

THE BLACK OBELISK  
INSCRIPTION OF SHALMANESER II.

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TRANSLATED BY

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THIS inscription is engraved on an obelisk of black marble, 5 feet in height, found by Mr. Layard in the centre of the Mound at Nimroud, and now in the British Museum. Each of its four sides is divided into five compartments of sculpture representing the tribute brought to the Assyrian king by vassal princes, Jehu of Israel being among the number. Shalmaneser, whose annals and conquests are recorded upon it, was the son of Assur-natsir-pal, and died in 823 B.C., after a reign of 35 years. A

translation of the inscription was one of the first achievements of Assyrian decipherment, and was made by Sir H. Rawlinson; and Dr. Hincks shortly afterwards (in 1851) succeeded in reading the name of Jehu in it. M. Oppert translated the inscription in his *Histoire des Empires de Chaldée et d'Assyrie* and M. Ménéant has given another rendering of it in his *Annales des Rois d'Assyrie* (1874). A copy of the text will be found in Layard's *Inscriptions in the Cuneiform Character* (1851).



## BLACK OBELISK OF SHALMANESER.

## FACE A.

- 1 ASSUR, the great Lord, the King of all  
 2 the great gods; ANU, King of the spirits of heaven  
 3 and the spirits of earth, the god, Lord of the world;  
 BEL,  
 4 the Supreme, Father of the gods, the Creator;  
 5 HEA, King of the deep, determiner of destinies,  
 6 the King of crowns, drinking in brilliance;  
 7 RIMMON, the *crowned* hero, Lord of canals;<sup>1</sup> the  
 SUN-GOD,  
 8 the Judge of heaven and earth, the urger on of all;  
 9 (MERODACH), Prince of the gods, Lord of battles;  
 ADAR, the terrible,  
 10 (Lord) of the spirits of heaven and the spirits of earth,  
 the exceeding strong god; NERGAL,  
 11 the powerful (god), King of the battle; NEBO, the  
 bearer of the high sceptre,  
 12 the god, the Father above; BELTIS, the wife of BEL,  
 mother of the (great) gods;  
 13 ISTAR, sovereign of heaven and earth, who the face of  
 heroism perfectest;  
 14 the great (gods), determining destinies, making great  
 my kingdom.  
 15 (I am) SHALMANESER, King of multitudes of men,  
 prince (and) hero of ASSUR, the strong King,  
 16 King of all the four zones of the Sun (and) of multi-  
 tudes of men, the marcher over  
 17 the whole world; Son of ASSUR-NATSIR-PAL, the  
 supreme hero, who his heroism over the gods

<sup>1</sup> Or, "fertility."

18 has made good and has caused all the world<sup>1</sup> to kiss  
his feet;

## FACE B.

19 the noble offspring of TIGLATH-ADAR  
20 who has laid his yoke upon all lands hostile to him,  
and  
21 has swept (them) like a whirlwind.  
22 At the beginning of my reign, when on the throne  
23 of royalty mightily I had seated myself, the chariots  
24 of my host I collected. Into the lowlands<sup>2</sup> of the  
country of 'Sime'si  
25 I descended. The city of Aridu, the strong city  
26 of NINNI, I took. In my first year  
27 the Euphrates in its flood I crossed. To the sea of  
the setting sun<sup>3</sup>  
28 I went. My weapons on the sea I rested. Victims  
29 for my gods I took.<sup>4</sup> To mount Amanus<sup>5</sup> I went up.  
30 Logs of cedar-wood and pine-wood I cut. To  
31 the country of Lallar I ascended. An image of my  
Royalty in the midst (of it) I erected.  
32 In my second year to the city of Tel-Barsip I ap-  
proached. The cities  
33 of AKHUNI the son of ADIN I captured. In his city I  
shut him up. The Euphrates  
34 in its flood I crossed. The city of Dabigu, a choice  
city of the Hittites  
35 together with the cities which (were) dependent upon  
it I captured. In my third year AKHUNI  
36 the son of ADIN, from the face of my mighty weapons  
fled, and the city of Tel-Barsip,

## FACE. C.

37 his royal city, he fortified. The Euphrates I crossed.

