

AN INSCRIPTION OF ASHURBANIPAL MENTIONING THE *KIDINNU* OF SIPPAR

Grant Frame and A. Kirk Grayson — Toronto*

In his catalogue of the Kuyunjik collection in the British Museum, C. Bezold described K. 6232, a fragment of a clay tablet, as “part of a historical inscription, probably of Saosduchinos [Šamaš-šuma-ukīn] ... concerning building-operations, etc.”¹. Although Šamaš-šuma-ukīn is mentioned by name in the inscription, the text is more probably to be assigned to his brother, the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal (668-627 B.C.). First, the piece comes from the Kuyunjik collection of the British Museum and is written in Assyrian script. Only a few inscriptions of Šamaš-šuma-ukīn are attested and none is from that collection or written in that script², while numerous inscriptions of Ashurbanipal are. Second, the inscription is written in the first person (see, for example, *adūk* and *aprus* of Obv. 7' and 8' respectively) while Šamaš-šuma-ukīn is described as “their viceroy” (Rev. 2'); this suggests that he was not the subject of the inscription. Third, Obv. 5'-7' appear to describe a lion hunt and Ashurbanipal was particularly proud of his skill in hunting lions³. Although descrip-

*) Grayson prepared the copy and a preliminary transliteration of the inscription. Frame prepared the basic manuscript of the article and the final edition of the text. Permission to publish K. 6232 was provided by the Trustees of the British Museum; photographs of the fragment were provided by the department of Western Asiatic Antiquities of the British Museum. The authors wish to thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for their support of the Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia Project, the resources of which greatly facilitated this research. The abbreviations used in the article follow those of the Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia Project, supplemented by those of the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary.

¹) Bezold, *Cat. 2*, p. 772. The fragment measures 7.5 × 10.5 cm. The tablet is poorly made and the script is rather clumsy. The lines of text are carefully separated one from another and line rulings are placed between them. This may suggest that the inscription was copied by an inexperienced scribe.

²) For the inscriptions of Šamaš-šuma-ukīn, see Frame, RIMB 2, no. B.6.33.

³) See, for example, Streck, *Asb.*, pp. 304-311 A.a (epigraphs to reliefs depicting his hunting of lions).

tions of hunting often appear in Assyrian royal inscriptions, they are rare in Babylonian ones.

The Obverse and (likely) the Reverse of the tablet deal with the city of Sippar and its environs and Ashurbanipal is known to have been concerned with that city. A cylinder inscription of his states that he rebuilt Ebabbar, the temple of the sun-god Šamaš at Sippar⁴, and a letter likely written to him refers to cedar beams to be used for work on the temples at Babylon, Sippar, and Cutha⁵. K. 6232 Rev. 5'-6' refer to cedar being used in the construction of a building, possibly the temple of the god Šamaš, who is mentioned in Rev. 8'. It must be noted, however, that Šamaš-šuma-ukīn also had building projects carried out at Sippar; its city wall, Badullisâ, was restored in his name⁶ and a brick inscription records that he had (re)constructed the Ebabbar temple⁷. Still, it seems likely that K. 6232 was composed in the name of Ashurbanipal. Because the inscription refers to Šamaš-šuma-ukīn as viceroy (*šakkanakku*) and states, favourably, that that individual revered the god Nabû and (probably) the god Marduk (*pāliḥ Nabû u [Marduk]*, Rev. 2'), it must have been composed sometime between 668 and 653 — after Šamaš-šuma-ukīn assumed control of Babylonia and before he rebelled against Assyrian overlordship.

The Obverse of the tablet seems to indicate that conditions in and around the city of Sippar were poor: one structure (possibly the temple Ebabbar) was in ruins and lions were found where one expected to see sheep and oxen. The ruler hunted the lions, slew them, and thereby made the people (presumably those of Sippar) happy. The Reverse records the construction or restoration of a structure which appears to be associated with the god Šamaš; this structure is likely the one mentioned as being in ruins on the Obverse. Rituals were performed in connection with this work. In all likelihood, this inscription describes actions by Ashurbanipal intended to benefit the city of Sippar and in particular that ruler's reconstruction of the temple of Šamaš.

