THROUGH A TABLET DARKLY

A RECONSTRUCTION OF OLD AKKADIAN MONUMENTS DESCRIBED IN OLD BABYLONIAN COPIES

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There is today a haunting quality to the open spaces of Ekur: the remnants of a modern house perched atop the ziggurat; a massive dune spread over the temple at its base; an eerie stratigraphic column standing in the middle of the courtyard; all of it sunk in a hole, as if a balustrade of centuries looking down at their own earlier past.[1] The perceptual reality of this monumental complex must clearly have been quite different in antiquity, being, as it was, the most revered religious center of Mesopotamia, the bustling core of a thriving urban center, the magnet for a vast flow of cultural goods. Ekur was in fact the architectural complex centering around the temple tower, or ziggurat, of Enlil, the supreme god of the pantheon in Nippur, the sacred city *par excellence*. It consisted primarily of a precinct which contained at one end the temple tower itself and at the other a relatively small temple at the basis of the temple tower. Considerable remains of the precinct wall, of the ziggurat, and of the temple at its base are still extant today. The rest of the vast precinct was otherwise filled with the kind of regular deposit which accumulates in an open area.

But this open area would hardly have been empty in antiquity. In the Old Babylonian period, for example, we know that there were monuments still standing which had been first erected by the kings of the Old Akkadian dynasty, some four to five hundred years earlier. The physical remains of these monuments have disappeared, but we have a sort of archaeological record which we owe not to recent excavators, but to an ancient diligent observer. For reasons which might have combined scribal erudition with simple scholarly interest, the texts written on these monuments were copied onto several large clay tablets, on which brief notations were added describing the monumental or "archaeological" setting of the inscriptions themselves. The result was a sort of anthology, which the ancient compiler described as follows:

> "The open air (monuments) which are set up in the courtyard of Ekur."[2]

The copies made by the Old Babylonian scribes were so accurate that these texts still serve as one of the major sources for our knowledge of the Old Akkadian dialect. It is interesting to note that the scribes chose not to reproduce the paleographic appearance of the writing, but rendered nevertheless very carefully the graphemic aspect, so that they preserved for us much invaluable information about the details of Old Akkadian phonetics, divergent as this was from that of the Old Babylonian period.[3]

The linguistic contribution of these ancient scholars is so overwhelming that it has overshadowed the other dimension of this unique scholarly enterprise, namely the "archaeological" contribution, *i.e.* the rendering of the monuments as monuments. Our modern lack of appreciation for this important endeavor derives perhaps from the simple fact that nowhere is any monument described as such, *i.e.* as a complete and self-standing structure of its own. Rather, the scribe noted the individual

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1. So, at least, did Ekur look when I first went to Nippur in the early sixties. I may be forgiven these personal reminiscences with which I reach back to the years when I first came in touch with Bill Hallo, first indirectly through our common mentor, Jay Gelb, who would so frequently refer to him when speaking to us younger students, and then personally through a growing series of encounters and through the commonality of our mutual interests. I am delighted to be able to offer him, as a token of my warm friendship and great admiration, these thoughts on a period to which he has contributed so much and so well. — In keeping with the recommendations by the editors of the volume, I will present here only the broad outline of my argument, addressing a general, non-Assyriological audience and trying to imitate Bill Hallo in what he does so well: integrate into a unified picture the diversity of our sources; see the life behind the words; empathize with the ancient scribe as if a colleague.

2. Literally: "They are set up in the middle of the courtyard, of the courtyard of Ekur," I.J. Gelb and B. Kienast, *Die altakkadischen Königsinschriften des dritten Jahrtausends v. Chr.*, Freiburger Altorientalische Studien, vol. 7, Stuttgart 1990, p.136 (abbreviated FAOS 7). See also p. 139: "[Monuments of] Sargon, Rimuš and Maništusu, such as they are (found) in Ekur." The text edition in FAOS is the most recent publication of these texts and will be used in this article as the standard reference. The other important earlier edition is H. Hirsch, "Die Inschriften der Könige von Agade," AfO 20 (1963), pp. 1–82 (abbreviated AfO 20).

3. Thus, for example, signs of the set SA stand for /ša/, those of the set ŠA for /ta/.

components which together made up some large composite monuments, and it is not immediately apparent how these components fit together. Such is then precisely the thrust of my argument: that out of the many Old Akkadian inscriptions given in the Old Babylonian scribal anthology we may reconstruct relatively few monuments, each one consisting of several different structural elements, with a variety of inscriptional components added to suit the nature of any given section of the monument.

Such an understanding would seem more aptly to match the assumption that these were large open-air structures, still standing in their original outdoor location several centuries after they had first been erected. And it is interesting for us to try and visualize not only the individual monuments, but also the general layout of Ekur. It was an open public space much like a square, defined not by houses but rather by a precinct (hence the term "courtyard" used to define it). And it contained not just a single towering monument, but a collection of important, juxtaposed structures. The perceptual image which we may form is thus somewhat similar to that of, say, the Capitol in Rome. The very fact that such an assemblage of Old Akkadian monuments had survived as a group into the Old Babylonian period, and very likely in the original emplacement in which they had first been set up, is indicative of their prominence and overall impact on the viewer.

But what can more readily be reconstructed from the scribal anthology as we have it are the individual monuments themselves, and not so much the larger setting of which they were a part. In return for such a reconstruction we obtain not only the presumed recovery of a lost archaeological artifact, but also a fuller understanding of the text in its more complex literary structure. What were disparate philological segments acquire a new life as the inscriptional articulation of a larger display. The segments complement each other and emerge as a unified new whole. If the whole is more than the sum of the parts it is because the texts point at each other and at the representational components of the monuments.

In what follows I will take up for special consideration one such monument,[4] which we may call the *Battles of Sumer* by Rimuš. It is composed of nine different inscriptions and can be reconstructed as a statue of the king standing atop two quadrangular platforms and a rounded base, with a variety of representational elements

and, of course, textual portions. As we shall see, it would appear as though even the name of the ancient artist is preserved. I will first present my reconstruction of the monument; then I will describe the inscriptional material; and finally I will draw some conclusions with regard to the fuller historical interpretation which the newly proposed interpretation makes possible.

There has been, to my knowledge, no attempt in the literature at reconstructing the monuments quite in the same way as I am doing here. The graphic reconstruction proposed by Kraus and by Foster for an inscription of Naram-Sin[5] does not properly look at the monument as such, but only at the topographic situation as given in the representation part of the monument.

1. THE MONUMENT

The monument, as I understand it, contained nine distinct portions on which inscriptional material was included.[6] These nine distinct components correspond to what are normally assumed to be, in our text editions, five or six different texts. I will refer to these nine components by means of a Roman numeral, according to a sequence which follows the logical order of the monument as I understand it. Such order is slightly at variance from the sequence which the texts have in the anthology for reasons which I will explain below. For ease of reference, I append here a concordance between the two sequences and the standard editions.

