

THE STANDARD
 INSCRIPTION OF ASHUR-AKH-BAL.

TRANSLATED BY
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A FINE copy of this inscription exists in the Museum of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland at Edinburgh, to whom it was presented several years ago by Professor Sir James Y. Simpson, Bart. At the request of the Council I gave a translation of it in Vol. VI., part i., of their *Proceedings* (Edinburgh 1866), which I have now revised and corrected.

This sculptured slab represents Ashur-akh-bal, a monarch of the ninth or tenth century B.C. holding a cup of wine, with which he is about to offer a libation to the gods. The sculpture is accompanied by an inscription of twenty-one lines in very good preservation.

This inscription is a well-known one, more than 100 copies of it having been found by Mr. Layard while he was engaged in the excavation of Ashur-akh-bal's palace; for which reason it has been called the "Standard Inscription."

Scholars are not agreed as to the pronunciation of this king's name ; which signifies " Ashur protect the child ! " Until this point is settled, I follow the reading proposed by Dr. Hincks ; but I think it probable that the name was Ashur-ussur-bal, but was pronounced in the reverse order Ashur-bal-ussur, like Nabo-bal-ussur (commonly called Nabopolassar, meaning " Nabo protect the child ! ")

Ashur-akh-bal was a great warrior and conqueror, but he appears to have been destitute of any taste for literature. This may be inferred from the fact that he gave orders to inscribe the same inscription upon so many of the slabs which lined the apartments and galleries of his palace ; whereas, if he had given upon each slab the description of some different battle, or other remarkable event of his reign, our knowledge of his career would now have been much more complete.

There have been found, however, two pavement slabs, engraved on both sides, at the entrance of the temple of Hercules on the mound of Nimrud, which give a much more full and perfect account of his reign and his conquests. These have been lithographed by the British Museum and occupy ten plates (17 to 26) of one of their volumes of inscriptions. A translation of them has been published by the Rev. J. M. Rodwell in the *Records of the Past*, Vol. III., pp. 37-80.

INSCRIPTION OF ASHUR-AKH-BAL.

- 1 THIS is the palace of ASHUR-AKH-BAL, servant of ASHUR, Priest of BEL and NINIB, beloved by ANU and DAGON, worshipper of the great gods : the great King, the King of the nations, the King of Assyria. Son of TUKLAT-NINIB¹ the great King, the powerful King, the King of the nations, the King of Assyria : who was the son of HU-NIRARI,² also King of nations and King of Assyria.
- 2 The noble hero who went forth in the armed service of ASHUR his Lord against the Kings of the four regions of the world, as none had ever done before ; and smote the heretics who worship not the exalted things, in battles too numerous to be counted.
- 3 The King who humbled to the dust all those who did not obey him ; and who subdued all the races of men. The great worshipper of the gods ; the trampler upon the necks of his enemies ; the conqueror of hostile lands ; the destroyer of powerful fortresses. The King who advanced in the arms of the great gods his lords, and seized with his hand all hostile countries, fixed the tribute of all their territories, and took hostages from them as a pledge.
- 4 The favour of ASHUR, who called me to the sovereign

¹ Means probably "Servant of Ninib."

² Means probably "The god of the sky is my helper."

power, and is the supporter of my throne, gave his irresistible arms into the hands of my Majesty. The armies or the wide world I overthrew in battle.

5 By the help of the SUN, and IM,¹ the gods to whom I trust, I conquered the armies of the Highland Nahiri, the land of Kirkhi, the land of Subari,² and the land of Nireb; and like the god IM himself I rode thundering over them.

6 The King who subdued all the regions from the great stream of the Tigris unto the land of Lebanon and the Great Sea: with the land of Laki throughout all its provinces, and the land of Tsukhi as far as the city Rapikhi, and compelled them to fall down at his feet. And who seized with his hand the region from the source of the river Supnat unto the land of Urardi.³

7 All the region from the entrance of the land of Kirruri unto the land of Kirzan; and from the great stream of the lower Zab as far as the fortress of Til-bahari which protects the city of Zakim; and from the fortress of Aptan unto the fortress of Zabdan, along with the cities of Khirimu and Birrutu which is a fortified city of the land of Kardunias⁴ I restored once more to my country's rule. All the region from the entrance of the land of Babiti, as far as the city of Khasmar, I distributed among the men of my own land.

8 Over the regions which I had conquered I placed my Lieutenants, and they did homage to me.

9 ASHUR-AKH-BAL the glorious Ruler, the favourite of the great gods. The Sun of great splendour, the conqueror of cities and lands with all their people; the King of Kings, the chastiser of heretics; the scourge of those who worship not the sacrifices; the great smiter of the

¹ The god of the sky.

² Or Mesopotamia.

³ Armenia.

⁴ Babylonia.

- disobedient ; the destroyer of rulers who reject my royalty, and of heretics and rebellious men. The King whose name caused lands and seas to tremble ; and who enrolled in the federation of his empire glorious foreign Kings, from the rising of the sun unto the setting of the sun, every one of them.
- 10 The former city of Calah, which SALMANURISH King of Assyria, one of the Kings who reigned before me, had built, that city had fallen into ruins.
- 11 That city I built again. I peopled it with the captives I had taken in the various lands which I had conquered : the land of Tsukhi ; the land of Lakhi through all its provinces ; the city of Tsirku which is placed at the great passage of the river Euphrates : the land of Zamia throughout its whole extent : the land of Bit-Adini, and the land of Syria ; together with the people of LUBARNA King of the Patinæans whom I had carried off.
- 12 I pulled down its old citadel, and I built it new, as far as the surface of the waters (in its moat?). One hundred and twenty spans of the lower part I built in fine masonry. Within the circuit of this fortress I constructed a palace¹ of cedar ; a house of cypress wood ; a house of *taprani* wood ; a house of *ku* wood ; a house of *meshkani* wood ; a house of *terebinth* wood ; and of *tarpikhi* wood, for the residence of my Majesty, and for a remembrance of my reign for evermore.
- 13 I made sculptures of the animals of the lands and seas, carved in *pari* stone and in *paruti* stone,² and I set them up at the doors of my palace.
- 14 I made it grand, I made it splendid ; and with images of bright copper I adorned it.
- 15 Columns of cedar wood, cypress wood, *taprani* wood,

¹ Or fine house.² White alabaster.(?)

and *meshkanni* wood I erected at its gates : and the stores of silver and gold ; of lead, copper, and iron, captured by my hand in the lands which I had conquered, which I had seized in vast quantities, I treasured up within it.

[It will be understood that this translation represents the Edinburgh copy of the inscription. Other copies which were found by Layard in great numbers, may differ somewhat in the phrases employed, and in the arrangement of the subjects.]



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