Transliteration

Obverse

Beginning broken away

1'. [...] x [x (x)] xxx [...]

2'. [...] x ŠA KI SIPA *du-mu-qi-iš di-niš ša ina 'ni'-kil-ti zu-ti-šú 'ú'-[...]*

⁴) Streck, *Asb.*, pp. XLI-XLII and 228-233 no. 2 (L²); see now Frame, RIMB 2, no. B.6.32.12.

⁵) ABL 464:3'-5'. The passage reads: *ina UGU GIŠ.ÛR.MEŠ ša GIŠ.EREN a-na KÁ.DINGIR.RA.KI sip-pár.KI GÙ.DU₈.A.KI a-na šal-lu-li [š]a É.KUR.MEŠ*, "concerning the cedar beams (destined) for Babylon, Sippar (and) Cutha to roof the temples". The date of the letter is suggested by the reference to "the king of Babylon" in Rev. 9.

⁶) Lehmann-Haupt, *Šamaššumukīn* 1, p. 22 and 2, pp. 6-9, 28-56 and pls. I-IV no. 1 (Bil.); see now Frame, RIMB 2, no. B.6.33.1.

⁷) Walker, CBI, no. 77; see now Frame, RIMB 2, no. B.6.33.2.

- 3'. [... *ina*] ^řšà^ř URU *ša-a-te ú-šá-aš-qi* URU *ki-din-ni ša* MUL.AL.LUL *ina šá-ma-mi iš-ru-ma* ŠAB *x* [...]
- 4'. [...] *x ed-ru ša iš-da-a-šú šu-bat* URU-šú *in-na-as-ḥa-ma la ú-šab-bu-u nab-^řnit^ř-[su ...]*
- 5'. [...] *ta[?]-mir[?]-t[?]i[?]-šú ku-um* GU₄.MEŠ *u* U₈.UDU.ḪI.A *im-lu-u* UR.MAḪ.MEŠ *ina* GIŠ.GIGIR-*i*[*a[?] ...*]
- 6'. [...] *-i*]š *pu-un-gu-lu e-mu-^řqi^ř* GIŠ.BAN *ez-ze-tu ^řmul^ř-mul-lu₄ r*[*a[?]-...]*
- 7'. [...] *x*.MEŠ *a-duk-ma gi-mir-ti ú-ḥal-liq ta-mir-ti x(x)* [...]
- 8'. [...] *q*]er-bi-šú *ap-ru-us-ma lib-bi* UN.MEŠ *ú-tib x* [...]
- 9'. [...] ZIMBIR.KI *e-šá-a-te ú-^řdan^ř-[nin[?] ...]*
- 10'. [...] *í*]D[?] *ḥé^ř-gál-la a-gu-ú ^řez-zi^ř [e-d]u-ú šam-r*[*u ...*]
- 11'. [...] *xx* [...] *xx* [...]
- Rest broken away

Reverse

Beginning broken away

- 1'. [...] *xxxx* [...] *xxxx* [...]
- 2'. [...] *a-na* ^{Id}GIŠ.NU₁₁—MU—GIN GÌR.NÍTA-šú-un *pa-liḥ* ^dAG *u* [^dAMAR.UTU ...]
- 3'. [...] *re[?]-eš* KUR.KUR *ša nap-ḥar da-ád-me ^řiš^ř-ku-nu šu-pi-*[...]]
- 4'. [...] *ú[?]-^řšal^ř-bi-in ina* ITI *šal-me it-ti* LÚ.*xx* [...]
- 5'. [...] .MEŠ-šú *ú-mat-te-ḥa né-reb-e-šú* GIŠ.ÚR.MEŠ [GIŠ.E]R[EN ...]
- 6'. [...] G]IŠ.ḪA.ŠUR *ú-ṭi-^řib^ř ni-pi-su* GIŠ.IG.MEŠ[Š] GIŠ.ER[EN ...]
- 7'. [...] KÁ.MEŠ-šú UD-8-KÁM UD.ÈŠ.ÈŠ UD.DA-*i ^řip^ř-[ṭu-ur[?] ...]*
- 8'. [...] *š*]a *šu-bat ^řta[?]-š^ři-la-a-te ú-še-rib ki-i* ^dUTU *^řnap^ř-ḥ*[*ar[?] ...*]
- 9'. [...] *u*]l[?]-*lu-ku* UDU.NÍTA.MEŠ *du-uš-šu-ú* LÚ.GALA(UŠ.KU).M[EŠ ...]
- 10'. [...] LU Ì.GIŠ *ut-ta-qi-ma x* [...]
- 11'. [...] *x-ni ši-mat la šá-na-an* DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ *e-x* [...]
- 12'. [...] ^d]*e^ř-a* AD-šú-nu *e-pu-šú ab-bu-ti xxx* [...]
- 13'. [...] *man[?]-d*]a[?]-*te ka-bit-te mi-nu-te¹ x* [...]
- 14'. [...] *x-^řla^ř-tu ina a-mat ^řd^ř[...]*
- 15'. [...] (x) [...]
- Rest broken away