<sup>1</sup> Or, "the countries the whole of them."

<sup>2</sup> Or, "the descendings."

<sup>3</sup> That is, the Mediterranean.

<sup>4</sup> Namely, in sacrifice.

<sup>5</sup> *Khamanu* in Assyrian.

- 38 The city unto Assyria I restored. I took it. (The  
town) which (is) on the further side  
39 of the Euphrates which (is) upon the river 'Sagurri,  
which the Kings  
40 of the Hittites call the city of Pitru,<sup>2</sup>  
41 for myself I took. At my return  
42 into the lowlands of the country of Alzi I descended.  
The country of Alzi I conquered.  
43 The countries of Dayaeni (and) Elam, (and) the city  
of Arzascunu, the royal city  
44 of ARAME of the country of the Armenians, the country  
of Gozan (and) the country of Khupuscia.  
45 During the eponymy of DAYAN-ASSUR from the city of  
Nineveh I departed. The Euphrates  
46 in its upper part I crossed. After AKHUNI the son of  
ADIN I went.  
47 The heights on the banks of the Euphrates as his  
stronghold he made.  
48 The mountains I attacked, I captured. AKHUNI with  
his gods, his chariots,  
49 his horses, his sons (and) his daughters I carried  
away. To my city Assur  
50 I brought (them). In that same year the country of  
Kullar I crossed. To the country of Zamua  
51 of Bit-Ani I went down. The cities of NIGDIARA of  
the city of the Idians  
52 (and) NIGDIMA I captured. In my fifth year to the  
country of Kasyari I ascended.  
53 The strongholds I captured. ELKHITTI of the Seru-  
rians (in) his city I shut up. His tribute  
54 to a large amount I received. In my sixth year to the  
cities on the banks of the river Balikhi

## FACE D.

- 55 I approached. GI'AMMU, their Governor, I smote.

<sup>2</sup> Pethor in the Old Testament.

- 56 To the city of Tel-abil-akhi I descended.  
 57 The Euphrates in its upper part I crossed.  
 58 The tribute of the Kings of the Hittites  
 59 all of them I received. In those days RIMMON-IDRI<sup>1</sup>  
 60 of Damascus, IRKHULINA of Hamath, and the Kings  
 61 of the Hittites and of the sea-coasts to the forces of  
 each other  
 62 trusted, and to make war and battle  
 63 against me came. By the command of ASSUR, the  
 great Lord, my Lord,  
 64 with them I fought. A destruction of them I made.  
 65 Their chariots, their war-carriages, their war-material<sup>2</sup> I  
 took from them.  
 66 20,500 of their fighting men with arrows I slew.  
 67 In my seventh year to the cities of KHABINI of the  
 city of Tel-Abni I went.  
 68 The city of Tel-Abni, his stronghold, together with the  
 cities which (were) dependent on it I captured.  
 69 To the head of the river, the springs of the Tigris, the  
 place where the waters rise,<sup>3</sup> I went.  
 70 The weapons of ASSUR in the midst (of it) I rested.  
 Sacrifices for my gods I took. Feasts and rejoicing  
 71 I made. An image of my Royalty of large size I  
 constructed. The laws of ASSUR my Lord, the records  
 72 of my victories, whatsoever in the world I had done,  
 in the midst of it I wrote. In the middle (of the  
 country) I set (it) up.

FACE A., *base*.

- 73 In my eighth year, MERODACH-SUMA-IDDIN King of  
 of Gan-Dunias<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This is the Ben-hadad of Scripture whose personal name seems to have been Rimmon-idri.

<sup>2</sup> Or, "furniture of battle."

<sup>3</sup> Or, "the place of the exit of the waters situated." The tablet is still to be seen near the town of Egil.

