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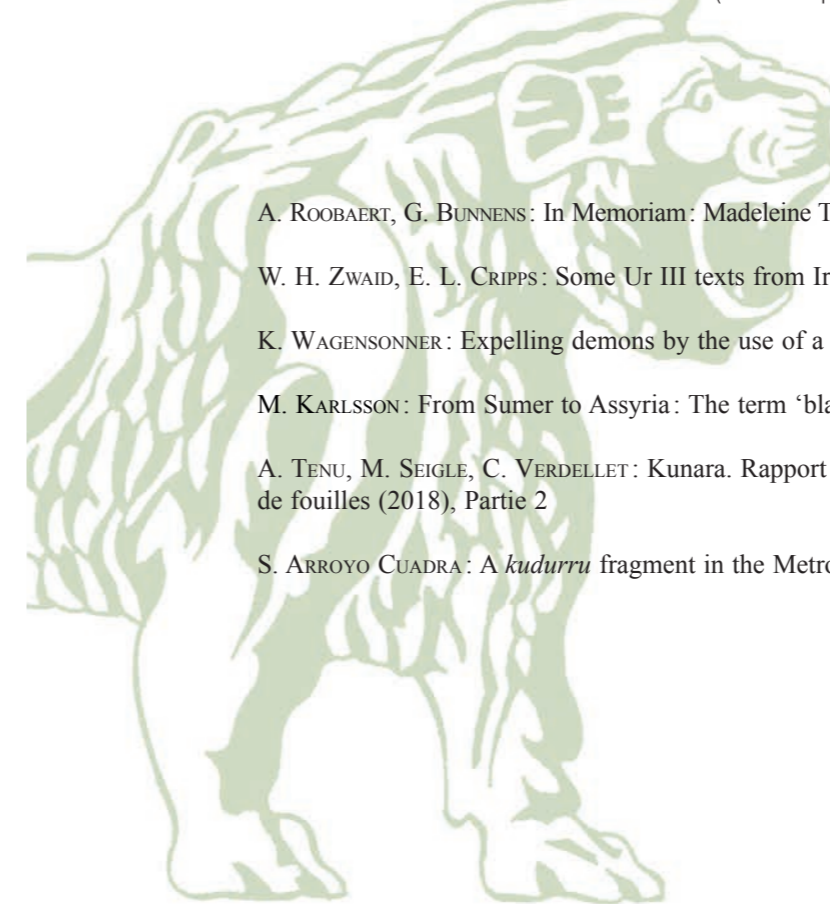
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A *kudurru* fragment in the Metropolitan Museum of Art

Sara Arroyo Cuadra*

Abstract: In the *Annual Report of the Trustees of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (1984-1985) a new fragment of the upper part of a boundary stone (*kudurru*) of the Second Dynasty of Isin was included as a purchase by the museum. This *kudurru* fragment preserves remains of iconographic motifs and cuneiform signs. Unfortunately, as yet there are no publications focused on the study of the iconography and inscription with photographs and drawings. This contribution provides an edition, translation, drawing and discussion of the *kudurru* fragment which is its first detailed study and also allows it to be given a specific date.

Keywords: *kudurru*, Kassites, Ancient Near Eastern iconography, Mesopotamian religion, Kassite land donations.

INTRODUCTION

The fragment was acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1985, when it was purchased from Iraj Lak (Naxos Art Ltd., London) thanks to the Rogers Fund (HARPER 1984, 21). It is now exhibited in Gallery 406 at The Met Fifth Avenue and accessioned as MMA 1985.45.

It is made of limestone and measures 165 x 100 x 184 mm at its maximum height, width and thickness respectively¹. This is only a fragment of the original *kudurru*, since its lower part is currently lost. The fragment shows reliefs of several divine emblems and the remains of a two-column inscription. To judge from the direction and position of its reliefs and writing, this piece is the upper part of what would appear to have been a phallic *kudurru* with a rounded top and curving sides. Unfortunately, not even the whole upper part is preserved as its two opposite edges are also lost.