Sequence proposed	Sequence on tablet	FAOS 7 191ff.	AfO 20 11ff.
I	I	C1	b1
II	II	C1	b1
III	III	C1	b1
IV (Ur+)	IV (Ur+)	C2	b2
V (Adab+)	VII (Kazallu)	C3	b3
VI (Umma+)	V (Adab+)	C4	b4
VII (Kazallu)	VI (Umma+)	C5	b5
VIII	VIII	C5	b5
IX	IX	C5	b6

Our knowledge of the arrangement of these nine components derives exclusively from very brief scholarly notations which are included in the anthology. These notations are clearly identifiable as such because they are written in Sumerian and because they come at natural breaks in the flow of the Akkadian text. According to the standard style of cuneiform texts, these notations are appended to the portion of the text to which they refer, i.e. they are colophons. I will review now these colophons in the order which I consider to be germane to the monument, and I will also offer an explanation for the manner in which the scribe would have copied the

5. One will find their views summarized in FAOS 7 pp. 262-64.
6. The full text in transcription and translation is given below as Appendices 1 and 2.

inscriptions in the particular sequence found in the anthology.

Such order is represented graphically in Fig. 1 — which, it must be stressed, is based exclusively on my understanding of the colophons and on no other explicit textual or figurative evidence. My assumption is that a stone statue was placed on top of a double brick platform, which was partly covered by stone plaques and reliefs. The choice of bricks was conditioned by the size of the platform: the lower platform especially would have been too large to allow for it to be made of a single block of stone. The brick platforms would have ensured the permanence in their original emplacement as long as they were cared for and maintained, presumably through regular replastering — at least down through the Old Babylonian period, when they were still visible for the author(s) of the anthologies to be able to copy them. But the least amount of neglect would have precipitated the collapse of the platforms, and with it the dislocation, if not the ruin, of the statue and plaques. This would explain why it would be very difficult indeed to discover such a monumental setting in its pristine emplacement. Judging from the size of portions of statues which are preserved and which are essentially life-size, we may surmise that both platforms together may not have exceeded a total height of 1.5 or 2 meters.

I. *"Written on the upper pedestal, to the front"* — The front of the monument is defined as the one towards which the statue is facing. The upper pedestal, presumably at eye level, would provide the most prominent location for a display inscription. And in point of fact, the inscription found here, as we will see momentarily, is a summary of a series of campaigns which are collectively called the *Battles of Sumer*.

II. *"On the [footstool]"*[7] — My hypothetical reconstruction of the text at this point presupposes that the next inscription is written on a less-visible surface of the monument, *i.e.* on the upper part of the lower platform, which may have been understood as a footstool. (If the statue had been sitting, then the top platform could have literally served as a footstool). It is possible that this surface may have tapered somewhat towards ground level, so that it would have been partly visible to an onlooker standing in front of the monument. However, since the inscriptional content, as we will see, consists of curses against individuals who might remove or appropriate the statue, it would stand to reason that for this particular inscription the main orientation should have been upwards, *i.e.* in the direction of the divine onlookers who were entrusted with the carrying out of the curses.

III. *"Written on the lower pedestal. Lu-Damu was the engraver"*[8] — The front face of lower pedestal would be the

surface of greatest significance in terms of the monumental impact of the display as a whole: it might stand up to a meter high, and would be most readily identified by any viewer, whether literate or not. Clearly, this was the "prime time" equivalent of political propaganda: and it is here that the relief would have shown for all to see the rulers who had just been defeated, led by their very protective deities who had failed to protect them in battle. In spite of the breaks in the text, we can reconstruct, on the basis of the captions which were written above the individual figures, four pairs of god/ruler. Such a row of figures in relief is known from fragments of other monuments which have survived.[9] Ironically, in our case, we seem to have the name of the artist (presumably written in some unobtrusive corner of the same pedestal face) for a work which has not been preserved!

IV. *"Inscription written on its left hand side"* — This colophon is the least explicit as to location. From the general logic of the display sequence, I am surmising that it may have been placed on the upper pedestal, the other two sides of which would have been left blank. Since this is the most important of the individual battles making up the overall sequence of the *Battles of Sumer* (as we shall see later), it may stand to reason that it be given a position of preeminence next to the summary account (inscription Number I), which is said to have been placed on the front of the upper pedestal. The notation that the inscription is "on its left side" presents a slight problem: I am assuming that what is meant is the left of the monument as one looks at it from the front, but the exact converse may of course be true. This remains however inconsequential, since the alternative interpretation would simply result in a mirror-image rendering of my overall reconstruction.

V. *"Plaque on the lower pedestal, on its left-hand side"*

VI. *"Plaque on the lower pedestal, on its backside"*

VII. *"Plaque on the lower pedestal, on its right-hand side"* These three inscriptions are symmetrically arranged on the three remaining sides of the lower pedestal. The word which I translate as "plaque"[10] is to be understood,

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7. This is hypothetical, since the text is largely broken at this point. I assume a reading [GIR₃.GUB].E.

8. I propose to read BUR.<GUL> at the end of the line. Since the copy (FAOS 7, p. 144) shows a hole in the clay immediately to the right of the sign BUR, it may be possible to assume a reading BUR.[GUL] instead, though from the appearance of the copy this is doubtful.

9. A vanquished ruler led by his (personal?) god does not seem to be a motif occurring in known early Mesopotamian reliefs. I am assuming here a scene which is otherwise very common in presentation scenes; see for instance E. Strommenger, "Statueninschriften und ihr Datierungswert," ZA 53 (1959), p. 49, pl. XIa, or D. Collon, *Catalogue of the Western Asiatic Seals in the British Museum. Cylinder Seals II: Akkadian, Post Akkadian, Ur III Periods,* London 1982, no. 159.

10. Sumerian MUŠ₃ (according to a collation by B. Foster, quoted in FAOS 7, p. 200), corresponding to Akkadian *būnu,* for which see CAD B 320. Literally, *būnu* means "figure, face," and then, by extension, "plan, shape (of an object)."

I submit, in a specific "archaeological" meaning, namely as a stone slab which covers part, but not all, of the brick structure of which the lower pedestal is made; in other words, a plaque embedded in plaster. In contrast, the word "inscription"[11] used for N. IV would refer to a face which is completely made of stone. This might also imply that the upper pedestal was a solid block of stone, rather than a core of bricks lined with stone slabs. — The reason for the discrepancy between what I perceive to be the logical sequence of the monumental display (V–VI–VII) and the sequence as we have it on the Old Babylonian tablet (VII–V–VI) is as follows. As he was copying the inscriptions, the scribe would have covered first the front (I–II–III), then the secondary face of the top pedestal (IV); at that point he would have moved (perhaps after an interruption?) to the lower pedestal, and would have started somewhat haphazardly from the right (VII–V–VI); finally he would have turned to the statue itself. The logical sequence of the historical events as related in the inscriptions would seem to require instead the sequence proposed, which might have been less apparent to the scribe as he was engaged in the physical labor of copying on clay the text of the stone inscriptions.

