

Cyrus Cylinder (2)



Cyrus cylinder (British Museum)

The Cyrus Cylinder was discovered in 1879 and rapidly became one of the most famous cuneiform texts, as it seemed to confirm that the Persian conqueror [Cyrus the Great](#) had allowed the Jews to return from their Babylonian Captivity. Although this is a bit exaggerated ([more...](#)), it remains an interesting text.



- The transcription offered here has been adapted from the edition by Hanspeter Schaudig, *Die Inschriften Nabonids von Babylon und Kyros' des Großen* (2001 Münster). Because this web edition was made to counter propaganda, Mr. Schaudig's footnotes could be ignored; some aspects have been simplified; and *Personenkeile* have been rendered with ^m instead of ⁱ (cf. the web versions of the [Babylonian Chronicles](#)). Check the original if you need to quote it.
- The translation is a modified version of Mordechai Cogan's, which was published in W.H. Hallo and K.L. Younger, *The Biblical World* (2003, Leiden and Boston), now adapted to Schaudig's edition with the help of Bert van der Spek and Mr. M. Stolper
- A scan of a drawing made by Th. Pinches can be found [here](#).
- The titles of the sections do not belong to the original text but are only there to help the reader.
- An introduction to reading a page like this can be found [here](#).
- I offer a box of chocolate to the one who can tell me who is responsible for the fraudulent text.

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Text of Fragment A	Translation
	The tyranny of Nabonidus
1 [𐎠-𐎠 nu x x x] /x\ 𐎠ni-šu	[When...] ...
2 [x x x ki-i]b-ra-a-t	[... of the four quar]ters
3 [x x x] /x x\ GAL ma-tu- 𐎠iš -šak-na a-na e-nu-tu ma-ti-š	[x x x] /x x\ An incompetent person [i.e., Nabonidus] was installed to exercise lordship over his country.
4 /and ^ʔ [x x x] 𐎠ši-li 𐎠ša- 𐎠š-ki-na 𐎠e-ru-šu-un	/and ^ʔ [...] he imposed upon them.
5 ta-am-ši-li 𐎠SAG- 𐎠L i-te-[pu-uš-ma x x x t] 𐎠a-na 𐎠RI ^{ki} 𐎠si-it-ta-a-t 𐎠ma-ha-za	A counterfeit of Esagila he ma[de, and...] for Ur and the rest of the cultic centers,
6 pa-ra-a-la si-ma-a-ti-šu-nu ta-[ak-li-im la-me-si x x x la] pa-lih ^u u ⁴ -mi-š 𐎠am-ma id-de-n 𐎠eb-bu-ub 𐎠ana ma-ag-ri-t	a ritual which was improper to them, an [unholy] di[splay offering x x x without] fear he daily recited. Irreverently,
7 sat-tuk-ku 𐎠šab-ti-li 𐎠-[a-ap-pi-ti p 𐎠l-lu-de-e x x x iš]-tak-ka-an q 𐎠reb ma-ha-zi pa-la-ha ^d AMAR.UTU LUGAL DINGIR ^{mes} i[^g -m]ur kar-šu-uš-šu	he put an end to the regular offerings (and) he in[terfered in the cultic centers; x x x he] established in the sacred centers. By his own plan, he did away with the worship of Marduk, the king of the gods,
8 le-mu-ut-ti URU-šu [i-t]e-n 𐎠ep-pu-luš ^u u ⁴ -mi-ša-am/ma x x [x x x] G ^{mes} -š 𐎠i-na ab-ša-a-ni la ta-ap-šu- 𐎠h-t 𐎠ha-li-iq kul-lat-si-in	he continually did evil against Marduk's city. Daily, [...] without interruption, he imposed the corv ^e upon its inhabitants unrelentingly, ruining them all.