<sup>4</sup> That is, Chaldea.

- 74 did MERODACH-BILA-YU'SATE his *foster*-brother against him rebel ;
- 75 strongly had he fortified (the land). To exact punishment<sup>1</sup>
- 76 against MERODACH-SUMA-IDDIN I went. The city of the waters of the Dhurnat<sup>2</sup> I took.
- 77 In my ninth campaign a second time to the land of Accad I went.
- 78 The city of Gana-nate I besieged. MERODACH-BILA-YU'SATE exceeding fear
- 79 of ASSUR (and) MERODACH overwhelmed, and to save his life to
- 80 the mountains he ascended. After him I rode. MERO-DACH-BILA-YU'SATE (and) the officers
- 81 the rebels<sup>3</sup> who (were) with him (with) arrows I slew. To the great fortresses
- 82 I went. Sacrifices in Babylon, Borsippa, (and) Cuthah I made.
- 83 Thanksgivings to the great gods I offered up. To the country of Kaldu<sup>4</sup> I descended. Their cities I captured.
- 84 The tribute of the Kings of the country of Kaldu I received. The greatness of my arms as far as the sea overwhelmed.
- 85 In my tenth year for the eighth time the Euphrates I crossed. The cities of 'SANGARA of the city of the Car-chemishians I captured.
- 86 To the cities of Arame I approached. Arne his royal city with 100 of his (other) towns I captured.
- 87 In my eleventh year for the ninth time the Euphrates I crossed. Cities to a countless number I captured. To the cities of the Hittites
- 88 of the land of the Hamathites I went down. Eighty-

<sup>1</sup> Or, "to return benefits."

<sup>2</sup> The Tornadotus of classical geographers.

<sup>3</sup> Or, "the Lord of sin."

<sup>4</sup> This is the primitive Chaldea. The Caldai or Chaldeans afterwards overran Babylonia and gave their name to it among classical writers.

- nine cities I took. RIMMON-IDRI of Damascus (and) twelve of the Kings of the Hittites  
 89 with one another's forces strengthened themselves. A destruction of them I made. In my twelfth campaign for the tenth time the Euphrates I crossed.  
 90 To the land of Pagar-khubuna I went. Their spoil I carried away. In my thirteenth year to the country of Yaeti I ascended.  
 91 Their spoil I carried away. In my fourteenth year the country I assembled; the Euphrates I crossed. Twelve Kings against me had come.  
 92 I fought. A destruction of them I made. In my fifteenth year among the sources of the Tigris (and) the Euphrates I went. An image  
 93 of my Majesty in their hollows I erected. In my sixteenth year the waters of the Zab I crossed. To the country of Zimri  
 94 I went. MERODACH-MUDAMMIK King of the land of Zimru to save his life (the mountains) ascended. His treasure  
 95 his army (and) his gods to Assyria I brought. YAN'SU son of KHANBAN to the kingdom over them I raised.<sup>1</sup>

FACE B., *base*.

- 96 In my seventeenth year the Euphrates I crossed. To the land of Amanus I ascended. Logs  
 97 of *cedar* I cut. In my eighteenth year for the sixteenth time the Euphrates I crossed. HAZAEL  
 98 of Damascus to battle came. 1,221 of his chariots, 470 of his war-carriages with  
 99 his camp I took from him. In my nineteenth campaign for the eighteenth<sup>2</sup> time the Euphrates I crossed. To the land of Amanus  
 100 I ascended. Logs of cedar I cut. In my 20th year for the 20th time the Euphrates

<sup>1</sup> Or, "I made."<sup>2</sup> The king counts his passage of the river on his return from Syria the seventeenth time of his crossing the Euphrates.