VIII. "*The pedestal on which he stands: the fallen ones*"[12] We are now moving to the statue itself. As on the front face of the lower pedestal, this is a semiotically rich display surface, if I may say so. Here too we have four pairs of names, each pair representing one of the four major armies defeated in the overall *Battle of Sumer*. They are not necessarily the leaders, but presumably the most important individuals that were slain in the field. As in other figurative representations,[13] they were most likely shown in a supine position, going around in a circle. Presumably, the names would not have been readable from the ground, but the main message was conveyed representationally by indicating very concretely the nature of the success achieved in battle.

IX. "*Inscription on his side*" — As in other statues,[14] the small inscription with the name of the king would have been placed on his shoulder. This too could not easily have been read by anyone on the ground, but the informational content of the inscription is obviously minimal. As for the more general question as to who may have in any case been privy to the written message, we must obviously think in terms of the broader issue of display inscriptions as a whole. In a well-known passage of the Code of Hammurapi the king urges that the person who feels oppressed should have "the inscribed monument read aloud" to him[15]: the monument stands

as a visible symbol of the judicial caring of the king, but one which contains at the same time the substance of the judicial verdicts to be issued. Similarly, a political display inscription is a visible symbol of the successes of the ruler (in this case, military successes); the content, which may be validated upon reading of the text by an expert, would but verify and validate the claim which is otherwise made representationally. It is time, then, that we turn to the specifics of the inscriptions as given on our monument.

2. THE INSCRIPTIONS

I will give now a brief review of the inscriptional content of each section, with a translation of some key passages, explaining how they relate to the individual components of the monument as I have just described it. Accordingly, I will follow the sequence as outlined above, and in so doing I will emphasize how the various parts of the monument, far from being isolated vignettes, add up to a unified whole which exhibits a perhaps unsuspected unity of literary composition. Fig. 2 reproduces the monument as I have explained it, with an appropriate description for each inscriptional component of the monument. Appendix 1 gives the full text in transcription, and Appendix 2 the translation.

I. *Summary* — In capsule form, this provides a synopsis of the whole monument. It begins with an identification of Rimuš as king — which parallels inscription N. IX on the shoulder of the statue. This is followed by a brief summary of the major battles waged, with body counts for the overall campaign. A brief sentence refers to the setting up of this monument[16]: this is the only place where such a reference is given. A brief curse formula concludes this section.

One point deserves particular mention. I interpret the beginning of the narrative as follows:

"He won three battles of Sumer in succession."[17]

or, more loosely,

"He defeated Sumer in three consecutive battles."

This requires a few comments. (1) The term translated as "battle" is a plural, since it agrees with the numeral "three." The text uses a logogram here, followed by the genitive "of Sumer." Either the logogram may be taken to stand for an Akkadian plural form (*tāḫazī*), or else it is a singular form which, however, as is often the case in the construct state, stands for a plural. (2) The term translated "in succession"[18] qualifies adverbially the numeral, with a construction similar to that found in "the four river banks together."[19] The qualification of a (rapid) succession of the three battles is important for a historical evaluation of the events about which I will say more be-

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11. Sumerian MU.SAR.

12. On the copy given in FAOS 7, p. 144, the reading KI.GAL KI.GUB[1] (instead of KI.GAL KI.TA) seems clear.
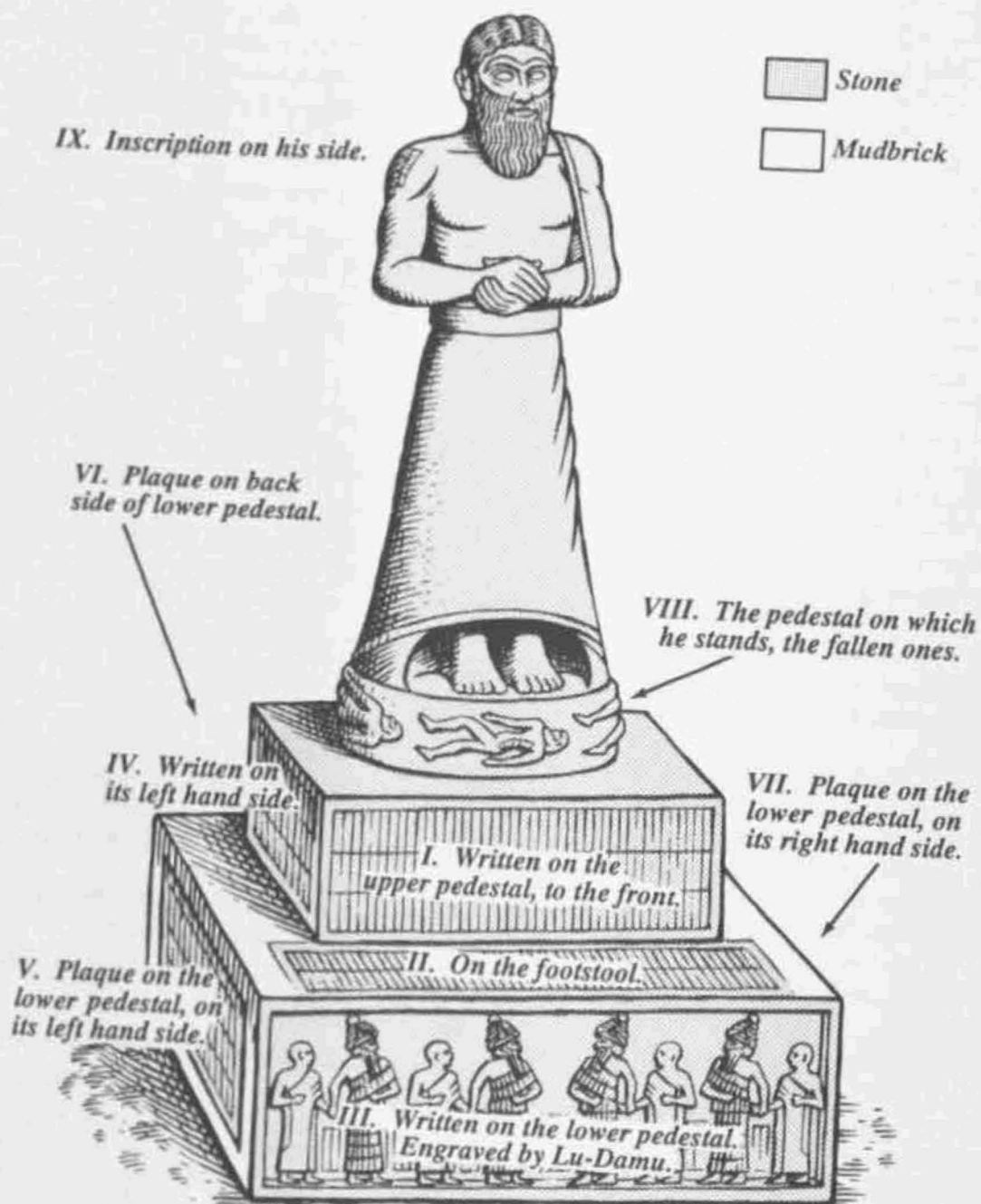
13. See for example A. Spycket, *La statuaire du Proche-Orient Ancient*, Leiden 1981, pl. 101. On our monument, the two individuals in each pair may have been shown one on top of the other.