	Marduk's anger
9 a-na ta-zi-im-ti-ši-na ^d EN.L 𐎠L DINGIR ^{mes} ez-zi-iš i-gu-ug-m[a x x x] ki-su- 𐎠r-šu-un DINGIR ^{mes} a-ši-ib Š 𐎠bi-šu-nu i-zi-bu at-ma-an-šu-un	Upon hearing their cries, the lord of the gods became furiously angry and [x x x] their borders; the gods who lived among them forsook their dwellings,
10 i-na ug-ga-ti-ša 𐎠še-ri-bi a-na q 𐎠reb ŠU.AN.NA ^{ki} 𐎠AMAR.UTU i[ⁱ -iz-qa-ru ^d EN.L 𐎠L DINGIR ^{mes} us-sa-a]h- ^d ra a-na nap-har da- 𐎠d-mi š 𐎠in-na-du- 𐎠šu-bat-su-un	angry that he [sc. Nabonidus] had brought them to Babylon . Marduk, the ex[alted, the lord of the gods], turned towards all the habitations that were abandoned and
	Marduk finds a new king for Babylon
11 𐎠G ^{mes} KUR šu-me-ri 𐎠URI ^{ki} ša i-mu- 𐎠ša-lam-ta- 𐎠š- 𐎠sa-la[^h -hi-ir ka-lba[^t -[ta- 𐎠š] ir-ta-ši ta-a-ra kul-lat ma-ta-a-ta ka-li-ši-na i-hi-i[^l ib-re-e-ma	all the people of Sumer and Akkad , who had become corpses. He was reconciled and had mercy upon them. He examined and checked all the entirety of the lands, all of them,
12 iš-te-'e-e-ma ma-al-ki i-š 𐎠ru bi-bil Š 𐎠bi-ša it-ta-ma-ah ^u qa-tu-uš-šu ^m Ku-ra- 𐎠š LUGAL URU an-ša-an it-ta-bi ni-bi-ti-su a-na ma-li-ku-t 𐎠kul-la-ta nap-har iz-zak-ra šu-um-s	he searched everywhere and then he took a righteous king, his favorite, by the hand, he called out his name: Cyrus , king of Anšan ; he pronounced his name to be king all over the world.
13 ^{kur} qu-ti-i gi-mir um-man-man-da 𐎠ka-an-ni-ša a-na še-pi-šu 𐎠G ^{mes} gal-mat SAG.DU ša 𐎠ša-ak-ši-du qa-ta-a-š	He made the land of Gutium and all the Umman-manda [i.e., the Medes] bow in submission at his feet. And he [i.e., Cyrus] shepherded with justice and righteousness all the black-headed people,
14 i-na ki-it-t 𐎠mi-š 𐎠ru iš-te-n 𐎠'e-e-ši-na-a-t 𐎠AMAR.UTU EN GAL ta-ru- 𐎠G ^{mes} -š 𐎠ep-še-e-ti-ša dam-qa-a-ta Š 𐎠ba-šu i-ša-ra ha-di-iš ip-pa-li-i[š]	over whom he [i.e., Marduk] had given him victory. Marduk, the great lord, guardian of his people, looked with gladness upon his good deeds and upright heart.
	Cyrus takes Babylon
15 a-na URU-šu K. 𐎠DINGIR ^{mes} ki a-la-ak-šu iq-bi 𐎠ša-aq-bi-ti-tu-su-ma har-ra-nu TIN.TIR ^{ki} ki-ma ib-ri 𐎠tap-pe-e it-tal-la-ka i-da-a-šu	He ordered him to go to his city Babylon. He set him on the road to Babylon and like a companion and a friend, he went at his side.
16 um-ma-ni-šu rap-ša-a-t 𐎠ša ki-ma me-e D la 𐎠ta-ad-du- 𐎠ni-ba-šu-un ^{gis} TUKUL ^{mes} -šu-nu ga-an-du-ma i-ša-ad-di-ha i-da-a-šu	His vast army, whose number, like water of the river, cannot be known, marched at his side fully armed.
17 ba-lu qab-li 𐎠ta-ha-zi 𐎠še-ri-ba-š q 𐎠reb ŠU.AN.NA ^{ki} URU-šu K. 𐎠DINGIR ^{mes} ki i-ti-ir i-na šap-ša-q 𐎠m ^d 𐎠N. 𐎠TUKU LUGAL la pa-li-hi-šu 𐎠ma-al-la-a qa-tu-uš-š	He made him enter his city Babylon without fighting or battle; he saved Babylon from hardship. He delivered Nabonidus, the king who did not revere him, into his hands.
