

## The Kudurru Fragment of the Montserrat Museum

Ignacio Márquez Rowe — C.S.I.C., Madrid  
Cornelia Wunsch — Barcelona / Heidelberg

This piece "was acquired after a long bargain from a person from Nasriyeh who belonged to the sect of the *subba*, or disciples of Saint John the Baptist" on March, 4th 1923 by P. Bonaventura Ubach as he himself recorded it in his *Dietari* ("*la vengué, després de molts precs, un individu del poble de Nasriyeh, pertanyent a la secta dels subba, o deixebles de Sant Joan Baptista*"). "Some days later, the dealer who settled the affair between him and the owner of the fragment came to him to claim the piece back for a Jew had offered him then the double price he had been paid. P. Ubach persuaded the dealer with conviction that the piece in question was *unfortunately* already on its way to Spain" —so were we told by P. Guiu Camps who keeps carefully "*somnis i records del temps passat*" (like the wise old man in J. Verdaguer's *L'Atlàntida*) and to whom this contribution is dedicated with our most sincere friendship and admiration.<sup>1</sup>

This highly appreciated fragment is now exhibited in one of the Western Asiatic antiquities rooms in the Museu Bíblic of Montserrat catalogued with the number 730.001. It is the upper part of a kudurru of dark grey limestone. The original stone stele of irregular long shape must have been relatively large, to judge from the maximum preserved dimensions of the fragment: the height is about 21 cm, the width about 20 cm (note that the edges are not fully preserved) and the thickness about 13.5 cm. Like other kudurrus, MM 730.001 has a rather rounded top and two morphologically distinct faces, one slightly convex and the other somewhat flatter.

The reason for the value and appeal of this piece can easily be deduced: the upper fragment preserves the carved images representing the symbols of the deities. In addition one must also mention the good quality of the style of the relief as well as the rather good state of preservation of the symbols. The Akkadian text of the contract, which possibly described a real estate transaction, was separated from the relief by two tori and was originally written on both sides of the kudurru. Indeed, few isolated traces of cuneiform signs, almost illegible,

1. Note the following abbreviations used in this paper: *BBSI* = L.W. King, *Babylonian Boundary-Stones and Memorial-Tablets in the British Museum*, London 1912; *Seidl* = U. Seidl, *Die babylonischen Kudurru-Reliefs. Symbole mesopotamischer Gottheiten, Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis* 87, Freiburg 1989; *Sumer* 7 = F. Basmachi, "Small Bas-Reliefs in the Iraq Museum", *Sumer* 7 (1951) 58-79; *Sumer* 36 = F. Rashid, "The Titles of King Marduk-Shabik-Ziri 1082-1070 B.C.", *Sumer* 36 (1980) 124-149; *Sumer* 38 = K. Al-Admi, "A New Kudurru of Marduk-nadin-ahhe IM 90585", *Sumer* 38 (1982) 121-133.

can be found on both sides (one may restore tentatively in the first line of the convex face the signs A.Š[À.ME]Š). The lines of the inscription are divided by rulings and measure about 0.7 cm; on the other hand, it is not possible to determine whether the text was also distributed in columns like in other examples due to the badly damaged state of preservation of the lower part of the piece.

As a result, the study of the kudurru fragment MM 730.001 will be, as is often the case, a study of the iconography.

### *The symbols*

The rather damaged flat face of MM 730.001 preserves part of two composite divine symbols. These are included in a register, divided on the lower part by the two tori which separate the inscription and are isolated from the other symbols by another upper torus. The two composite symbols, proper of the kudurrus from the XIth century B.C. on, represent the deities Nabû and Marduk: their emblems, the wedge-shaped stylus with a tablet and the triangular-headed spade respectively, stood each on a podium from which the protome of a snake-dragon extended horizontally. Of Nabû's symbol, only the head of the dragon is preserved; whereas Marduk's altar supporting the triangular-headed spade is fully preserved as well as part of the body of the snake-dragon.

Above this first register, one can find the symbols of the celestial gods. On the right end and bent on the upper slightly round edge of the kudurru, the symbol of Šamaš is entirely preserved. The sun is here elaborately depicted as a disc enclosing the four-pointed star with radiating wavy lines between each of the points. To the left of Šamaš is part of the crescent moon, the symbol of Sîn, which was probably flanked in turn by the eight-pointed star Istar-Venus completely broken away. This 'register' is closed on the upper edge by the snake, the symbol of Ištaran. Its head should presumably be restored on the right upper edge on account of the broader size of the body. Its lower part would then run along the left edge of the stone, like in other examples, and would thus divide graphically the two halves of the kudurru.