Translation

Obverse

Beginning broken away

- 1'. [...] ... [...]
- 2'. [...] ... shepherd favourably, justly who [...] by his clever knowledge
- 3'. [...] with]in the eternal city he elevated; the city of *kidinnu*-status which was designated the “Crab” in the heavens ... [...]

- 4'. [...] ... whose foundations, the abode of his city, were torn out so that one could not examine [its] structure [...]
- 5'. [(...)] its [*water-meadow*]s were filled with lions instead of oxen and sheep; [*I hunted them*] in my chariot [...]
- 6'. [...] mighty strength, fierce bow, arrow(s) [...]
- 7'. [...] ... I slew and totally destroyed. The *water-meadows* ... [...]
- 8'. [...] I cut off [*from*] inside it and I made the people happy ... [...]
- 9'. [...] Sippar disturbances [...] *made wo[rse]* ...]
- 10'. [(...)] the *Arahtu* river, a *rive[r]* of abundance, (now) an *angry* flood, a raging tide [...]
- 11'. [...] ... [...] ... [...]
- Rest broken away

Reverse

Beginning broken away

- 1'. [...] ... [...] ... [...]
- 2'. [...] to/for Šamaš-šuma-ukīn, their viceroy, one who reveres the god Nabû and [the god Marduk ...]
- 3'. [...] ... of the lands who *established* all settlements ... [...]
- 4'. [...] *I had bricks made*. In a favourable month with the ... [...]
- 5'. Its [...] I transported; at its entrances [*I installed*] beams [of ced]a[r ...]
- 6'. I made [*its aroma*] sweet with *ḥašurru*-cedar; *the workmanship* of the cedar doors [*he/I made fine* ...]
- 7'. [...] its gates, on the eighth day, a festival day, *he re[moved]* the trouble [...]
- 8'. [...] I caused to enter the splendid abode, *when/like* the god Šamaš [*he/I illuminated*] all the [...]
- 9'. [...] ... sheep were abundant; the *kalû*-priests [...]
- 10'. [...] I poured out a libation of oil and [...]
- 11'. [...] ... a fate without equal, the great gods [...]
- 12'. [...] *Ea*, their father, interceded ... [...]
- 13'. [...] abundant [*tribute*, the amount [*of which was countless* (...)]
- 14'. [...] ... at the command of *the god* [...]
- 15'. [...]
- Rest broken away

Notes

2': The adverbs *dummuqiš* and *dīniš* are not otherwise attested.

3': The term *āl šāti*, "the eternal city", is an epithet which was often used to describe Sippar and one which was first employed in the time of Ḫammu-rāpi (see Frayne, RIME 4, no. E4.3.6.2, ll. 56-57 [Sumerian version] and 58-59 [Akkadian

version] and CAD Š, p. 118). With regard to this epithet and its (less frequent) use with other cities (Nippur, Ereš, Uruk, and Babylon), see A.R. George, *Babylonian Topographical Texts* (OLA 40), Leuven 1992, pp. 5 and 245-246 commentary to l. 8.