18 𐎠G ^{mes} TIN.TIR ^{ki} ka-li-šu-nu nap-har KUR šu-me-ri u URI ^{ki} ru-b 𐎠e 𐎠šak-ka-nak-ka ša-pal-šu ik-mi-sa 𐎠na- 𐎠š-ši-ku še-pu-uš-šu ih-du- 𐎠a-na LUGAL- 𐎠ti-š 𐎠im-mi-ru pa-nu-uš-š-un	All the people of Babylon, all the land of Sumer and Akkad, princes and governors, bowed to him and kissed his feet. They rejoiced at his kingship and their faces shone.
19 be-lu ša i-na tu-kul-ti-ša 𐎠bal-li-tu mi-tu-ta-an i-na pu-uš-qu 𐎠de-e ig-mi-lu kul-la-ta-an ta-bi-iš ik-ta-ar-ra-bu-šu iš-tam-ma-ru zi-ki-ir-šu	Lord by whose aid the dead were revived and who had all been redeemed from hardship and difficulty, they greeted him with gladness and praised his name.
	Cyrus' titles
20 a-na-ku ^m Ku-ra- 𐎠š LUGAL kiš-šat LUGAL GAL LUGAL dan-nu LUGAL TIN.TIR ^{ki} LUGAL KUR šu-me-ri 𐎠ak-ka-di-i LUGAL kib-ra-a-ti er-b 𐎠et-t	I am Cyrus, king of the world, great king, mighty king, king of Babylon, king of Sumer and Akkad, king of the four quarters,
21 DUMU ^m Ka-am-bu-zi-ia LUGAL GAL LUGAL URU an-ša-an DUMU DUMU ^m Ku-ra- 𐎠š LUGAL GAL LUGAL LUGAL URU an-ša-an Š. BAL.BAL ^m ši-iš-pi-iš LUGAL GAL LUGAL URU an-š-an	the son of Cambyses , great king, king of Anšan, grandson of Cyrus , great king, king of Anšan, descendant of Teispes, great king, king of Anšan,
22 NUMUN da-ru- 𐎠ša LUGAL- 𐎠tu ša ^d EN u ^d EN ir-a-mu pa-la-a-šu a-na tu-ub Š 𐎠bi-š- 𐎠nu ih-ši-ha L[UGA]L-ut-su e-nu-ma a-n[a q] 𐎠reb TIN.TIR ^{ki} e-ru-bu sa-li-mi-iš	of an eternal line of kingship, whose rule B and Nabu love, whose kingship they desire for their hearts' pleasure. When I entered Babylon in a peaceful manner,
	The prince of peace
23 i-na ul-gi 𐎠ri-ša-a-t 𐎠i-na 𐎠GAL ma-al-ki ar-ma-a šu-bat be-lu- 𐎠AMAR.UTU EN GAL Š 𐎠bi-ri-ti-pa-šu ša ra-i[m] TIN.TIR ^{ki} ši-m[a] /a-tiš /iš-ku ^ʔ -na-an-ni-ma u ⁴ -mi-šam a-še-'a-a pa-la-ah ^u -š	I took up my lordly abode in the royal palace amidst rejoicing and happiness. Marduk, the great lord, /established as his fate (<i>šimtu</i>) for me a magnanimous heart of one who loves Babylon, and I daily attended to his worship.
24 um-ma-ni-ia rap-ša-a-t 𐎠i-na q 𐎠reb TIN.TIR ^{ki} i-ša-ad-di-ha 𐎠ul-ma-niš nap-har KU[R šu-me-ri] / 𐎠URI ^{ki} mu-gal-[i-t] ul 𐎠šar-ši	My vast army marched into Babylon in peace; I did not permit anyone to frighten the people of [Sumer] /and Akkad.
