The Cyrus Cylinder

In the inscription cited below, Cyrus the Great recounts his peaceful conquest of the city of Babylon and his plan for restoring the exiles to their original lands. He also reveals his policy on restoring the religious artifacts and sanctuaries of conquered peoples.

Cyrus Cylinder: “When I entered Babylon as a friend and established my seat of government there in the palace of the king, Marduk caused the people to love me and I worshipped him daily. My troops kept order in the streets of Babylon and throughout the land of Sumer and Akkad. In Babylon I ended the practice of forced labor and helped rebuild their ruined houses.

All the kings in the entire world, from the Upper to the Lower Sea, those seated on thrones, or other types of dwellings as well as the tent dwellers from the land in the West, brought me tribute and kissed my feet in Babylon.

To all the regions, as far as Ashur and Susa, Agade ... I returned the images of their gods to their sanctuaries which had been in ruins for a long period of time. I now established for them permanent sanctuaries. I also gathered all the former inhabitants of these places and returned them to their homes.

Furthermore, upon the command of Marduk, I resettled all the gods of Sumer and Akkad, which Nabonidus had moved to Babylon, unharmed in their former places to make them happy ... and I endeavored to repair their dwelling places.”
(Translation from Benjamin and Matthews, OTPar)