 95 years.

Col. II, 26-8.
She lived from the time 2 of Assurbanipal to the 5th year of
Nabonidus her son, 104 years.

Col. II, 46-3.
She served the kings of Babylon during
21 years of Nabopolassar,
43 " Nebuchadrezzar,
4 " Neriglissar.
A total of 68 years, before her son’s accession.

1 The first two of these summaries were already present in A, but the former was
defective, and most of the figures missing.
2 Lit. " from before " i.e. she came into the world during the lifetime of Assurbanipal.