25 /URU ^{ki} K. 𐎠DINGIR.RA ^{ki} 𐎠kul-lat ma-ha-zi-šu i-na ša-li-im-t 𐎠š-te-'e-e DUMU ^{mes} TIN.TIR ^{ki} x x x ša ki-ma la Š 𐎠[bi DINGIR]IR-ma ab-š 𐎠a-ni la si-ma-ti-š- 𐎠nu šu-ziz-/zu ^ʔ	I sought the welfare of the city of Babylon and all its sacred centers. As for the citizens of Babylon, [x x x upon wh]om he [i.e., Nabonidus] imposed a corv ^e which was not the gods' wish and not befitting them,
26 an-hu-ut-su-un 𐎠pa- 𐎠š-š-ha 𐎠ša-ap-ti-ir sa-ar-ma-š nu a-na ep-še-e-ti-[ia dam-qa-a-ti] ^d AMAR.UTU EN GAL- 𐎠ih-de-e-ma	I relieved their weariness and freed them from their service. Marduk, the great lord, rejoiced over [my good] deeds.
27 a-na ia-a-ti ^m Ku-ra- 𐎠š LUGAL pa-li-ih-šu 𐎠Ka-am-bu-zi-ia DUMU gi-it Š 𐎠bi-[ia 𐎠a-n]a nap-h[ar] um-ma-ni-ia	He sent gracious blessing upon me, Cyrus, the king who worships him, and upon Cambyses , the son who is [my] offspring. [and up]on all my army,
	Religious measures
28 da-am-q 𐎠š ik-ru-ub-ma i-na š 𐎠lim-t 𐎠ma-har-ša ta-bi-iš ni-it-[a-al-la-ak i-na q 𐎠bi-ti-š] gir-ti nap-har LUGAL a-ši-ib B ^d RA ^{mes}	and in peace, before him, we mov[ed] around in friendship. [By his] exalted [word], all the kings who sit upon thrones
29 ša ka-li-iš kib-ra-a-ta iš-tu tam-t 𐎠e-li-t 𐎠a-di tam-t 𐎠šap-li-t 𐎠a-ši-ib n[a-gi-i n 𐎠su-t] LUGAL ^{mes} KUR a-mur-ri-i a-ši-ib kuš-ta-ri ka-li-š-un	throughout the world, from the Upper Sea to the Lower Sea, who live in the dis[tricts far-off], the kings of the West, who dwell in tents, all of them,
30 bi-lat-su-nu ka-bi-it-t 𐎠bi-lu-nim-ma q 𐎠er-ba ŠU.AN.NA ^{ki} 𐎠na- 𐎠š-š-ku še-pu- 𐎠a iš-tu [ŠU.AN.NA ^k] a-di URU aš-šur ^{ki} M ^d Š-EREN ^{ki}	brought their heavy tribute before me and in Babylon they kissed my feet. From [Babylon] to Aššur and (from) Susa .
31 a-k- 𐎠a ^{ki} KUR 𐎠š-nu-nak URU za-am-ba-an URU me- 𐎠r-nu B ^d DINGIR ^{ki} a-di pa-a ^{kur} qu-ti-i ma-ha-za[e-be]r-ti ^d IDIGNA ša iš-tu pa ^ʔ -na-ma na-du- 𐎠šu-bat-su-un	Agade, Ešnunna, Zamban, Me-Turnu, Der, as far as the region of Gutium , the sacred centers on the other side of the Tigris , whose sanctuaries had been abandoned for a long time,
32 DINGIR ^{mes} a-ši-ib Š 𐎠bi-š 𐎠nu a-na 𐎠š-ri-šu-nu 𐎠tir-ma 𐎠sar-ma-a šu-bat da-r 𐎠a-ta kul-lat 𐎠G ^{mes} -š 𐎠nu 𐎠pa-ah ^u -hi-ra-am-ma 𐎠te-er da- 𐎠d-mi-š-un	I returned the images of the gods, who had resided there [i.e., in Babylon], to their places and I let them dwell in eternal abodes. I gathered all their inhabitants and returned to them their dwellings.
33 𐎠DINGIR ^{mes} KUR šu-me-ri 𐎠URI ^{ki} ša m ^d 𐎠N. 𐎠TUKU a-na ug-ga-ti EN DINGIR ^{mes} 𐎠še-ri-bi a-na q 𐎠reb ŠU.AN.NA ^{ki} i-na q 𐎠bi-ti ^d AMAR.UTU EN GAL i-na ša-li-im-t	In addition, at the command of Marduk, the great lord, I settled in their habitations, in pleasing abodes, the gods of Sumer and Akkad, whom Nabonidus, to the anger of the lord of the gods, had brought into Babylon.