14. See for example Strommenger, *op. cit.*, p. 31, pl. 11b.

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15. CH rev. 25: 9–11.

16. Literally "he built his statue" *ṣalamšu ibni*, C1 82–83.

17. *tāḫaz šumerim ad matiš talātim iṭ'ar*, C1: 8–11.

IX. Inscription on his side.

Stone

Mudbrick

VI. Plaque on back
side of lower pedestal.

VIII. The pedestal on which
he stands, the fallen ones.

IV. Written on
its left hand side.

VII. Plaque on the
lower pedestal, on
its right hand side.

I. Written on the
upper pedestal, to the front.

V. Plaque on the
lower pedestal, on
its left hand side.

II. On the footstool.

III. Written on the lower pedestal.
Engraved by Lu-Damu.

(The monuments) which are set up in the
middle of the courtyard, the courtyard of Ekur.

Figure 1. Reconstruction of the monument of Rimuš
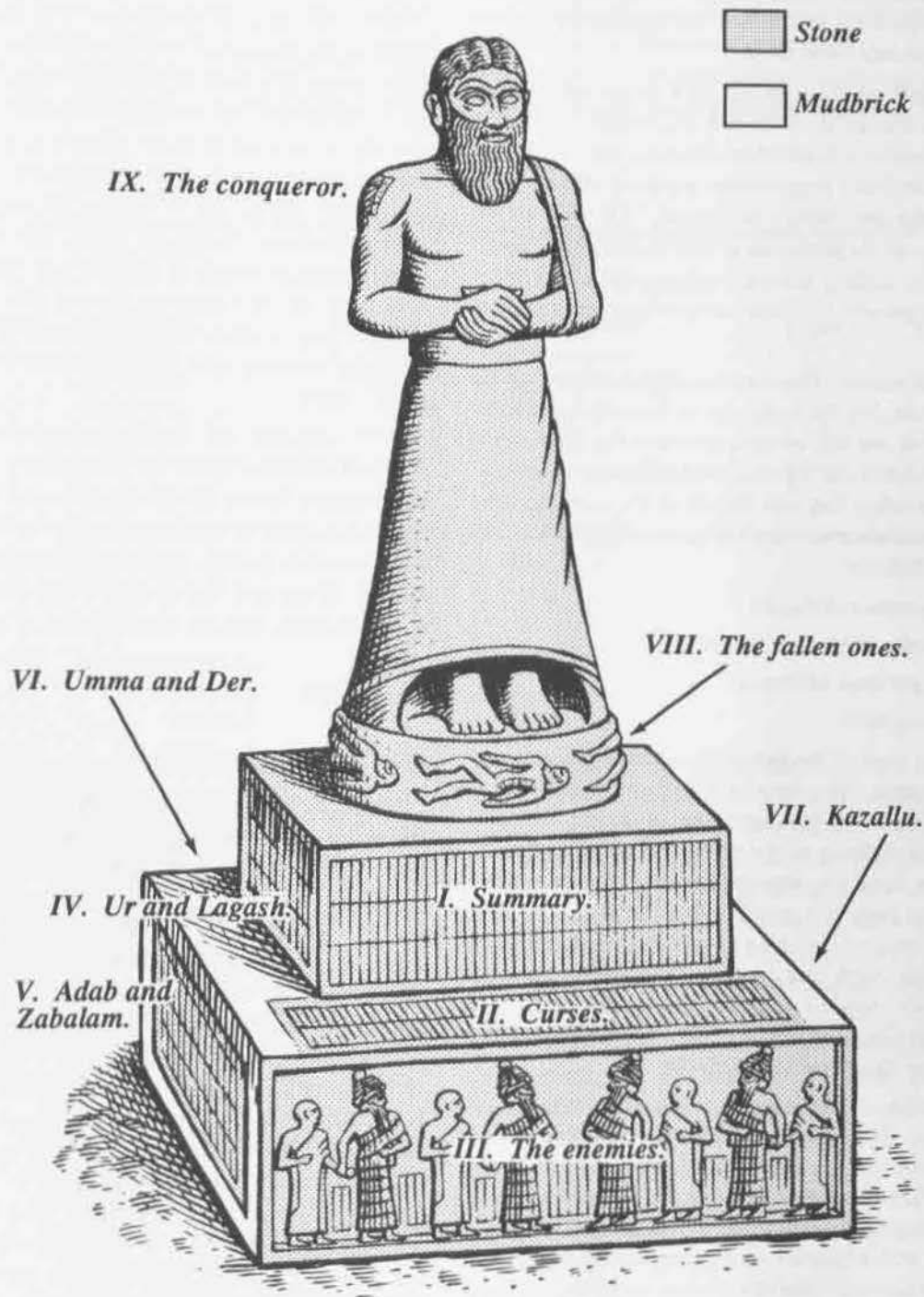showing hypothetical placement of tablet colophons.

Figure 2. The Battle of Sumer: Monumental arrangement of the inscriptions.

low. (3) While the text speaks of three battles, there are in fact four major battles all told. However, as we shall see, only three battles take place in the Sumerian south (hence, appropriately, "three" battles of Sumer), while the fourth takes place against Akkadian Kazallu, which is mentioned separately in this first inscription for reasons which will become clear later.

II. *The major curses* — While each prose section (*i.e.* each section except II, VIII and IX, which only give captions) contains a brief curse formula, this section is entirely devoted to a longer curse formula, which mentions explicitly the "statue of Rimuš," *i.e.* the overall monument with its platforms as well as the statue itself. As mentioned earlier, this particular section may have been facing upwards as it was destined primarily for the gods.

III. *The enemies* — The list of enemies and their gods is partly broken, but from the size of the break and from the names that are left we may assume that there were four pairs of names, each pair giving the name of the ruler and of the deity; this was placed, as if a caption, next to the representation in relief of the two figures. The sequence is as follows:

God + governor of Kazallu

[God + ruler of Adab or Zabalam]

[God] + governor of Umma

God + king of Ur

If so, then each of the four pairs would represent one of the four major campaigns to which the monument is dedicated. Since in the figurative sequence the god should appear in front of the respective ruler, and since on the other hand the sequence as given on the tablet begins with a god, it is possible that the row of figures was split in two, so that two pairs faced right, and two pairs faced left, each one progressing therefore towards the center, *i.e.* toward a point which was dominated above by the towering figure of Rimuš. The figurative sequence may therefore be as follows:

Adab/Zabalam	Kazallu	Ur	Umma
⇒	⇒	⇐	⇐

IV - VI. *The three battles of Sumer* — Two pairs of cities are mentioned in each of the three inscriptions, using a formulaic and repetitive language. The pairs are: Ur and Lagaš, Adab and Zabalam, Umma and Der. There is a geographic rationale about this order, to which we

shall revert later. In N. IV the standard editions reconstruct in a break (C2 7) the name of Umma as the second city next to Ur, but there is no reason for this. The logic of the monumental sequence suggests that the name of Lagaš has to be reconstructed here.