The reason for the value and appeal of the fragment can easily be deduced: the excellent quality of the reliefs as well as their good state of preservation (Figs. 1 and 2). Therefore, this study focuses on the analysis of the engraved iconographic motifs. Nevertheless, the inscription as well as the shape, size, and material of the stone are relevant elements for understanding this piece, so they are also examined in detail in this contribution².

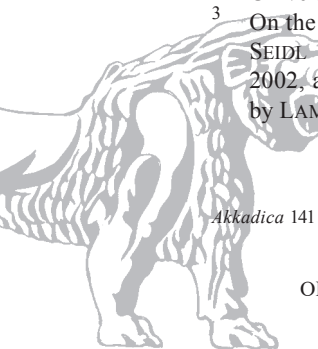
Finally, the content and style of the reliefs and writing, together with the formal features of this stone will be compared to the rest of the Babylonian *kudurru* corpus after a close examination of each stone and consultation of the latest publications³.

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¹ <<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/327048?>> (accessed 29 September 2020).

² This article is one of the academic results of a research project financed by the National Distance Education University (Spain) through a Postdoctoral Scholarship Program (FPI UNED).

³ On the inscriptions, iconography and function of Babylonian *kudurrus* in general, see: PAULUS 2014 and 2017; SEIDL 1989 and 2017; ARROYO CUADRA 2016; BRINKMAN 2006; SLANSKI 2000 and 2003/2004; CHARPIN 2002, and BUCCELLATI 1994. This contribution follows the interdisciplinary methodology used, for example, by LAMBERT 2011, WESZELI 2010, and WOODS 2004.



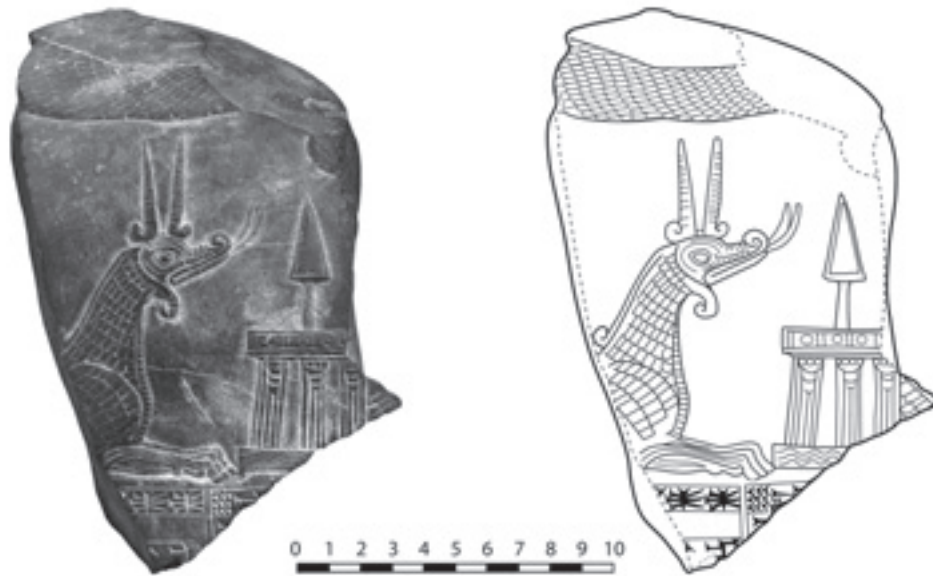


Fig. 1: *Kudurru* MMA 1985.45, Side A. Limestone. 16.5 x 10 x 18.4 cm (photo public domain under CC0, The Metropolitan Museum of Art; drawing by the author).