- 101 I crossed. To the land of Kāhue I went down.  
Their cities I captured. Their spoil
- 102 I carried off. In my 21st campaign, for the 21st  
time the Euphrates I crossed. To the cities
- 103 of HAZAEL of Damascus I went. Four of his for-  
tresses I took. The tribute of the Tyrians,
- 104 the Zidonians (and) the Gebalites I received. In my  
22nd campaign for the 22nd time the Euphrates
- 105 I crossed. To the country of Tabalu<sup>1</sup> I went down.  
In those days (as regards) the 24
- 106 Kings of the country of Tabalu their wealth I  
received. To conquer
- 107 the mines of silver, of salt and of stone for sculpture  
I went. In my 23rd year
- 108 the Euphrates I crossed. The city of Uetas, his  
strong city,
- 109 (which belonged) to LALLA of the land of the Mili-  
dians I captured. The Kings of the country of Tabalu
- 110 had set out. Their tribute I received. In my 24th  
year, the lower Zab
- 111 I crossed. The land of Khalimmur I passed through.  
To the land of Zimru
- 112 I went down. YAN'SU King of the Zimri from the face
- 113 of my mighty weapons fled and to save his life
- 114 ascended (the mountains). The cities of 'Sikhisatakh,  
Bit-Tamul, Bit-Sacci
- 115 (and) Bit-Sedi, his strong cities, I captured. His  
fighting men I slew.
- 116 His spoil I carried away. The cities I threw down,  
dug up, (and) with fire burned.
- 117 The rest of them to the mountains ascended. The  
peaks of the mountains
- 118 I attacked, I captured. Their fighting men I slew.  
Their spoil (and) their goods

<sup>1</sup> The Tubal of the Old Testament and Tibareni of classical geographers.

- 119 I caused to be brought down. From the country of Zimru I departed. The tribute of 27 Kings  
 120 of the country of Par'sua<sup>1</sup> I received. From the country of Par'sua I departed. To  
 121 the strongholds of the country of the Amadai,<sup>2</sup> (and) the countries of Arazias (and) Kharkhar I went down.  
 122 The cities of Cua-cinda, Khazzanabi, Ermul,  
 123 (and) Cin-ablila with the cities which were dependent on them I captured. Their fighting men

FACE C., *base*.

- 124 I slew. Their spoil I carried away. The cities I threw down, dug up (and) burned with fire. An image of my Majesty  
 125 in the country of Kharkhāra I set up. YAN'SU son of KHABAN with his abundant treasures  
 126 his gods, his sons, his daughters, his soldiers in large numbers I carried off. To Assyria I brought (them). In my 25th campaign  
 127 the Euphrates at its flood I crossed. The tribute of the Kings of the Hittites, all of them, I received. The country of Amanus  
 128 I traversed. To the cities of Catī of the country of the Kahuians I descended. The city of Timur, his strong city,  
 129 I besieged, I captured. Their fighting men I slew. Its spoil I carried away. The cities to a countless number I threw down, dug up,  
 130 (and) burned with fire. On my return, the city of Mūru, the strong city of ARAME the son of AGU'SI,  
 131 (as) a possession for myself I took. Its entrance-space I marked out. A palace, the seat of my Majesty, in the middle (of it) I founded.  
 132 In my 26th year for the seventh time the country of

<sup>1</sup> The Parthia of classical authors.

<sup>2</sup> These seem to be the Madai or Medes of later inscriptions. This is the first notice that we have of them. It will be observed that they have not yet penetrated into Media but are still eastward of the Parthians.