The upper edge of MM 730.001 shows also two other divine symbols. Both the eagle-head of Zababa (whose staff is not preserved) and the walking bird, the emblem of Papsukkal, are located on the right side with no distinct division and are facing the convex front of the kudurru. One should note the high quality of the carving in depicting the details and parts of these birds (e.g. the different depth of the incised lines in drawing the feathers or eyes).

On the same level of the relief, that means still on the upper edge, the scorpion, representing Išhara, dominates the scene of the relief work, both in size and style.

Below and thus on the upper part of the convex face of the kudurru, the entire outline and portions of the relief of the lamp, the symbol of Nusku, are preserved. To the left, it is possible to distinguish the traces of the outline of the 'omega' symbol of Ninġursanga whose relief is completely broken away. This is the last preserved symbol before reaching the row of images which stands directly over the two tori that separate the relief from the cuneiform text.

This row shows the triad Anu, Enlil and Ea represented by three pedestals (which exhibit the same design and are finished in the same way as the one of Marduk on the opposite face of the stone) supporting their respective symbols. Anu and Enlil are identified by the multi-horned crowns. As for Ea, only a portion of the pedestal is preserved; on the basis of other kudurrus where these three symbols do also occur, one could restore upon this altar either the curved staff with ram's head or the turtle, often combined with the protome

of goat-fish extended horizontally from the pedestal.<sup>2</sup> Finally, to the left of the triad the dog, representing Gula, is sitting on the rear legs and is almost entirely preserved.

*Classification*

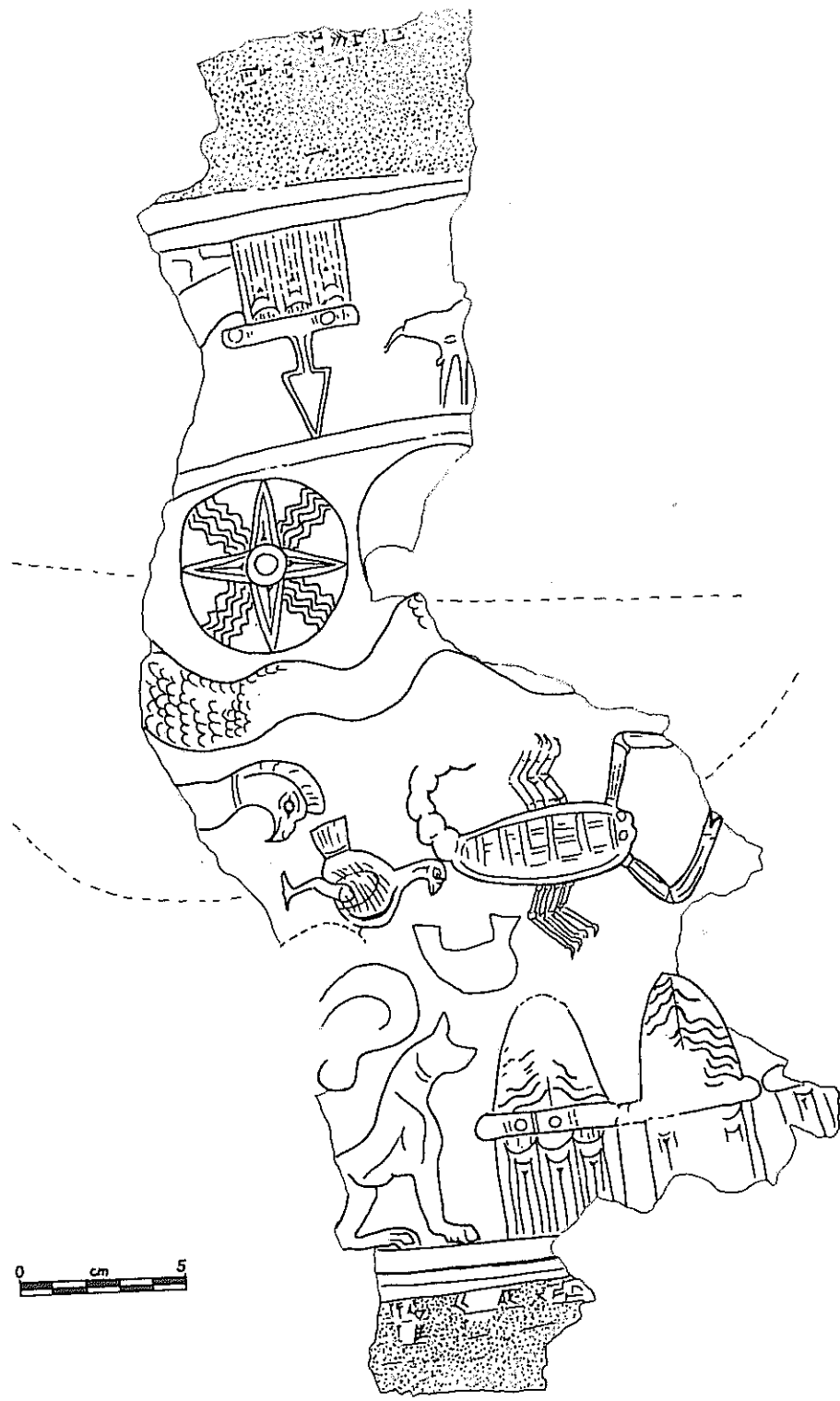
Since only few scattered traces of signs from the text of MM 730.001 are preserved, the only criterium which may help to date this stone fragment will be the style of the relief. For this purpose, we shall, of course, refer to the essential study of U. Seidl where a stylistic-chronological typology of all kudurrus known up to 1989 can be found.