VII. *The battle of Kazallu* — The battle of Kazallu stands apart in that the city is mentioned by itself rather than as part of a pair. What is also significant is that the governor of the city bears an Akkadian name, and that the city is located at some remove north of the other Sumerian cities, and much closer to the presumed location of the capital city of Rimuš. All of this is explained in the summary inscription (N.I), where it is said that Kazallu was in revolt as Rimuš was winding his way back from Ur and Lagaš by way of the other Sumerian cities: it was, in other words, a rebellious Akkadian city, of which the king took care after dealing with the Sumerian enemy.

VIII. *The fallen ones* — The most prestigious enemies that had fallen in battle are shown in a supine position immediately below the king's feet, and their respective names are given as captions written on the silhouette of their prostrate bodies. They are also given in pairs: the second, third, and fourth pair are accompanied by the name of a city, but not the first one, as follows:

-	governor's brother	his minister
Zabalam	governor	his minister
Der	governor	his high minister
Lagaš	governor	his general.

Zabalam, Der and Lagaš each corresponds to one of the three major campaigns of Sumer. For the first pair, for which no city is mentioned, two alternatives may be suggested. The missing city may be Kazallu, which is the fourth major campaign to which the monument is dedicated. It seems strange, however, that the name of the city should be omitted, and that the leading figure should be identified as the brother of the governor, implying that the pertinent governor is already known. It seems more likely, therefore, that the person mentioned is the brother of the governor of Lagaš. It is true that Lagaš is mentioned last in this sequence, but since it is very likely that the row of fallen figures is placed in a circle on the outside face of a round base, the first and the last would in fact match. In other words, the "brother of the governor" would in fact appear immediately to the right of the governor of Lagaš, and thus the relationship would be clearly established.

IX. *The conqueror* — The final text is the caption placed on the shoulder of the statue which identifies the conqueror of all battles, towering above his enemies and standing as guarantor of the truth of the statements contained in the inscriptions written throughout the monument.

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18. Read *ad matiš*, consisting of the preposition *ad* "until" and the temporal *mati* which has the value "when," but also the value "always" in the form *matima*. I understand the terminative-adverbial ending *-iš*, as giving a special lexicalized value to the expression, "until whenever," *i.e.* "consecutively, in sequence." I owe the reading *matiš*, though not the interpretation, to some personal notes of I.J. Gelb.

19. *kibrātum arba'um išteniš, e.g.* in Šar-kali-šarri C1 10-12.

There is one problem for which I have no adequate solution, namely the discrepancy in detail among the various body counts given in the different inscriptions. This problem, however, is not a function of the interpretation I am offering here, so it does not militate against it: there are discrepancies even within the same summary inscription given as N. I. It may be that further

collations will clarify this issue, or that there were mistakes made by the Old Babylonian copyist, or that there was some confusion in the original figures. I cannot discuss this issue in any detail, but it is interesting to point out at least the following correlations:

The curious correlations among divergent ways of arriving at similar total figures when starting from different

I	IV+V+VI	I	I	I	VII
total for Sumer as computed (41,784) plus Kazallu (17,914)	grand total for three individual Sumerian campaigns	grand total as given by scribe in summary	total for Sumer as computed (41,784) plus Kazallu dead (12,052)	Kazallu	Kazallu
59,698	59,894	54,106	53,836	17,914	17,916

3. THE EVENTS

body counts might suggest that there was some confusion in the original tallies resulting from the campaigns. But such a confusion might militate in favor of considering the information as relatively accurate within an order of magnitude, precisely on account of its slight discrepancies: if these were purely imaginary figures, they would presumably have been even figures which would have easily been kept the same across the board. At any rate, the description which emerges for the overall conduct of the war appears to be quite historical in nature, partly because of how unexpected some of the details are.

The best way to visualize this is to look at a map (Fig. 3). Leaving from a point in the north, wherever the capital of Akkad may have been located, Rimuš bypassed all of the Sumerian cities and went straight for Ur, the southernmost city, which was probably the leading and unifying power behind the enemy forces. He also bypassed Kazallu, which is described in the text as "being in revolt,"[20] not as "having started a revolt" (following the departure of the king for the South). The implication may be on the one hand that Rimuš exposed his flank by overreaching all intermediary stages and aiming directly for the farthest target, but on the other hand that

he took possibly by surprise the city of Ur, which would presumably not have expected such a swift action. (In some way, this appears to be a mirror image of the strategy followed by the allied forces during the Gulf war.)

Assuming that the proposed sequence of the inscriptions corresponds to the sequence of the events, it would appear that Rimuš would have continued the war going north from Ur and choosing his engagements in a sort of irregular spiral. It would appear as though the Sumerian cities joined forces in pairs which corresponded to discrete regions: Ur and Lagaš in the south, Adab and Zabalam slightly to the northeast, Der and Umma in the south-central region, and finally the single city of Kazallu in the north, dangerously close to his own capital. Kazallu is an "Akkadian" city in the specific sense that it does not belong to "Sumer": its governor, with an Akkadian name, is a governor close to the Akkadian dynasty, appointed directly by it.

It is interesting to observe the geographical awareness that the inscriptions of the Old Akkadian kings reveal. Sumer is viewed in the Rimuš monument as a distinct region, from which Kazallu is clearly perceived to be altogether separate. The other monuments of the Akkadian kings, partly preserved in the Old Babylonian copies, afford a glimpse into the wider horizons which their expanding geographical perception was incorporating. While I cannot delve here into the details of these other