	Cyrus' prayer
34 i-na maš-ta-ki-šu-nu 𐎠še-ši-ib š 𐎠ba-at tu-ub Š 𐎠bi [ut] kul-la-ta DINGIR ^{mes} ša 𐎠še-ri-bi a-na q 𐎠er-bi ma-ha-zi-šu-un	May all the gods whom I settled in their sacred centers ask daily
35 u ⁴ -mi-ša-am ma-har ^d EN 𐎠 ^d N 𐎠ša a-ra-ku U ⁴ ^{mes} -ia li-ta-mu 𐎠lit-taz-ka-ru a-ma-a-ta du-un-q-ia 𐎠a-na ^d AMAR.UTU EN-ia li-iq-bu- 𐎠ša ^m ku-ra- 𐎠š { ^d -š} LUGAL pa-li-hi-ka u ^m Ka-am-bu-zi-ia DUMU-š	of B and N bu that my days be long and may they intercede for my welfare. May they say to Marduk, my lord: "As for Cyrus, the king who reveres you, and Cambyses, his son,
	Text of Fragment B
36 /x\ [x x x- i]b šu-nu lu- /x x x x x x x\ 𐎠G ^{mes} TIN.TIR ^{ki} /ik-tar-ra-bu\ LUGAL- ut KUR.KUR ka-li-ši-na šu-ub-ti n 𐎠eh-t 𐎠š-še-ši-ib	[end of prayer]." The people of Babylon blessed my kingship, and I settled all the lands in peaceful abodes.
	Building activities
37 [x x x KUR.]G ⁱ mušen 2 UZ.TUR ^{mušen} 𐎠10 TU.GUR ⁴ mušen ^{mes} e-lr KUR.G ⁱ mušen UZ.TUR ^{mušen} .meš 𐎠TU.GUR ⁴ mušen ^{mes}	I [daily increased the number offerings to N] geese, two ducks, and ten turtledoves above the former offerings of geese, ducks, and turtledoves.
38 [x x x u ⁴ -m]i-šam TIN. 𐎠ta-ah ^u -hi-id B ^d D im-gur- ^d EN.L 𐎠L B ^d GAL-a ša EN.L TIN.TIR ^{ki} ma-aš-š[ar-ta]-š du-un-nu-n 𐎠š-te-'e-e-ma	[...] Dur-Imgur-Enlil, the great wall of Babylon, its de[^f en]se, I sought to strengthen
39 [x x x] ka-a-ri a-gur-ru š 𐎠G 𐎠ha-ri-ši ša LUGAL mah ^u -ri i-p[u-šu-ma la 𐎠ša]k-/li-lu ^ʔ ši-pi-ir-šu	[...] The quay wall of brick, which a former king had bu[ilt, but had not com]pleted its construction,
40 [x x x la 𐎠ša-as-hi-ru URU] /a-na ki-da-a-ni ša LUGAL ma-ah ^u -ra la i-pu-šu um-man-ni-šu di-ku-u[t ma-ti-šu i-na (or: a-na) q] 𐎠reb ŠU.AN.NA ^{ki}	[...]who had not surrounded the city] on the outside, which no former king had made, [who] a levy of work[men (or: soldiers) had led] in, (Babylon),
41 [x x x i-na ESIR.H ^d D.R ^d] \A\ SIG ⁴ .AL. 𐎠R.RA eš- [http://www.livius.org/ct-cz/cyrus/_l/cyrus_cylinder2.html] Go AUG SEP OCT	[... with bitumen] and bricks, I built anew [and completed
73 captures ^{GIS} 8 Feb 2007 - 16 Sep 2017	16 2016 2017 2018
K ^{mes} -š]i-na	their [doorways].
43 [𐎠ra-at-ti x x x š]i-ti-ir šu-mu š 𐎠AN.Š ^d R-D- 𐎠IBILA LUGAL a-lik mah ^u -ri-[ia š 𐎠qer-ba-šu ap-pa-a]-sa ^ʔ	[x x x] An inscription with the name of Aššurbanipal, a king who had preceded [me, I s]aw [in its midst].
44 [x x x] /x x\ [x x x]-x-t	[...]
45 [x x x] /x x\ [x x a-na d]a-r 𐎠a-t	[...] for eternity.

Literature

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