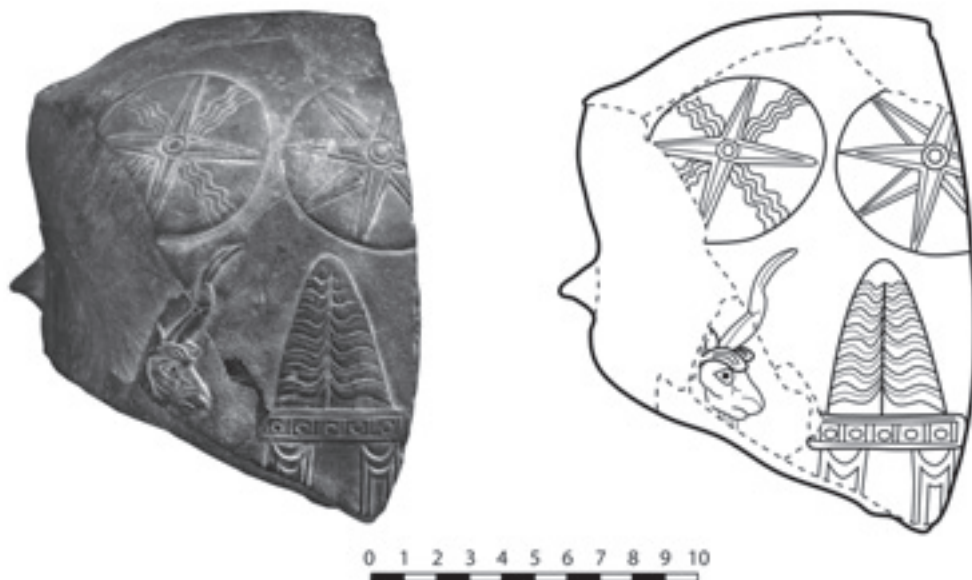


Fig. 2: *Kudurru* MMA 1985.45, Side B. Limestone. 16.5 x 10 x 18.4 cm (photo public domain under CC0, The Metropolitan Museum of Art; drawing by the author).



THE DIVINE EMBLEMS

The reliefs on this piece are placed as usual at the top of the stone. On Side A (Fig. 1), the remains of three fragmented iconographical motifs are preserved: on top, a curling snake; and on the curving side, a *mušhuššu* and a triangular-headed spade standing on a pedestal.

The representation of a snake coiling around the top of a stone is a common feature on Babylonian kudurrus. In this case, only a part of its body is preserved. This symbol is thought to be the representation of Niraḥ, son of the god Ištaran (WOODS 2004, 68), since the name Niraḥ literally means ‘little snake’ (WIGGERMANN 2001, 570). It is included in the list of deities on *kudurru* Sb 21, whose inscription also contains a description of some divine emblems and their connection to specific deities as their iconographic representative. However, Niraḥ is named as the ‘messenger of Ištaran’ (PAULUS 2014, 329; SEIDL 1989, 155), but he is not described as a snake, so his iconographic appearance remains unclear⁴.

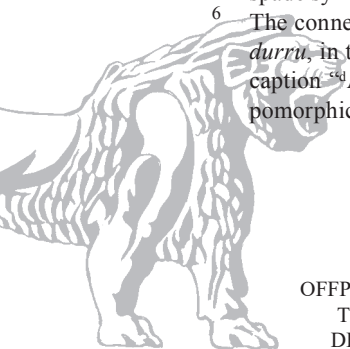
The snake-dragon *mušhuššu*, literally ‘furious snake’ or ‘awful snake’, was originally a servant of Ninazu, the city-god of Ešnunna, and also the symbolic attribute of Tišpak when he replaced Ninazu as the god of Ešnunna (WIGGERMANN 1992, 168). Then, probably because of Hammurabi’s conquest of Ešnunna, the *mušhuššu* was associated with Marduk and his son Nabû, and was also usurped by the Assyrian god Aššur after Sennacherib’s conquest of Babylon (BLACK and GREEN 1992, 166; WIGGERMANN 1992, 168). On Babylonian kudurrus, this snake-dragon is usually found as the symbolic attribute of both Marduk and Nabû, and normally appears guarding the pedestal which supports their corresponding divine emblems.