CAD K, p. 342, translates *kidinnu* as “divine protection (mainly for the citizens of a city), divinely enforced security (symbolized by a sacred insigne)”, and AHW., p. 472, as “besonderer Schutzbereich”. This is the only known instance in the inscriptions of Ashurbanipal in which Sippar is referred to as *āl kidinni*, “city of *kidinnu*-status”, though the city is known to have held special privileges in the eighth century and in the time of Ashurbanipal’s father Esarhaddon. A *kudurru* composed at Babylon in 715 B.C., the seventh year of the Babylonian king Marduk-apla-iddina II (Mero-dach-Baladan), states: *ana nadān eqlēti ana šābē kidinnu mārē Sippar Nippur Bābili u šūt māḥāzī ša māt Akkadī uzunšu ibšīma*, “his [= Marduk-apla-iddina’s] mind was set on giving the fields to the people of *kidinnu*-status, (namely to) the citizens of Sippar, Nippur, Babylon, and those (dwelling) in the (other) cult centres of the land of Akkad” (Messerschmidt - Ungnad, VAS 1, no. 37, iii, 10-14). The Assyrian king Sargon II, who ruled Babylonia from 709 to 705 B.C., states that he had granted the *šubarrû* of Sippar, Nippur, and Babylon (*šākin šubarrê Sippar Nippur Bābili*, e.g., Winckler, *Sargon* 1, ll. 2-3, pp. 164-165) and that: *ša Sippar Nippur Bābili u Barsipa zāninūssun ēteppuša ša šābē kidinni mala bašû ḥibiltāšunu arībma*, “I continually acted as provider for the cities of Sippar, Nippur, Babylon, and Borsippa, (and) I compensated all the people of *kidinnu*-status for the damages suffered by them” (e.g., Winckler, *Sargon* 1, l. 3, pp. 80-81, and i, 9-12, pp. 174-175). Esarhaddon (ruler of Assyria and Babylonia, 680-669 B.C.) claims to have established (or confirmed) the *andurāru*, *šubarrû*, *kidinnūtu*, and *zakūtu* of Babylon and the *šubarrû* of Borsippa, Nippur and Sippar (Borger, *Asarh.*, pp. 25-26, § 11, Ep. 37, and p. 81, § 53, 41)⁸. In addition, concern to protect the rights and privileges of the citizens of Sippar, Nippur, and Babylon is clearly what was behind the text known as “Advice to a Prince” or “Babylonian Fürstenspiegel” (see Lambert, BWL, pp. 110-115 and M. Civil, *Studies Diakonoff*, pp. 324-326)⁹. The exact difference between the various types of privileges (*andurāru*, *šubarrû*, *kidinnūtu*, and *zakūtu*) is not clear, but they appear to have at times included exemption from military service, corvée labour, and various taxes

⁸) A damaged text from Uruk might be restored to indicate that Esarhaddon granted *kidinnu*-status to some people of Uruk (Falkenstein, LKU, no. 46:16'; see now Frame, RIMB 2, no. B.6.31.1001).

⁹) The date of this text is not certain. I.M. Diakonoff has argued that it was composed about 700, in the reign of Sennacherib (*Studies Landsberger*, pp. 343-349), but J.A. Brinkman notes that the archive in which the earliest copy of the text was found may date to the third quarter of the eighth century (CAH 3/1 [2nd edition], p. 291). As pointed out by E. Reiner (*Studies Diakonoff*, pp. 320-323), a quotation from the “Advice to a Prince” which mentions these three cities is found in a Neo-Babylonian letter to Esarhaddon (Dietrich, CT 54, no. 212 Rev. 4-6).

and duties, and the right to appeal to the king in court cases. They included both various financial and judicial benefits for the citizens of the cities receiving them and they were much prized by them.

