The arrowhead published here (figs. 1 and 2), which belongs to a private collection in California, bears the cuneiform inscription of a Babylonian prince. Its physical characteristics are similar to those of a number of other royal Babylonian arrowheads dating to the end of the second and beginning of the first millennium BCE. It has a flat lanceolate blade joined to a substantial tang, approximately square in section, which tapers at its midpoint to a thinner prong for hafting. The object as a whole is 7.3 cm long and measures 2.1 cm at the widest point of the blade. The blade is 0.2 cm thick at its center, and the tang is 0.6 cm thick before the taper. The arrowhead was crafted from high quality bronze, the alloy consisting of 85.15% copper and 12.85% tin.

The inscription reads:

\[ \text{šàt}^{4} \text{MAŠ-NÍG-DU-PAB} \]
\[ A \text{ LUGAL} \]

that is,

\[ \text{šà ninurta-kudurrí-usur} \]
\[ \text{már šarri} \]

(Belonging to)\(^5\) Ninurta-kudurrí-usur, the son of the king.

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1 I am grateful to have the opportunity to join the colleagues and friends of Professor Bruce Zuckerman in celebrating his extraordinary scholarship and achievements.

2 The arrowhead was acquired by Gale Blosser of Millbrae, California, at an antiquities show in San Francisco c. 1974. I wish to express my gratitude to Mr. Blosser for his permission to study and publish this important object.

3 There is also a small amount of iron (1.65%) and lead (0.35%), a trace of arsenic, and low or non-existent antimony. The composition of the arrowhead was determined using x-ray microfluorescence analysis performed by Dr. David Scott at the Getty Conservation Institute in Los Angeles on March 19, 2001. Dr. Scott described the metal as a fairly typical bronze alloy, but of good quality with no skimping on tin, as might be expected in a royal smithy in Babylon. The incisions of the cuneiform signs contain a soft, light-colored mineral fill. Though this material was not isolated for special analysis, in Dr. Scott’s opinion it probably consists of iron, tin and calcium deposited naturally as a result of soil contact.

4 Though the reading of the rest of the inscription is very clear, the initial sign of the obverse is difficult to identify in the cramped engraving on the ridge at the base of the tang. We expect šà on the basis of comparable inscriptions, such as those on the arrowheads of Eulmaš-šakin-sumi and Ninurta-kudduri-usur I and the situla of Ninurta-kudurri-usur II, all of which are referenced below. Moreover, since níg and šà are the same sign, the logographic spelling NÍG.DU (kudurru) later in the line should give us the form we are seeking. Even with this abundance of information, however, the initial sign remains problematic. (I wish to thank my colleague Jerrold S. Cooper for helping me understand this problem and other aspects of the text of the arrowhead.)

5 For a somewhat different interpretation of šà, see R. Girshman, “À propos des bronzes du Luristan de la collection Foroughi,” Irana Antiqua 2 (1962): 165–179. Comparing the use of U in royal Elamite dedicatory inscriptions, Girshman argues (p. 166) for a votive interpretation of šà PN in comparable Babylonian inscriptions, thus “That which PN (vowed)” or “That which PN (caused to be made in order to be vowed).”
There were two kings of Babylon by the name of Ninurta-kudurri-uṣur, both of whom reigned in the poorly documented post-Kassite period. The first of these, who ruled 987–985 BCE, was the second of three members of a family from the town of Bit-Bazi, east of the Tigris, who held sway in Babylon at the turn of the millennium. The founder of the Bazi Dynasty, Eulmaš-šakin-šumi (1004–987 BCE), was Ninurta-kudurri-uṣur’s predecessor, but he is not known to have been his father, a situation that creates uncertainty about whether an inscription with the title “son of the king” can be attributed to Ninurta-kudurri-uṣur I. Two other arrowheads thought to have belonged to Ninurta-kudduri-usur I are in the Foroughi Collection (Teheran); both bear the inscription “Ninurta-kudurri-uṣur, king of the world (šar kīšati),” and are tentatively assigned to Ninurta-kudurri-uṣur I because Ninurta-kudurri-uṣur II was king for less than a year.

According to King List A the precise length of Ninurta-kudurri-uṣur II’s reign seems to have been eight months and twelve days. This was in 943 BCE, when he succeeded the dynastic founder, Nabû-mukīn-apli (979–943 BCE). A kudurru set up during Nabû-mukīn-apli’s reign is witnessed by his three sons:

Ninurta-kudurri-uṣur, son of the king (DUMU LUGAL)
Rimūt-li, son of the king, šatammu-official of the temples
Mār-bīti-āḫḫē-iddīna, son of the king

Of these brothers, the first and third succeeded their father as king. Thus we know that Ninurta-kudurri-uṣur II was called “son of the king” before he began to rule and that he succeeded his father as king, very likely after having been crown prince for a long time (his father had ruled thirty-six years). For these reasons a fragmentary situla in a private collection bearing the inscription “Ninurta-kudurri-uṣur, son of the king,” is usually attributed to Ninurta-kudurri-uṣur II. The same reasons favor a tentative attribution to the same king of the arrowhead “(Belonging to) Ninurta-kudurri-uṣur, the son of the king,” which is published here.

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6 The meaning of Ninurta-kudurri-uṣur is evidently “Ninurta, protect my son!” In their surviving inscriptions the name of the two kings is spelled 𒀀𒀀𒈗lugal, as on our arrowhead, or 𒀀𒈗𒈗𒈗. See J.A. Brinkman, A Political History of Post-Kassite Babylonia, 1158–722 BC. (Analecta Orientalia 43; Rome: PBI, 1968): 162 n. 986.
7 For the possibility of a family relationship between the two kings named Ninurta-kudurri-uṣur, see Brinkman (N 6): 175 and n. 1077.
8 At least three arrowheads bearing the inscription ša 𒀀𒀀𒈗-𒈗𒈗𒈗-𒈗-𒈗, king of the world, are known; cf. G. Dossin, “Bronzes inscrits du Luristan de la collection Foroughi,” Iranica Antiqua 2 (1962): 149–164; see p. 160, no. 17 and pl. XXVI.
9 The full name of Ninurta-kudurri-uṣur I is provided by the Synchronistic Chronicle (Assur 14616c iii) and the length of his reign is given in King List A (King List A iii 16), which indicates that his successor, Śirikti-Šuqamuna, was king for only three months in 985 BCE.
10 A photograph of one of these was published by Dossin (N 8): 160, no. 18 and pl. XXVII. For bibliography, see G. Frame, Rulers of Babylonia from the Second Dynasty of Isin to the End of Assyrian Domination (1157–612 BC) (The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Babylonian Periods 2; Toronto: Univ. of Toronto, 1995): 81–82.
11 On this reading (“eight months 12 [days]”) see Brinkman (N 6): 48 and n. 229.
16 Special thanks to my colleague Jacob Lauinger, who read and corrected a late draft of this paper. All remaining mistakes are entirely my own.