As mentioned above, a relief showing a triangular-headed spade upon a pedestal is also preserved. The Akkadian term for this spade is *marru*⁵, and it is known from the Neo-Sumerian to the Neo-Babylonian periods. On a Babylonian *kudurru*, the spade can be found either as an independent symbol, on a pedestal (sometimes carried or guarded by a *mušhuššu*) or directly carried by a *mušhuššu* (Fig. 3), but these iconographic variations have the same role: all of them symbolically represent the god Marduk⁶. In this *kudurru*, Type 7 (Fig. 3) was chosen, since it is possible to recognize a very small part of the scaled body of the *mušhuššu* just emerging from the right side of the pedestal. Consequently, the almost entirely preserved *mušhuššu* noted above is the attribute of Marduk’s son, the god Nabû (Fig. 5).

⁴ The divine emblems represented on *kudurru* Sb 21 are not in accordance with the ‘17 emblems of the great gods’ (IV 30-31) mentioned in its own inscription, so the consideration of Niraḥ as the snake engraved on the top of the stone is only tentative, possibly because of the literal meaning of his name. Moreover, on Babylonian kudurrus there is never a caption with “^dni-raḥ”, either inside or next to any representation of a snake.

⁵ On the *marru*, see: DE MECQUENEM and DOSSIN 1938. The earliest mention of the spade as the symbol of Marduk is found on *kudurru* Sb 3224, since the name ^dAMAR.UTU (PAULUS 2014, 876) is written just inside a spade symbol.

⁶ The connection between the *mušhuššu*, the spade symbol, and Marduk occurs for the first time on another *kudurru*, in this case Sb 3229: a spade symbol upon a pedestal guarded by a *mušhuššu* is represented next to the caption “^dAMAR.UTU, DINGIR.GAL” (PAULUS 2014, 774). On divine emblems as ‘abbreviations’ of anthropomorphic representations of deities, see: BERLEJUNG 1997, 52; CORNELIUS 1997, 36.



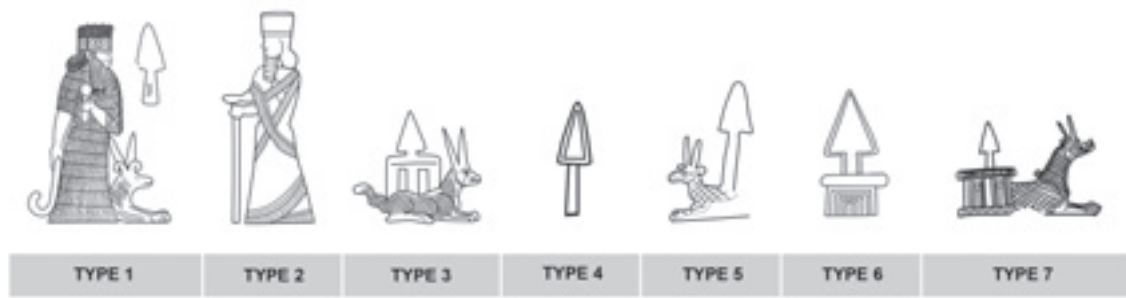


Fig. 3: Iconographic variations of Marduk representations on Babylonian kudurrus. Type 1: BM 90827 (1186-1172); type 2: Sb 14 (1186-1172); type 3: Sb 22 (1186-1172); type 4: BM 90829 (1186-1172); type 5: BM 90850 (1171-1159); type 6: BM 102485 (1103-1100); type 7: IM 90585 (1099-1082). Graphic and drawings by the author.

On Side B (Fig. 2) there also are several fragmented divine emblems. The sun disk of Šamaš and the eight-pointed star of Ištar inside a disk are engraved close to the top of the stone. They are normally accompanied by the moon crescent of the god Sîn, probably present on the original *kudurru* but currently lost.