As far as was previously known, Babylon was the only city in Babylon favoured with special status during Ashurbanipal's reign. He frequently states that he granted the *kidinnūtu* of Babylon —*kidinnūt(u) Bābili akšur* (e.g., Frame, RIMB 2, no. B.6.32.1, l. 12)— and once explicitly refers to the people of Babylon as the people granted *kidinnu*-status by him (*šābē kidinniy[a]*, ABL 926, 1). However, he did concern himself with conditions in other parts of Babylonia. As mentioned earlier, he claims to have rebuilt Ebabbar, the temple of the sun-god Šamaš, at Sippar and numerous other building projects were carried out under his name in such cities as Babylon, Borsippa, Nippur, and Uruk¹⁰.

Such privileges were also granted by Assyrian kings to cities in Assyria, although apparently on fewer occasions. The only Assyrian cities known to have received special status are Assur and Ḫarrān, which were granted *kidinnūtu* and *zakūtu* by Sargon II. Sargon, however, states that he was restoring their *zakūtu* “which had fallen in oblivion in the distant past” and their *kidinnūtu* “which had fallen into disuse” (e.g., Winckler, *Sargon* 1, no. V, ll. 9-11, pp. 158-159). G.W.V. Chamaza has argued that in at least this case *kidinnūtu* refers to the exemption from both *ilku* and *tupšikku*, that is from “compulsory work” and “corvée”¹¹.

With regard to *kidinnu/kidinnūtu*, see in particular W.F. Leemans in M. David *et al.* (Eds.), *Symbolae ad jus et historiam antiquitatis pertinentes Julio Christiano van Oven dedicatae*, Leiden 1946, pp. 36-61; Brinkman, CAH 3/1 (2nd edition), pp. 290-291; Reviv, JESHO 31 (1988), pp. 286-298; Frame, *Babylonia*, pp. 35-36; and George, *Babylonian Topographical Texts*, pp. 264-265.

The “crab” (*alluttu*, MUL.AL.LUL) is the constellation Cancer; see CAD A1, pp. 360-361. A connection between the city of Sippar and this constellation is found in the lexical series an-ta-gál = *šaqû*. Tablet G, ll. 310-314, of this series connect constellations with various cities and in line 310 Cancer is paired with Sippar (m u l - a l - l u l / *sip-par*.KI); see MSL 17, p. 229. The celestial omen series *Enūma Anu Enlil* also connects the two: [DİŠ 30] *ina* KI MUL.AL.LUL [*a-dir* EŠ.BAR *sip-par*.KI], “[If the moon is eclipsed] (while it is) in the area of the ‘Crab’, [the prediction (is associated with) Sippar]”; see F. Rochberg-Halton, *Aspects of Babylonian Celestial Divination: The Lunar Eclipse Tablets of Enūma Anu Enlil* (AfO Beiheft 22), Horn 1988, p. 219, tablet 20, text a, Obv. ii 3' (passage restored after Weidner, AfO 20 [1963], p. 118 and

¹⁰ See Frame, *Babylonia*, pp. 111-113 and 196-198.

¹¹ See Chamaza, SAAB 6/1 (1992), pp. 26-31 for a discussion of this matter and Sargon II's reasons for granting special privileges.

pl. VI MNB 1849, Rev. 49: DIŠ *ina* [K]I [MU]L.AL.LUL *a-dir* EŠ.BAR ZIMBIR.KI). (References courtesy W.H. van Soldt.)

5'-7': The text appears to indicate that lions roamed where oxen and sheep had been previously raised and to state that the king hunted them. The passage is reminiscent of one in an inscription of Sargon II which describes how the route to Babylon had become difficult and dangerous because of wild animals, marauding tribes, and the spread of undergrowth. Settlements had fallen into ruin and fields had been abandoned. Sargon cleared away the undergrowth, slew the tribesmen, and slaughtered the lions and wolves; as a result the area could be inhabited again (see Gadd, *Iraq* 16 [1954], pp. 192-196 and pl. 50, ll. 45-76, and C. Zaccagnini's study of this passage in Fales, *ARINH*, pp. 276-282). It is interesting that both this inscription of Ashurbanipal and the one of Sargon II refer to the killing of lions in order to improve conditions.