- the Amanus I traversed. For the fourth time to the cities of Catī
- 133 of the country of the Kahuians I went. The city of Tanacun, the strong city of TULCA I approached. Exceeding fear
- 134 of ASSUR my Lord overwhelmed him and (when) he had come out my feet he took. His hostages I took. Silver, gold,
- 135 iron, oxen, (and) sheep, (as) his tribute I received. From the city of Tanacun I departed. To the country of Lamena
- 136 I went. The men collected themselves. An inaccessible mountain they occupied. The peak of the mountain I assailed,
- 137 I took. Their fighting men I slew. Their spoil, their oxen, their sheep, from the midst of the mountain I brought down.
- 138 Their cities I threw down, dug up (and) burned with fire. To the city of Khazzi I went. My feet they took. Silver (and) gold,
- 139 their tribute, I received. CIRRI, the brother of CATI to the sovereignty over them
- 140 I set. On my return, to the country of Amanus I ascended. Beams of cedar I cut,
- 141 I removed, to my city Assur<sup>1</sup> I brought. In my 27th year the chariots of my armies I mustered. DAYAN-ASSUR
- 142 the Tartan,<sup>2</sup> the Commander of the wide-spreading army, at the head of my army to the country of Armenia I urged,
- 143 I sent. To Bit-Zamāni he descended. Into the low ground of the city of Ammas he went down. The river Arzane he crossed.
- 144 'SEDURI of the country of the Armenians heard, and to the strength of his numerous host

<sup>1</sup> The Ellasar of Genesis, now Kalah Shergat.

<sup>2</sup> *Turtanu* ("chief prince") in Assyrian.

- 145 he trusted; and to make conflict (and) battle against me he came. With him I fought.
- 146 A destruction of him I made. With the flower of his youth<sup>1</sup> his broad fields I filled. In my 28th year
- 147 when in the city of Calah I was stopping news had been brought (me, that) men of the Patinians
- 148 LUBARNI their Lord had slain (and) 'SURRI (who was) not heir to the throne to the kingdom had raised.
- 149 DAYAN-ASSUR the Tartan, the Commander of the widespreading army at the head of my host (and) my camp<sup>2</sup>
- 150 I urged, I sent. The Euphrates in its flood he crossed. In the city of Cinalua his royal city
- 151 a slaughter he made. (As for) 'SURRI the usurper, exceeding fear of ASSUR my Lord
- 152 overwhelmed him, and the death of his destiny he went.<sup>3</sup> The men of the country of the Patinians from before the sight of my mighty weapons

FACE D., *base.*

- 153 fled, and the children of 'SURRI together with the soldiers, the rebels, (whom) they had taken they delivered to me.
- 154 Those soldiers on stakes I fixed. 'SA'SITUR of the country of Uzzā my feet took. To the kingdom
- 155 over them I placed (him). Silver, gold, lead, bronze, iron, (and) the horns of wild bulls to a countless number I received.
- 156 An image of my Majesty of great size I made. In the city of Cinalua his royal city in the temple of his gods I set it up. In
- 157 my 29th year (my) army (and) camp I urged, I sent.

<sup>1</sup> Or, "the chiefs of his young warriors."

<sup>2</sup> The word properly means "baggage," and sometimes signifies "standard," which may be the translation here.

<sup>3</sup> That is, he died as was fated.

- To the country of Cirkhi<sup>1</sup> I ascended. Their cities I threw down,
- 158 dug up, (and) burned with fire. Their country like a thunderstorm I swept. Exceeding
- 159 fear over them I cast. In my 30th year when in the city of Calah I was stopping, DAYAN-ASSUR
- 160 the Tartan, the Commander of the wide spreading army at the head of my army I urged, I sent. The river Zab
- 161 he crossed. To the midst of the cities of the city of Khupuscā he approached. The tribute of DATANA
- 162 of the city of the Khupuscians I received. From the midst of the cities of the Khupuscians
- 163 I departed.<sup>2</sup> To the midst of the cities of Maggubbi of the country of the Madakhirians he approached. The tribute
- 164 I received. From the midst of the cities of the country of the Madakhirians he departed. To the midst of the cities of UDACI
- 165 of the country of the Mannians he approached. UDACI of the country of the Mannians from before the sight of my mighty weapons
- 166 fled, and the city of Zirta, his royal city, he abandoned. To save his life he ascended (the mountains).
- 167 After him I pursued. His oxen, his sheep, his spoil, to a countless amount I brought back. His cities
- 168 I threw down, dug up, (and) burned with fire. From the country of the Mannians<sup>3</sup> he departed. To the cities of SULU'SUNU of the country of Kharru
- 169 he approached. The city of Mairsuru, his royal city, together with the cities which depended on it he captured. (To) SULU'SUNU
- 170 together with his sons mercy I granted. To his

<sup>1</sup> The mountainous country near the sources of the Tigris.