Below these emblems, it is possible to see the head and one horn of a goat-fish or *suḫurmāšu*, a hybrid being with the head and horns of a goat and the body of a fish. In art, the *suḫurmāšu* appeared in the Ur III period and was associated with water, flowing vases and the god Enki/Ea from that period. The goat-fish was also connected with Marduk as it was one of his trophies after his battle against Tiāmat (WIGGERMANN 1992, 184). On Babylonian kudurrus, this creature was the symbolic attribute of Ea, which was usually represented as a ram-headed staff or as a turtle⁷. Both divine emblems can be found in various ways: as independent symbols, on the goat-fish, or upon a pedestal (sometimes accompanied by the goat-fish). Since the only preserved iconographical feature of Ea on this *kudurru* fragment is the head of the goat-fish, it is not possible to determine whether his divine emblem there was the turtle or the ram-headed staff. Nevertheless, judging from the style of its iconographic features, the most plausible choice is Type 4 (Fig. 4).

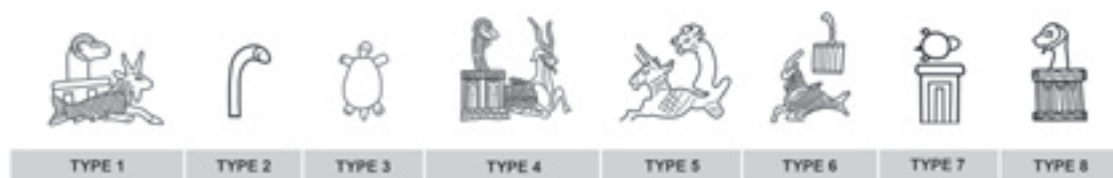


Fig. 4: Iconographic variations of Ea representations on Babylonian kudurrus. Type 1: Sb 22 (1186-1172); type 2: BM 90829 (1186-1172); type 3: BM 90827 (1186-1172); type 4: IM 90585 (1099-1082); type 5: BM 90850 (1171-1159); type 6: Teheran *kudurru* (1171-1159); type 7: Teheran *kudurru* (1171-1159); type 8: WAM 21.10 (1099-1082). Graphic and drawings by the author.

⁷ Again, *kudurru* Sb 3224 shows how the goat-fish was associated with Ea, as the caption ⁴*é-a* (PAULUS 2014, 876) is written just inside a pedestal supporting a ram-headed staff and which is accompanied by a goat-fish.

In front of the head of the *suḫurmāšu* there is a horned crown, the divine emblem of Anu⁸ and Enlil, on another pedestal. In general, this type of crown was used as the distinctive headdress of a deity (BLACK and GREEN 1992, 102), but on Babylonian kudurrus appears as an independent symbol, usually on a pedestal (SEIDL 1989, 116-117). Therefore, the reconstruction of the original divine emblems sequence on this piece could be as follows (Fig. 5):









































Fig. 5: Possible divine emblems sequence on *kudurru* MMA 1985.45 (drawing by the author).

The most interesting iconographic features on this *kudurru* fragment are the pedestals, since their decoration enables a specific date for this piece. On Side A, the pedestal with the emblem of Marduk has a base decorated with four horizontal wavy lines, a quadrangular middle part divided into three ‘columns’ or ‘pillars’ with a kind of chapter, and an upper frieze divided into a sort of ‘metopes’ with a circle inside them. On Side B, the design of the pedestal with the emblem of Anu/Enlil is almost identical, except for its central section, which is divided into two ‘doors’ instead of the three columns described above. Table 1 shows that these pedestal designs are found only on kudurrus dated by their inscriptions to the reigns of Marduk-nādin-aḫḫē (1099-1082 BCE) or Marduk-šāpik-zēri (1081-1069 BCE). The most similar pedestals are those of the so-called ‘Caillou Michaux’, *kudurru* BNP 12, which includes a mixture of both types (pedestals with three ‘columns’ and pedestals with two ‘doors’) as in the present example. In addition, the fine and detailed style of carving, together with the proportioned scale of the *mušḫuššu* and *suḫurmāšu* are also very close to those on *kudurru* BNP 12. Therefore, the most plausible date for this *kudurru* fragment is in the reign of Marduk-nādin-aḫḫē.

