

70) Nabonidus at al-Hayit/Padakku — Recently, F. Joannès mentioned the existence of a relief of King Nabonidus in Saudi Arabia in NABU 2014/2, 51) *Un relief inscrit de Nabonide à Padakka/Hayit*.

On this occasion, we would like to make the following remarks:

In 2012 an official expedition by the Saudi Commission for Antiquities and Tourism (SCTA) and the German Archaeological Institute, by kind invitation of SCTA, investigated the site of al-Hayit, Province of Ha'il, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, where the above mentioned relief of King Nabonidus had been discovered.<sup>1)</sup>

There is no expedition of the University of Heidelberg operating at Tayma. The parties of the archaeological expedition at the site of Tayma are SCTA, Riyadh, and the Orient Department of the German Archaeological Institute, Berlin. In this context H. Schaudig is responsible for the edition of the cuneiform texts.

The stele of King Nabonidus found in 2004 at Tayma has been published by R. Eichmann, H. Schaudig and A. Hausleiter, "Archaeology and Epigraphy at Tayma (Saudi Arabia)", *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 17 (2006) 163–76; see also H. Schaudig, "The cuneiform inscription of the stele TA 488", in: Eichmann, R., Hausleiter, A., al-Najem, M.H. and al-Said, S.F., "Tayma – Autumn 2004 and Spring 2005. 2<sup>nd</sup> Report on the Saudi Arabian-German Joint Archaeological Project", *ATLAL* 20 (2010) 137–8; A. Hausleiter and H. Schaudig, "Stèle cintrée du roi Nabonide", in: al-Ghabban, A., André-Salvini, B., Demange, F., Juvin, C. and Cotty, M., *Routes d'Arabie. Archéologie et Histoire du Royaume Arabie Saoudite*, Paris, 252–3.

The study of the relief and inscription revealed the following additional information:

Above the three astral symbols a fourth u-shaped symbol has been carved. Its meaning is currently unclear and it does not fit with any known Mesopotamian symbol used by Nabonidus. Although it generally resembles the omega-shaped symbol,<sup>2)</sup> there is also the possibility that it might be of local origin.

In addition to the name and royal title mentioned by F. Joannès, in the text, Nabonidus expresses his religious conviction that the moon-god Sîn is to be worshipped as the king of the gods:

<sup>d</sup>3o lugal diĝir<sup>meš</sup> en diĝir<sup>meš</sup> = *Sîn šar ilānī bēl ilānī* / "Sîn king of the gods, lord of the gods".

This attitude had brought Nabonidus into bitter conflict with the Babylonian priesthood who claimed the position of the head of the pantheon for their god Marduk.

In the heavily damaged lines at the beginning of the inscription there is apparently a reference to the city of Fadak where the inscription was set up:

eri pa-[dak-ku] = *āl Pa[dakku]* "the city of Fa[dak]".

This is the first sure evidence of the proposal for the identification of al-Hayit with ancient Padakku.

A small photograph of the new Nabonidus relief has been reproduced without further comment by the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities, *Discovering Saudi Arabia. Land of Dialogue and Culture*, Rome 2013, 70 (top centre).

A full publication of the relief and inscription of al-Hayit is by the present authors in preparation.

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**2** Ursula Seidl, personal communication (2013); cf. U. Seidl, *Die babylonischen Kudurru-Reliefs. Symbole mesopotamischer Gottheiten*, OBO 87, 1989 (reprint of the 1969 edition with additions), 199–200; 232.

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