20. The Akkadian uses the permansive here, *nakir* (C1 47), not the preterite, *ikkir*.
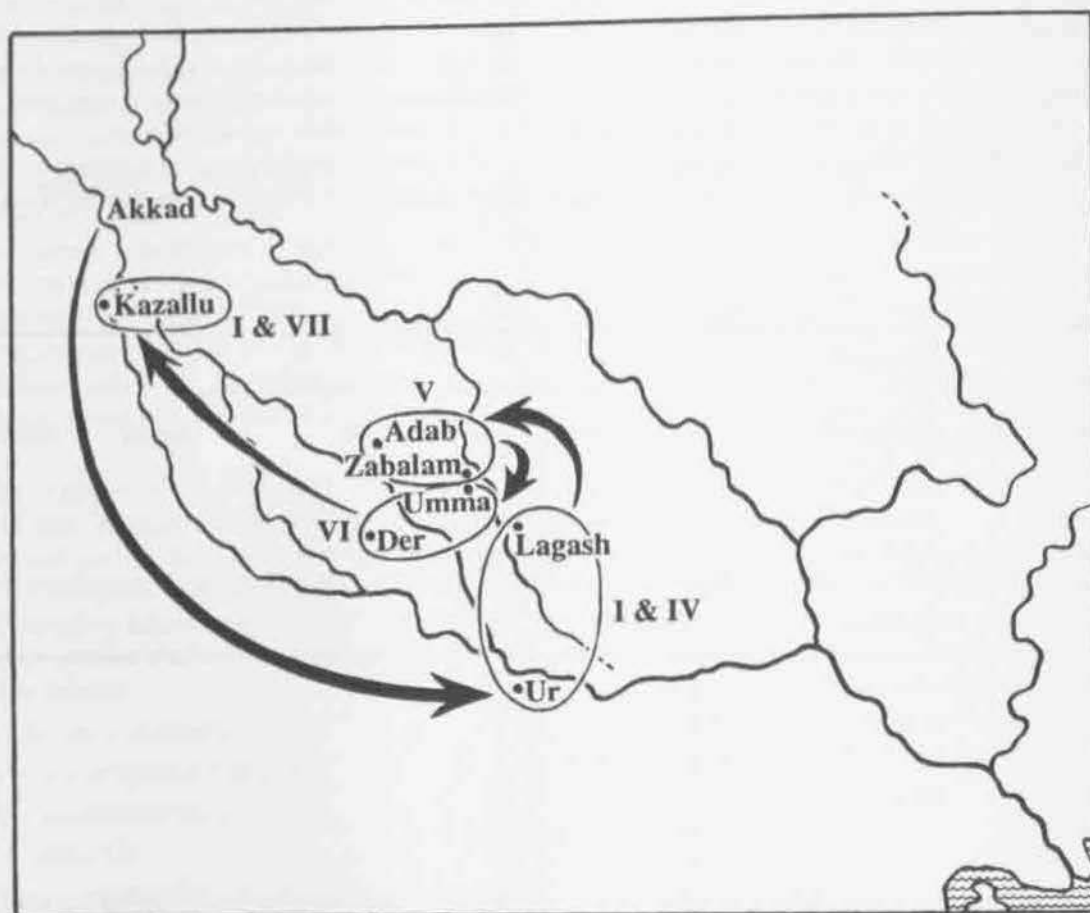
Figure 3. Proposed sequence of events for Rimuš' battle of Sumer (2315 B.C.)

monuments, I will conclude by referring briefly to some aspects of this development.

The map on Fig. 4 combines two specific dimensions of this perceptual atlas of early Mesopotamia. The very concept of Mesopotamia takes shape at this point in time. It is not the perception incorporated in the Aramaic/Greek term of "Mesopotamia" or the Arabic term of *jezira*, which reflect an almost cartographic view of the rivers as encasing an "island" in their "middle." It is a more concrete perception from within, as it were, according to which the "four river banks" shown with shading in the map on Fig. 4 are what we call Mesopotamia.[21] Thus when Šar-kali-šarri, for instance, says that the "four river banks revolted against him,"[22] he indi-

cates all of Mesopotamia (not the "four quarters of the world," which would have been an excessive hyperbole even for this type of political literature) as a comprehensive territorial unit, of which the Sumer of Rimuš is only a part.

The perceptual dimension of the rivers is also apparent in other terms which begin to appear at this time. The collection of inscriptions of Naram-Sin recently published by Foster[23] presents us with military campaigns to the north and the west. In the reconstruction of the itinerary as shown on Fig. 4, Naram-Sin goes along the Tigris to the regions "upstream,"[24] *i.e.* the Khabur plains which are at the headwaters of the various rivers and streams comprising the Khabur triangle. From there he goes to Subartu, which is the upper part of the Tigris basin, where the river is still channeled through a

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21. For more details on this, as well as on the whole concept of perceptual geography, see G. Buccellati, "'River Bank', 'High Country' and 'Pasture Land': The Growth of Nomadism on the Middle Euphrates and the Khabur," in S. Eichler, M. Wäfler, D. Warburton (eds.), *Tell alHamidiyah 2*, Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, pp. 87-117.

22. See above, footnote 19.

23. B. Foster, "Naram-Sin in Martu and Magan," *Annual Review of the Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia Project* 8 (1990), pp. 25-44.

24. Referred to by the Akkadian term *'aliātum* (Foster, *op. cit.*, p. 25, i 3); on this too see Buccellati, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-98.
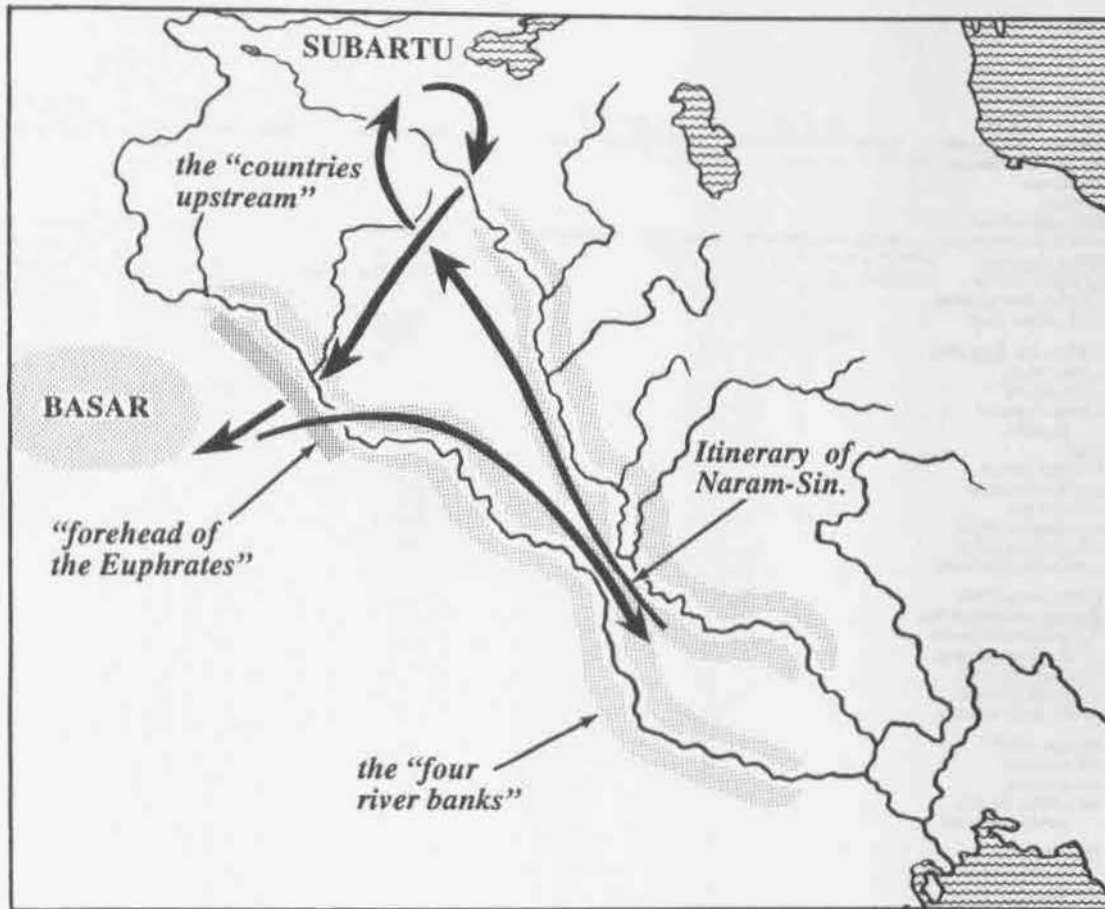
Figure 4. Geographical perception of early Mesopotamia.

mountain valley. Coming southwest across the Sinjar, he faces the "forehead of the Euphrates,"[25] *i.e.* the steep escarpment which delimits the edge of the valley trough cut by the Euphrates along its middle course. From there, he went across the western steppe, away now from the river banks, towards the range of the Bishri in the direction of Palmyra.