⁸ *Kudurru* Sb 6435 demonstrates that the horned crown was the emblem of Anu, since ⁴a-[num] is written just next to the horned crown symbol (PAULUS 2014, 876).

Table 1: Iconographic variations of pedestal representations on Babylonian kudurrus. 1: Sb 22; 2: Sb 26; 3: NBC 9502; 4: UM 29.20.1; 5: BM 90858; 6: Private collection; 7: BM 102485; 8: BM 102485; 9: BM 102485; 10: BM 102485; 11: BM 102485; 12: BNP 12; 13: BNP 12; 14: BM 90841; 15: BM 90840; 16: IM 90585; 17: WAM 21.10; 18: IM 74651; 19: IM 80908; 20: VA 5037; 21: Moussaieff collection; 22: Private collection; 23: BM 90937; 24: BM 90835; 25: David Sofer collection; 26: BM 90922; 27: BM 90936; 28: AO 21422; 29: AO 6684; 30: VA 208; 31: VA 3031; 32: Ash. 1933.1101; 33: VA 2663; 34: BM 40006; 35: BM 32642; 36: VA 209; 37: YBC 18182; 38: VA 3614. Table and drawings by the author.

Meli-Šipak (1186-1172)		1										
Marduk-apla-iddina I (1171-1159)		2		3								
Nabû-kudurrî-ušur I (1125-1104)		4		5		6						
Enlil-nâdin-apli (1103-1100)		7		8		9		10		11		
Marduk-nâdin-aḫḫê (1099-1082)		12		13		14		15		16		17
Marduk-šâpik-zêri (1081-1069)		18		19								
Adad-apla-iddina I (1068-1047)		20		21								
Marduk-aḫḫê-eriba (1046)		22										
Simbar-Šipak (1025-1008)		23										
Nabû-mukin-apli (978-943)		24		25		26						
Nabû-apla-iddina I (886-855)		27		28								
Marduk-zâkir-šumi I (851-824)		29		30								
Nabû-šuma-iškun (760-748)		31										
Nabû-nâsir (747-734)		32										
Marduk-apla-iddina II (721-710)		33		34		35						
Šarru-ukin II (709-705)		36										
Aššur-aḫḫê-iddina (680-669)		37										
Šamaš-šum-ukin (667-648)		38										

SHAPE, SIZE AND MATERIAL

From examining the whole corpus of Babylonian kudurrus, the most common shape is a phallic stele, that is, a cylindrical stone with a rounded top. From approximately the reign of Marduk-šāpik-zēri (*ca.* 1081-1069 BCE) onwards, stones with two flattened and longer sides and a rounded top were more frequent, whereas from the reign of Nabû-apla-iddina (*ca.* 886-855 BCE) the stone tablet *kudurru* (stones in the shape of a clay tablet) became common. As explained above, the shape of this *kudurru* fragment was probably a phallic stele, so its shape does not provide additional information about its actual date. The size of this piece is more helpful on this matter. In general, the size of a Babylonian *kudurru* gradually diminished, from a maximum of 90 cm high during the reign of Meli-šipak (1186-1172 BCE) to a minimum of 16 cm during the reign of Marduk-zākir-šumi I (851-824 BCE). As described above, the piece analyzed here is only a fragment of the upper part of a phallic-shaped *kudurru* that measures 165 x 100 x 184 mm. From comparison with other *kudurru* examples with the same shape and iconographic style (Fig. 6), this fragment corresponds to one third or one fourth of the total height of the original stone. So, this piece could be part of a 50-66 cm high *kudurru*, a plausible size only until the reign of Marduk-nādin-aḥḥē. Thus, its supposed original size fits perfectly into the date given by the iconographic analysis of this *kudurru* fragment.