The exact meaning of the term *tamirtu*, which appears in line 7' and possibly in line 5' and which is tentatively translated "water-meadows", is not certain. See the studies by W.H. van Soldt, van Driel, and M. Stol in *BSA* 4 (1988), pp. 107-110, 142-143 and 177-181 respectively. S.W. Cole states that: "Although it is impossible to determine the precise character of these *tamirtus*, they may have been the areas between the intersecting lines of contemporary and abandoned river and canal levees that at any time crisscross the region above the level of the surrounding plain. The basins formed by these intersecting levees would have been inundated during the process of irrigating the backslopes adjoining them. For this reason, *tamirtus* seem to have been commonly waterlogged ..." (*JNES* 53 [1994], pp. 92-93). Stol, however, notes that in royal inscriptions "*tamirtu* has often the very general meaning 'cultivated land around a city'" (*BSA* 4 [1988], p. 179).

6': Possibly *mul'-lu-lu₄ za[q²-tu-te ...]*, "po[inted] arrow(s) [...]". For parallel passages, see *CAD Z*, p. 63.

9': *ešâte*, "disturbances", are also connected with Sippar in a bilingual text of Šamaš-šuma-ukīn from Sippar: *dūru Sippar ša ina ešāti nakri īnišu iqūpu*, "the wall of Sippar which had become weak and buckled because of enemy disturbances" (Lehmann-Haupt, *Šamaššumukīn* 2, p. 9 and pl. 4, ll. 24-25 [Akkadian version]; see now Frame, *RIMB* 2, no. B.6.33.1).

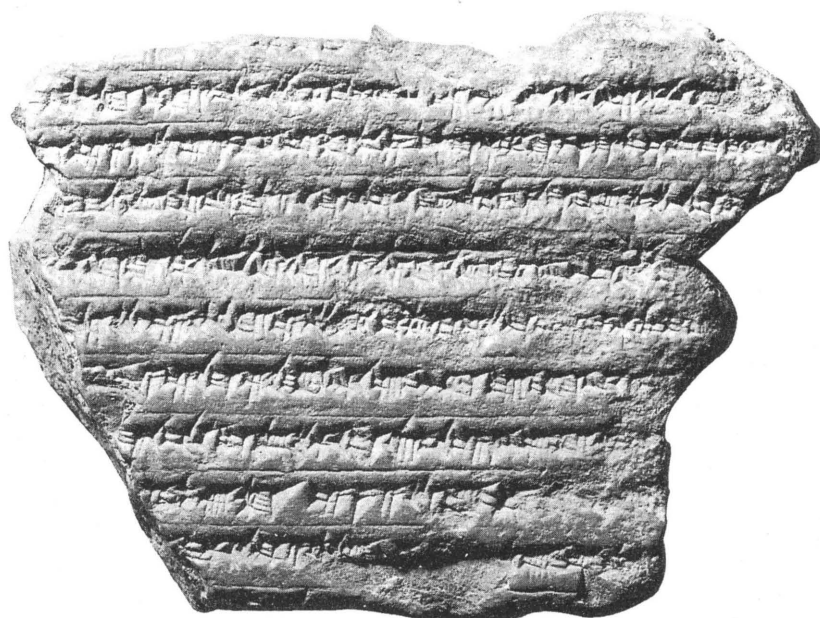
10': The passage is similar to one used in Esarhaddon's inscriptions to describe the manner in which Babylon had been destroyed by Sennacherib: *īd.a-ra-aḫ-ti īd ḪÉ.GÁL a-gu-ú ez-zi e-du-ú šam-ru ILLU kaš-šu tam-šil a-bu-bu ib-bab-lam-ma* (with various minor variations), "the Araḫtu river—a river of abundance, (now) an angry flood, a raging tide, a mighty flood, a very Deluge— overflowed (the city of Babylon)"; see Borger, *Asarh.*, p. 14, § 11, Ep. 7a, ll. 38-41.

Rev. 2': For the epithet *pāliḫ Nabû u Marduk*, see Seux, *ERAS*, p. 215. This epithet is also applied to Šamaš-šuma-ukīn on a *kudurru* from Sippar (see Steinmetzer, *Deimel Festschrift*, p. 303, l. 4).