To the many innovations of the Akkadian period, so dynamic within the overall cultural development of ancient Mesopotamia, we can also add now the introduc-

tion of new perceptions of the geo-political environment, and, more importantly, the establishment of major permanent monuments to commemorate their accomplishments, on a scale perhaps unknown in previous times. If the ravages of time came to have at some point the upper hand on their physical permanence, their intellectual survival was guaranteed by those early Mesopotamian Assyriologists who, like us, treasured the past as a safeguard for the future.[26]

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25. Akkadian *ana pūti Purattim* (Foster, *op. cit.*, p. 27, ii 13). My interpretation "escarpment (of the *zôr*)" fits well both the perceptual impression that the escarpment makes on anybody coming from the steppe, and with the general geographical situation of the itinerary. This is also true for the occurrence of the same term in another inscription of Naram-Sin (FAOS 7, Naram-Sin CS 421). Foster's suggestion (p. 36) that the expression may refer to Sippar seems less plausible to me on both grounds.

GIORGIO BUCCELLATI

APPENDIX 1
Synopsis of Rimush C1-5 (left portion)

	I (C1)	II (C1)	III (C1)	IV (C2)	V (C3)	VI (C4)
Invocation	Rimuš, šar kiššatim surramma šarrūtam Enlil iddinušum!					
Occasion	Tāḫaz Šumerim ad mādis 3 iš'ar 11322 eṭlūtim ušamqit, 2520 eṭlūtim ikmī. U Kaku šar Urim ikmī u iššiakki-šu. U ʿarabšunū adīma ti'amtim šapiltim ilqut. U 14100 eṭlūtim in ālānī Šumerim ušūšiam-ma ana karāšim iškun. U ālānišunū en'ar u dūrānišunū u'abbit. Ullūm ina ta'ārišu Kazallu nakirma en'ar; ina qarbi māt Kazallu 12052 eṭlūtim ušamqit, 5862 asirūtim ikmī. U Ašarēd, iššiak K., ikmī u duršu u'abbit. Napḫar 54016, adi miqittim, adi asirūtim adi eṭlūtim šūt ana karāšim iškunni. Ḫarrānum šū surra[mma]! Šamaš u Aba ūmā: lā surrātim, lū kiniš-ma!			Rimuš šar kiššatim in tāḫazim Urim u [Lagaš]inu iš'ar u 8040 eṭlūtim ušamqit. 5460 asirūtim ikmī. U Kaku, šar Urim ikmī. U Kituš'id iššiak Lagaš ikmī u ālānišuni en'ar u dūrānišuni u'abbit u in ālānišuni ušūšiamma ana karāšim iškun.	Rimuš šar kiššatim Kazallu en'ar in tāḫaz Kazallu 12052 eṭlūtim ušamqit, 5864 asirūtim ikmī, u Ašarēd, iššiak K., ikmī. U dūrānišu u'abbit.	Rimuš šar kiššatim in tāḫazim Adab u Zabalam iš'ar u 15718 eṭlūtim ušamqit 14576 asirūtim ikmī. U Meskigalla, iššiak Adab, ikmī. U Lugalgalzu, iššiak Zabalam, ikmī. Alānišuni en'ar [u dūrānišuni u'abbit. U ina ālānišuni] ušūšiam-ma anakarāšim iškun.
The memorial monument	Inu tāḫazim šua ṣalamšu ibnī-ma ana Enlil sālimišu iqīš.					
Curses	Ša ṭuppam šua ušazzakuni Enlil u Šamaš išidšu lissuḫā u zeršu liqutā.	Mannama šum Rimuš, šar kiššatim, ušazzakuni, ʿal ṣalam Rimuš šumšū išakkanu-ma "Ṣalmī-me" iqabbiu, Enlil beʿal ṣalmi šua u Šamaš išidšu lissuḫā u zeršu lilqutā māra ayyiddināšum maḫriš ilišu ayyittalak!		Ša ṭuppam šua ušazzakuni Enlil u Šamaš išidšu lissuḫā u zeršu lilqutā.	Ša ṭuppam šua ušazzakuni, Enlil u Šamaš išidšu lissuḫā u zeršu lilqutā.	Ša ṭuppam šua ušazzakuni Enlil u Šamaš [išidšu lissuḫā] u zeršu lilqutā.
Captions			[DN] ālik maḫrišu. Ašarēd iššiak Kazallu. [ca. 3 missing] Be[..] iššiak Umma U.MEŠ ālik maḫrišu Kaku šar Urim.			
Colophon	KI.GAL AN.TA IGI.NI.ŠE₃ A.AB.SAR	[x x x] E	KI.GAL KI.TA BUR Lu-Damu	MU.SAR GUB₃.NI.ŠE₃ A.AB.SAR	MUŠ₃ KI.GAL KI.TA A₂.ZI.DA.NA	MUŠ₃ KI.GAL KI.TA EGIR.RA.NI.ŠE₃

APPENDIX 1
Synopsis of Rimush C1-5 (right portion)

	VI (C5)	VIII (C5)	IX (C5)
Invocation			
Occasion	*Rīmuš šar kiššatim* *ina tāḫazim* <u>*Umma u Der*</u> *it'ar* *u 8960 eṭlūtim ušamqit.* *3540 asīrūtim [ikmī]* *[...]* *Ú aḫ iššiak Umma* *ikmī* *u Lugal-KA iššiak Der* *ikmī* *u ālānīšuni en'ar* *u dūrānīšuni u'abbit* *u ina ālānīšuni 3600* *eṭlūtim* *ušūṣiam-ma* *ana karāšim iškun.*		*Rīmuš šar kiššatim* *ṭū Enlil* *maḫira* *lā iddiššum.*
The memorial monument			
Curses	*Ta ṭuppam ṭua* *ušazzakuni* *Enlil u Šamaš* *išidšu lissuḫā* *u zeršu liqutā.*		
Captions		*Zinuba aḫ iššiakkim.* *Ašarmubi, sukkallašu.* *Lugalgalzu, iššiak* *Zabalam* *Ursu'en sukkallašu.* *Lugal-KA iššiak Der.* *GIŠ-ŠA sukkalmaḫḫāšu* *Kit'ušid iššiak Lagaš.* *Adda šakkannakkum.*	
Colophon	MUŠ₃ KI.GAL KI.TA GUB₃.BU.NI.ŠE₃	KI.GAL KI.GUB[1] ŠUB.BA.MEŠ	MU.SAR.RA ZAG.GA.NA.