Fig. 6: Possible reconstruction of the original size of *kudurru* MMA 1985.45 (left), from comparison with IM 90585, IM 74651 and IM 80908 (graphic and drawings by the author).

Finally, it is necessary to discuss the material used to create this piece. Some *kudurru* examples were made of valuable stone such as diorite or basalt, but the usual material was limestone, which could be bright or dark. The use of bright limestone was common when the future beneficiary of the land transaction engraved on a *kudurru* was a royal official, while dark limestone was frequently used when the future beneficiary was a member of the clergy. This piece was made of bright limestone, so it is possible that the beneficiary of the land transaction was an official of the king.



THE INSCRIPTION

On Side A, some cuneiform signs divided into two columns by a double vertical line are preserved. In Col. I there are the remains of the first three lines, but in Col. II only two signs of the first two lines are preserved. The inscription can be translated as follows⁹:

I 1		[x(xxx)]'x' DINGIR.DINGIR	[...] all the gods ²
I 2		[x(x)]'x'	[...]
I 3		'x-UM'	[...]
II 1		'IN'. [x(xxx)]'	[...]
II 2		'x' [(xxxx)]'	[...]
II 3	[completely broken]	[...]	[...]

The few preserved cuneiform signs do not provide enough information to understand any part of the text, except by the epithet 'all the gods' (II 1). It is possible to find this kind of epithets at the beginning of a text, when it starts with a 'hymn' dedicated to a deity¹⁰, although this option is seldom attested on the corpus. So, this epithet is probably part of the common imprecatory formula section of Babylonian kudurrus¹¹.

These types of the DINGIR-sign and the IN-sign are mainly found in Kassite *kudurru* inscriptions, although they can also appear with this shape during the II Isin Dynasty, including the reigns of Marduk-nādin-aḥḥē and Marduk-šāpik-zēri. Hence, the typology and shape of the cuneiform signs also fit into the chronological background indicated by the style, shape and design of the above described divine emblems, together with the supposed original size of the stone.

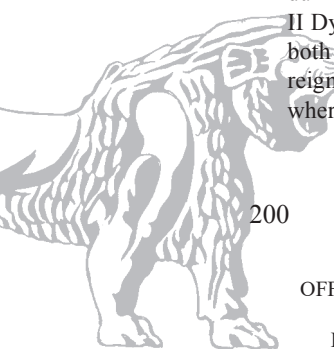
CONCLUSIONS

The interdisciplinary analysis of *kudurru* 1985.45 in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, based on the style of the iconography, the shape and typology of the cuneiform signs, and the shape and supposed original size of the stone, shows that the most plausible date for this piece is the reign of Marduk-nādin-aḥḥē (1099-1082 BCE). Moreover, it is possible that a royal

⁹ Thanks are due to Profs. J. Justel and D. Justel (Universidad de Alcalá, UAH) for looking through the edition and translation and providing comments.

¹⁰ Some *kudurru* examples inscribed with hymns dedicated to a deity are UM 29.20.1, IM 80908, VA 3031, VA 2663, and BM 87220.

¹¹ Other examples on Babylonian kudurrus are: YBC 2242 (I 16, I 30 and III 31), supposed to have been written during the reign of Kadašman-Ḥarbe I (PAULUS 2014, 296 ff.), although other scholars date it during the Isin II Dynasty (BRINKMAN 2015, 19-20; TENNEY 2016, 159); Sb 26 (VI 8), Sb 169 (IV 11²) and IM 67953 (III 8'), both of them written during the reign of Marduk-apla-iddina I; and VA 3614 (I 3 and III 5), written during the reign of Šamaš-šum-ukīn. Most of these examples are epithets for the gods in the imprecatory formula section, where DINGIR.DINGIR could also be translated as 'the great gods'.



official was the beneficiary of the transaction, which would originally have been inscribed on this *kudurru* judging by the material of the stone (bright limestone). Thus, it is now possible to add this significant piece to the other examples of Babylonian *kudurrus* examined in recent publications.

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