<sup>2</sup> That is, in the person of his Commander-in-chief, Dayan-Assur.

<sup>3</sup> The modern Van.

- country I restored him. A payment (and) tribute of horses I imposed.
- 171 My yoke upon him I placed. To the city of Surdira he approached. The tribute of ARTA-IRRI
- 172 of the city of the Surdirians I received. To the country of Par'sua<sup>1</sup> I went down. The tribute of the Kings
- 173 of the country of Par'sua I received. (As for) the rest of the country of Par'sua which did not reverence ASSUR, its cities
- 174 I captured. Their spoil, their plunder to Assyria I brought. In my 31st year, the second time, the cyclical-feast
- 175 of ASSUR and RIMMON I had inaugurated.<sup>2</sup> At the time while I was stopping in the city of Calah, DAYAN-ASSUR
- 176 the Tartan, the Commander of my wide spreading army, at the head of my army (and) my camp I urged, I sent.
- 177 To the cities of Datā of the country of Khupuscā he approached. The tribute I received.
- 178 To the city of Zapparia, a stronghold of the country of Muzatsira, I went. The city of Zapparia together with
- 179 forty-six cities of the city of the Muzatsirians I captured. Up to the borders of the country of the Armenians
- 180 I went. Fifty of their cities I threw down, dug up (and) burned with fire. To the country of Gūzani<sup>3</sup> I went down. The tribute
- 181 of UPU of the country of the Gūzanians, of the

<sup>1</sup> Parthia.

<sup>2</sup> This refers to his assuming the eponymy a second time after completing a reign of 30 years. At this period the Assyrian kings assumed the eponymy on first ascending the throne, and the fact that Shalmaneser took the same office again in his 31st year shows that a cycle of thirty years was in existence.

<sup>3</sup> The Gozan of the Old Testament.

- country of the Mannians, of the country of the Buririans, of the country of the Kharranians,<sup>1</sup>
- 182 of the country of the Sasganians, of the country of the Andians,<sup>2</sup> (and) of the country of the Kharkhanians, oxen, sheep, (and) horses
- 183 trained to the yoke I received. To the cities of the country of . . . . I went down. The city of Perria
- 184 (and) the city of Sitivarya, its strongholds, together with 22 cities which depended upon it, I threw down, dug up
- 185 (and) burned with fire. Exceeding fear over them I cast. To the cities of the Parthians he went.
- 186 The cities of Bustu, Sala-khamanu (and) Cini-khamanu, fortified towns, together with 23 cities
- 187 which depended upon them I captured. Their fighting-men I slew. Their spoil I carried off. To the country of Zimri I went down.
- 188 Exceeding fear of ASSUR (and) MERODACH overwhelmed them. Their cities they abandoned. To
- 189 inaccessible mountains they ascended. Two hundred and fifty of their cities I threw down, dug up (and) burned with fire.
- 190 Into the lowground of Sime'si at the head of the country of Khalman I went down.

## THE EPIGRAPHS ACCOMPANYING THE SCULPTURES.

- I. The tribute of 'SU'A of the country of the Gūzanians: silver, gold, lead, articles of bronze, sceptres for the King's hand, horses (and) camels with double backs: I received.
- II. The tribute of YAHUA<sup>3</sup> son of KHUMRI:<sup>4</sup> silver, gold, bowls of gold, vessels of gold, goblets of gold, pitchers of gold, lead, sceptres for the King's hand, (and) staves: I received.

<sup>1</sup> Haran or Harran in the Old Testament, called Carrhæ by the classical geographers.

<sup>2</sup> Andia was afterwards incorporated into Assyria by Sargon.

<sup>3</sup> Jehu.

<sup>4</sup> Omri.

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