APPENDIX 2
Translation of Rimush C1-5

Section I Invocation	Rimush, king of Kish — by god, if it isn't Enlil who bestowed kingship on him!
Conquest of Ur and Kazallu, with body counts	He won three battles of Sumer in succession in which he struck down 11,322 men and bound 2,520 men in fetters. He bound in fetters Kaku, king of Ur, and his governors. He forcibly seized the tribute (as due) as far south as the lower sea, he removed 14,100 men from the cities of Sumer and slaughtered/interned(?) them, then he occupied their cities and tore down their walls.
	Afterwards, on his way back, he occupied Kazallu which was up in arms against him, within its territory he struck down 12,052 men and bound 5,862 prisoners in fetters; Ashared, governor of Kazallu, he bound in fetters and he tore down the city's walls.
	The total is of 54,016 men, including those fallen in battle, those bound in fetters, and those slaughtered/interned(?).
	By g[od], if this wasn't the campaign! (?) By Shamash and Aba I swear that these are no lies, but that it is all true.
The memorial monument	At the time of this campaign, he set up his statue and dedicated it to Enlil, his helper.
Curses	Whoever should abrade this inscription, let Enlil and Shamash tear out his genitals and drain out his semen.
Reference to monument	WRITTEN ON THE UPPER PEDESTAL, TO THE FRONT
Section II Curses	Whosoever should deface the statue of Rimush and put his name on it and say "It is my statue," let Enlil, the lord of this statue, and Shamash tear out his genitals and drain out his semen, let them not give him any heir let him be unable to stand in front of his god.
Reference to monument	ON THE [FOOTSTOOL]
Section III Captions	[...] the god who goes in front of him Ashared, governor of Kazallu. [DN, the god who goes in front of him.] [PN, governor of Adab(?). DN, the god who goes in front of him.] [...], governor of Umma. U.MES, the god who goes in front of him; Kakug, the king of Ur.
Reference to monument	WRITTEN ON THE LOWER PEDESTAL; LU-DAMU WAS THE ENGRAVER

Section IV	(Conquest of Ur and Lagash; text similar to that of Section I)
Reference to monument	INSCRIPTION WRITTEN TO ITS LEFT-HAND SIDE

Section VII	(Conquest of Kazallu; text similar to that of Section I)
Reference to monument	PLAQUE ON THE LOWER PEDESTAL, TO ITS RIGHT-HAND SIDE

Section V	(Conquest of Adab and Zabalam; text similar to that of Section I)
Reference to monument	PLAQUE ON THE LOWER PEDESTAL, TO ITS BACK SIDE

Section VI	(Conquest of Umma and Der; text similar to that of Section I)
Reference to monument	PLAQUE ON THE LOWER PEDESTAL, TO ITS LEFT SIDE

Section VIII Captions on figures	Zinuba, brother of the governor; Ashar-mubi, his vizier Lugal-galzu, governor of Zabalam; Ur-Sin, his vizier Lugal-KA, governor of Der, GIŠ-ŠA, his grand vizier; Kitšu'id, governor of Lagash; Irbada, his general.
Reference to monument	THE PEDESTAL ON WHICH HE STANDS, THE FALLEN ONES

Section IX	Rimush, king of Kish, to whom Enlil gave no rival.
Reference to monument	INSCRIPTION ON HIS SIDE
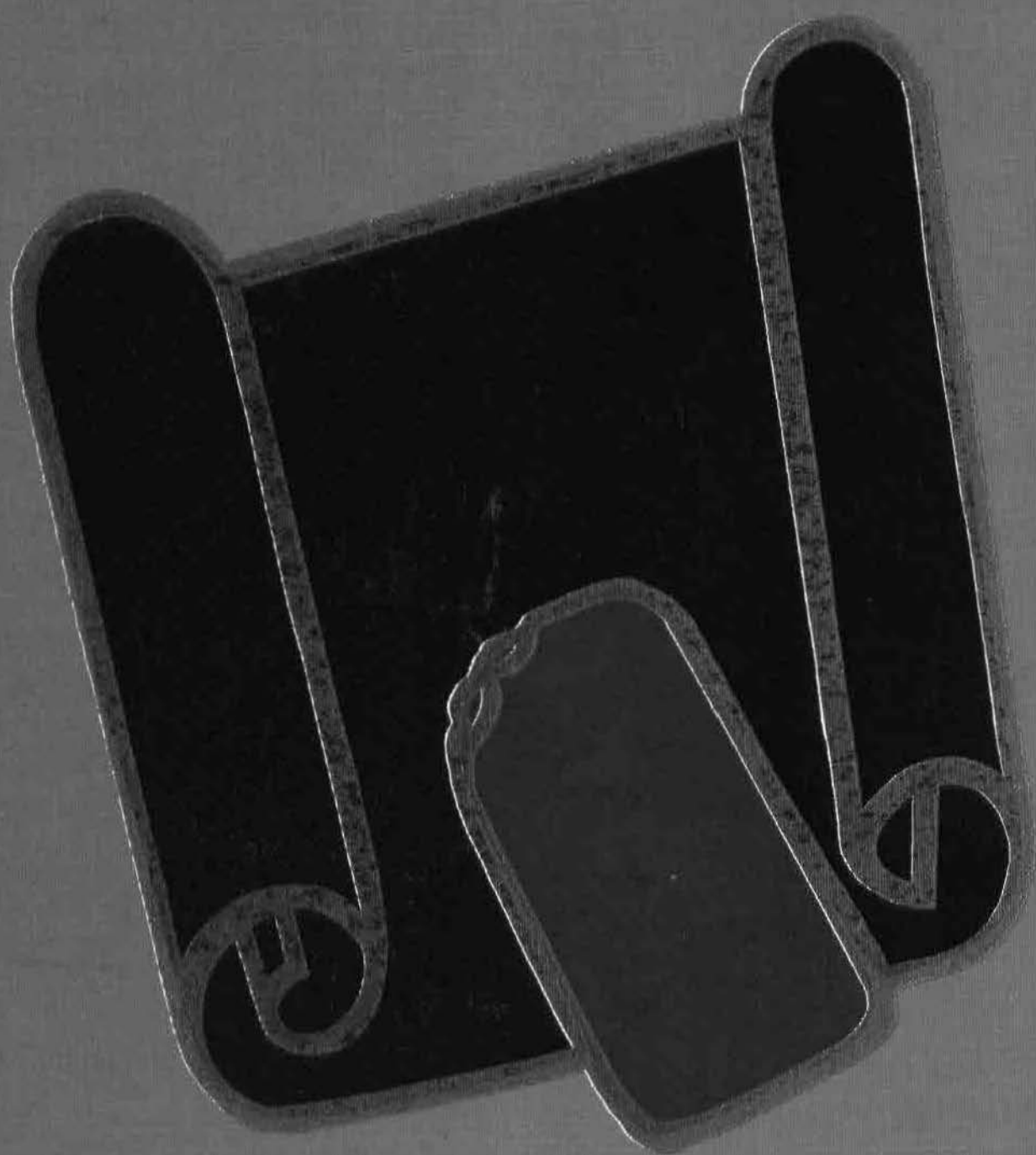
THE TABLET
AND
THE SCROLL

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