On the basis then of the nature and form of the divine symbols as well as their spatial distribution on the relief, we suggest to catalogue MM 730.001 within the so-called "Canonical C" group. This group includes all kudurrus from Marduk-nadin-aḫḫe down to Marduk-aḫḫe-eriba, dated thus to the first half of the XIth. century B.C.

A short list of representative similar examples of "Canonical C" kudurrus could be the following: IM 90585 (*Sumer* 38 127-133 = Seidl pp. 223s.) of Marduk-nadin-aḫḫe, and BM 90841 (*BBS*; Pl. LXIII, LXIIIss. = Seidl no. 79) presumably from the same reign; or IM 934 (*Sumer* 7 Pl. V = Seidl no. 84) and IM 80908 (*Sumer* 36 145-149 = Seidl p. 224) of Marduk-šapik-zeri. Distinctively, however, MM 730.001 shows, as already mentioned, a clear separate register—where the symbols of Marduk and Nabû are located—that is absent in these aforementioned examples. In this regard, one may finally refer to the well-known "Caillou Michaux" of Marduk-nadin-aḫḫe with its characteristic 'registered' relief.

2. For the symbol of the turtle with and without protome of goat-fish, see respectively Seidl no. 83 (Pl. 28d) and BM 90841 (*BBS*; Pl. LXIII = Seidl no. 79); for the ram-headed staff with protome of goat-fish, see IM 934 (*Sumer* 7 Pl. V = Seidl no. 84) or IM 90585 (*Sumer* 38 Pl. 1b, 2a pp. 128s. = Seidl pp. 223s.).

MM 730.001







## Bronces de Palestina en el Museo de Montserrat<sup>1</sup>

Juan Luis Montero Fenollós — I.P.O.A. - Universidad de Barcelona

El hierro se extrae del suelo  
y una piedra se funde haciéndose cobre.  
Job, 28, 3

En la sección de Arqueología del Oriente Bíblico del Museo del Monasterio de Montserrat (Barcelona) se conserva una interesante colección de armas y útiles metálicos procedente de Palestina. Dicho grupo de objetos tiene su origen en los frecuentes viajes que el P. B. Ubach realizó a principios de siglo a Tierra Santa, quien posiblemente los adquirió en Jerusalén. Este hecho justifica el carácter heterogéneo de este conjunto de bronce, cuya cronología abarca desde finales del III milenio a.C. hasta época helenística. Asimismo explica que se trate de objetos carentes de procedencia exacta, si exceptuamos algún caso. Gracias a los manuscritos del P. B. Ubach sabemos de la existencia de dos puntas de flecha originarias de Beisán y de una tercera de Māliḥā, compradas antes de 1910<sup>2</sup>. Entre las adquisiciones de 1925 figuran varias flechas de Hebrón y Gaza, sin que podamos identificar de qué piezas concretas se trata<sup>3</sup>. El resto constan como *Palaestinae objecta perantiqua* o como bronce provenientes de *Chanaan-Judaea*<sup>4</sup>.

1. Sea este mi pequeño homenaje al Padre Guu Camps por su dedicación a la historia y arqueología de Tierra Santa.

2. B. Ubach, *Petit guia del Museu Bíblic de Montserrat segons la disposició d'armaris i objectes, el dia de la inauguració de son engrandiment* (Manuscrito 1921).

3. B. Ubach, *Despeses pel Museu Bíblic de Montserrat* (Manuscrito 1925-28).

4. B. Ubach, *Catàleg dels objectes exposats en el 'Museum Biblicum' del Monestir de Montserrat* (Manuscrito 1924).