

## MONOLITH OF ASHUR-AKH-BAL,

KING OF ASSYRIA.

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 TRANSLATED BY

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THIS inscription is now preserved in the British Museum. A lithographic copy of it was published in *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, Vol. I. pl. 27. I published a translation of it in 1862 in the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature*, Vol. VII. p. 184.

It is distinguished by a long and earnest adjuration to his successors on the throne, not to injure or deface his monuments, as they value the happiness of their own lives, and the favour of heaven.

Ashur-akh-bal was the most powerful of the *ancient* kings of Assyria. He seems to have been almost always at war. His conquests were very extensive, reaching as far as the Mediterranean Sea, upon which his love of adventure prompted him to embark and join in the exciting chase of the dolphin. As a warrior he was doubtless very active and skilful, but he was cruel and merciless as we know from his own account of his campaigns.



## INSCRIPTION OF ASHUR-AKH-BAL.

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THE former city of Calah, which SALMANURISH King of Assyria, my ancestor, had built; that city had fallen to decay, and its buildings had sunk into ruins and rubbish. That city I built again. And I dug a canal from the Upper Zab river, and I gave it the name of the Stream of Fertility. And I planted beautiful trees along its banks, and *fruit trees* the best of every kind, and vines. The finest I devoted to ASHUR my Lord, and the temples of my country.

I erected palaces, and from the foundation to the roof I built and I finished them. A palace for my royal residence and for an eternal remembrance of my reign I founded within the city. I adorned it, I embellished it; with a crowd of precious bronzes<sup>1</sup> I filled it. Great gates of . . .<sup>2</sup> wood I

<sup>1</sup> Bronze or perhaps polished brass.

<sup>2</sup> Lacuna.

made: with nails of bronze I fastened them together and I placed them at the entrance. Thrones of cedar and various other precious woods: ornamental ivories skilfully carved: heaps of silver, gold, lead, copper and iron, the spoils gained by my valour which I had brought away from the nations I had conquered: all these treasures I deposited within it.

The King of future days who shall repair its injuries, and shall replace the written tablets in their places, ASHUR will hear his prayers!

That good King shall never fly before his enemies, nor abandon this palace, my royal dwelling, in the city of Calah. Its gates, its rafters, the crowd of bronze ornaments which now stand within it, shall not be carried off. They shall not be removed to the city of his enemies, nor to the palace of his foes. Its roofs shall not be broken: its statues shall not be torn up: the sources which supply it with water shall not be cut off: its spring shall not be closed up.<sup>1</sup> Its chambers of treasure shall not be plundered: its *harem* shall not be burst open with violence. Its inhabitants shall not be made captives, nor with unseemly shameful and immodest treatment be dragged away to the enemy's palace, during the destruction and downfall of their own city.

The King who shall not injure the sculptures of my palaces, nor write on them wicked words: who shall not

<sup>1</sup> *Bab-sha la ipakhi.*

suffer the front of my throne and my royal dwellingplace to be broken; who shall protect the face of these my written tablets and shall not hurt the records of my reign; May ASHUR Chief of the great gods, who is the supporter of my kingdom, uphold his rule over all the nations and place him on my throne of glory and in my seat of power! May he subject the country of the four nations to his arms, and make him live in prosperity joy and abundance!

But the man who shall not spare the face of these my tablets, who shall injure the written records of my name, who shall destroy these sculptures, or tear them off or hide them in the earth, or bury them in the ashes, or burn them with fire, or drown them in the waters: or who shall remove them from their place and shall throw them down where they will be trampled on by animals, and shall place them in the pathway of the cattle: or who shall falsify my tablets, which are now sculptured with good and pious words, and shall write on the face of my records anything that is bad and impious: or who shall change the words so as to confound their meaning; whether he be a nobleman, or an officer or any one else among my people, or who shall scrawl on the tablets that I have written, and shall say that they are not true; or out of contempt<sup>1</sup> shall turn the face of my tablets backward:

May ASHUR the great Lord, the god of Assyria, the Lord of all royal crowns, curse his reign and destroy his works!

<sup>1</sup> *As nisti.*

May he shake the foundations of his kingdom! May want and famine; sickness and distress, prevail throughout his land!<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This inscription contains a few more lines, but they are much defaced.



# END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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