

NEBUCHADNEZZAR II (2.122)

NEBUCHADNEZZAR II'S RESTORATION OF THE EBABBAR TEMPLE IN LARSA (2.122A)

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This inscription is recorded on several clay cylinders and baked bricks found at Larsa, all written in Neo-Babylonian script. It commemorates the rebuilding of Ebabbar, the temple of the sun god Shamash at Larsa, by Nebuchadnezzar II (605-562 BCE), the son and successor of Nabopolassar and the real architect of Neo-Babylonian hegemony.

Nabonidus restored Ebabbar again in his 10th regnal year (546-45 BCE). He claims that Nebuchadnezzar did not find the original foundation deposit before rebuilding the temple, this being apparently the reason why it quickly fell into disrepair. Nebuchadnezzar's inscription is indeed ominously silent concerning the finding of a foundation deposit, but insists that the god Marduk directly ordered him to restore the temple. The Sippar cylinder of Nabonidus, translated below (COS 2.123A), makes the same observation for the other temple of Shamash, the Ebabbar of Sippar. The inscription follows the standard Neo-Babylonian pattern, with the royal titulary in first position (royal name — epithets — *andku* "I"), then the description of the building work with its surrounding circumstances (clauses *nu* "when" and *ina umisu* "at that time"), and the concluding prayer.

*Royal titulary* (i.1-6)

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, the humble one, the submissive one, the pious one, the worshiper of the lord of lords, the caretaker of Esagil and Ezida, the legitimate heir of Nabopolassar, king of Babylon, I,

*Rebuilding of Ebabbar* (i.7-ii.11)

when Marduk, the great lord, the wisest among the gods, the proud one, gave me the shepherdship of the country and the people, at that time Ebabbar, the temple of Shamash in Larsa, which since distant days had turned into a mound of ruins, in whose midst sand had accumulated and (whose) ground plan could no longer be identified, during my reign the great lord Marduk became reconciled to that temple. He aroused the four winds and removed the sand inside it so that the ground plan could be discovered. He specifically ordered me,

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, the servant who worships him, to restore that temple. I surveyed and inspected its old foundations, spread consecrated soil above its old foundations and set up its brickwork. Ebabbar, the legitimate temple (and) residence of Shamash, my lord, for Shamash, who dwells in Ebabbar in the midst of Larsa, the great lord, my lord, did I rebuild.

*Concluding prayer to Shamash* (ii.12-26)

O Shamash, great lord, when you enter Ebabbar, your lordly seat, in joy and gladness, look joyfully upon the work of my gracious hands, and may a life of distant days, the stability of the throne, the long duration of my reign (and) [the defeat of my enemies]<sup>1</sup> be set (for me) on your lips. May the thresholds, the locks, the bolts (and) the doors of Ebabbar, without ceasing, speak of me favorably in your presence.

<sup>1</sup> The passage between brackets appears only in the Yale exemplar published as YOS 9:140.

REFERENCES

Text: IR, plate 51, no.2 (copy); Stephens 1937:35-36; Langdon 1912:96-97; Berger 1973:249-251. Translations: Seux 1976:510; Foster 1993 2:746.