6': The derivation of the word *ni-pi-su* (tentatively translated as “workmanship” is uncertain. Possibly from *nēpeštu/nēpešu*?

7': Or UD.DA-*i* ‘*ip*’-[*ru-us* ...], “*he cu[t off] the trouble [...]*”; see R.I. Caplice in *Studies Oppenheim*, pp. 63 no. 6; 65 no. 11; and 66 *sub d*.

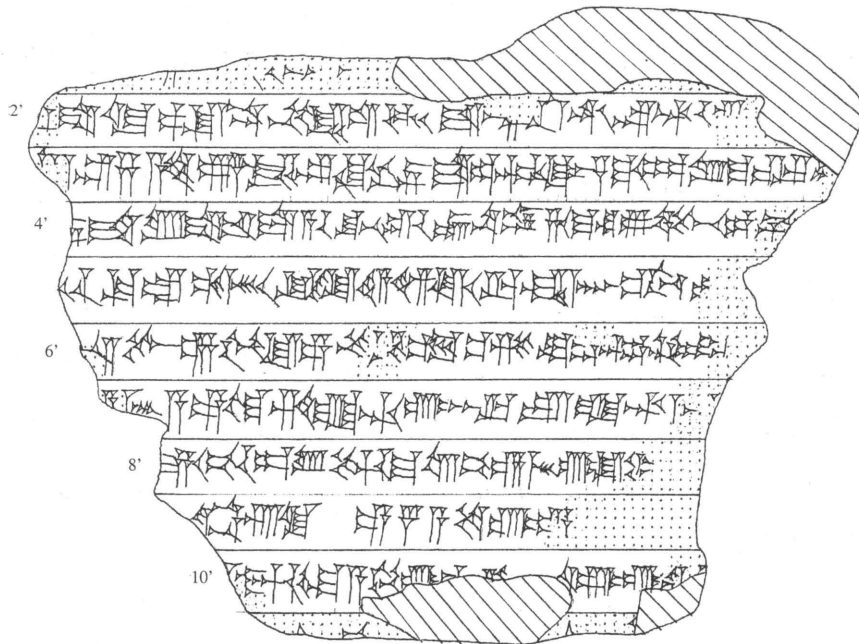
13': Since people of *kidinnu*-status would presumably not have had to pay tribute, either the restoration [*man²-d*]*a²-te* is not correct or the passage does not refer to tribute from the people of Sippar.



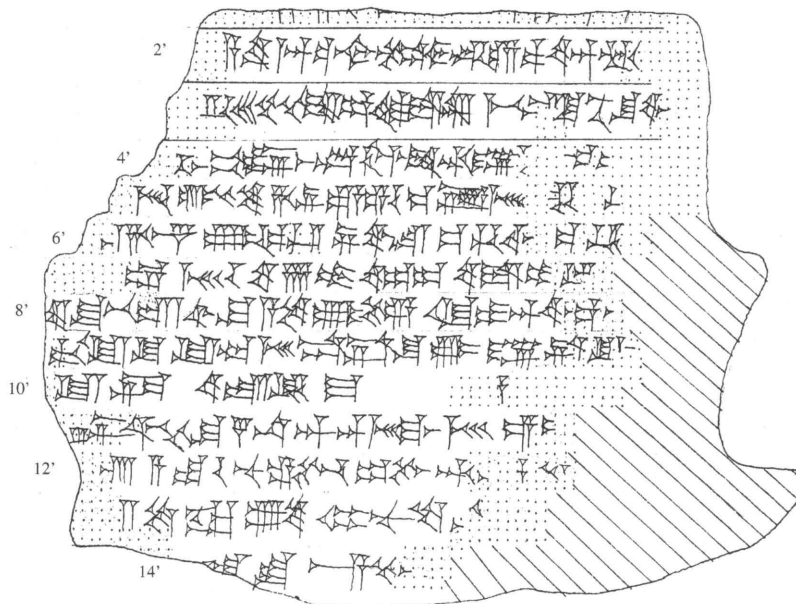
K. 6232, Obverse.



K. 6232, Reverse.



K. 6232, Obverse.



K. 6232, Reverse.