

## BULL INSCRIPTION OF KHORSABAD.

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TRANSLATED BY  
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THIS document has a great historical interest for the history of cuneiform decipherment. It was the first inscription which was translated; to the study of this text, first sent over by Botta from Nineveh, is attached the most ancient reading, and the first identification of the name of an Assyrian king, made by Adrian de Longpérier in 1847. M. de Saulcy studied this text in 1849, and attempted its interpretation even before the publication of the Babylonian Behistun text of Sir Henry Rawlinson. The first translation has been made in Scotland; it was laid by myself before the Glasgow Meeting of the British Association in 1855, and published in the *Transactions of the Historical Society of Cheshire and Lancashire*, 1856, and equally in the *Annales de Philosophie Chrétienne*, 1855.

The discovery of many other texts drew the attention of Assyriologists away from this important document, which was for the first time, only in 1870, published with its transliteration and an interlinear translation in my *Dour-Sarkayan*, Paris. Since that epoch, it has been several times reprinted, and its locutions have been discussed by MM. Ménant, Schrader, Praetorius, and others.

This new English translation contains some important improvements and emendations on the former French version.



## BULL INSCRIPTION OF KHORSABAD.

PALACE of SARGON, the great King, the powerful King, King of the legions, King of Assyria, Viceroy of the gods at Babylon, King of the Sumers, and of the Accads,<sup>1</sup> favourite of the great gods, the only herdsman<sup>2</sup> of the peoples to whom ASSUR, NEBO, and MERODACH, have confided sovereign power, and whose glorious name they have spread to the extremities of the earth.

He fulfilled the hopes of Sippara, of Nipur, of Babylon.

He reunited the dominions of Kalu, Ur, Erit, Larsa, Kullab, Kisik,<sup>3</sup> Nivit-Laguda;<sup>4</sup> he subdued their inhabitants. He ratified the laws of the ancient empire,<sup>5</sup> when the Kings interpreted to his favour the eclipse over Harran,<sup>6</sup> and wrote their treaties according to the will of ANU and of DAGON.

Valiant and powerful, sharpening his arms<sup>7</sup> he shot off his arrows for subduing the rebels. He routed the

<sup>1</sup> That is, of the Turanian Sumers, and of the Semitic Accads.

<sup>2</sup> The metaphor of "herdsman," *ri'u*, is now used in Turkey of the subjects, who are named "the herd," *r'aya*.

<sup>3</sup> See on those cities the remarks made on the texts in *Records of the Past*, Vols. VII., IX.

<sup>4</sup> Dwelling-place of the god Laguda.

<sup>5</sup> *Pal-mit-ki*, explained in the syllabaries by "Assur."

<sup>6</sup> This is the lunar eclipse of March 19, B.C. 721 (9,280), mentioned by Ptolemy. The matter becomes very intelligible to us, since we know the various portenta predicted from the position of the moon. But this eclipse proves also, that the accession of Sargon cannot occur till B.C. 722 (9,279).

<sup>7</sup> *Halib namurrati*.

King of Elam, he conquered the countries of Van, Karalla, Andia, Zikirtu, Kisasi, Kharkhar, and placed Media and Ellip under the dominion of ASSUR. He declared war with Armenia, and took the city of Musasir, when the Armenian, URSAHA, fearing his power, cut off his life with his own hand. He made slaves of the Princes of Circesium,<sup>1</sup> of Hamath, of Commagene, of the city of Asdod, of the people of Hatti,<sup>2</sup> his enemies who did not reverence the memory of the gods and who contemplated revolt. He appointed Lieutenants over all these countries for the purpose of governing the provinces, and he imposed tributes upon these people, as upon the Assyrians. He swept away Samaria, and the whole house of OMRI<sup>3</sup> and Kaska. He subdued the country of Tubal, and the whole of Bet-Burutas, he overcame Egypt near the city of Raphia, and placed HANUN, King of Gaza, in slavery. He crushed the city of Sinukhta. He put MITA, King of the Moschiens to flight. He changed the citadels of Kuë and the marshes. He swam like a fish to Yamna which is in the sea. He drove away GUNZINAN of Khammanua, and TARHULARA of Gamgum from their dwellings; he confiscated the whole of their possessions, which he reduced to an Assyrian province. He subjugated the seven Kings of Yahnaghe of the coast of Yatnan (Cyprus) who had taken up their residence, seven days' voyage, in the middle of the sea of the setting sun. He attacked Ras, subdued Pukud, the inhabitants of Tamun, and the city of Lahir. And he established the country of Yatburi under his dominion. He chastised MERODACH-BALADAN King of Chaldæa, the enemy who, contrary to the wish of the great gods, had exercised sovereign power at

<sup>1</sup> Carchemis.

<sup>2</sup> Syria.

<sup>3</sup> This is the usual designation of the Israelitish kingdom in the later texts; Salmanassar quotes *Sir 'il*.

Babylon,<sup>1</sup> and the force of his arm came to him. He took off the foundation-stone of Dur-Yakin the city of his revolt, and heaped up in the depths of the sea, as on a threshing-floor, the corpses of these warriors. And UPIR, King of Dilmun, whose abode was established like that of fishes, thirty parasangs<sup>2</sup> in the middle of the sea of the rising sun, when he heard all these things brought his tributes.

The king anxious to fulfil his duty,<sup>3</sup> and fostering a lucky intention, directed his mind to people those extensive habitations, to open porticoes, and to stick measuring pegs. Then above the valley which is at the foot of the mountains, to replace Nineveh, I founded a town, and I gave it the name of Dur-Sarkin.<sup>4</sup> There I planted a variegated forest, reviving the memory of Mount Amanus which contains all the different kinds of trees in Syria, and all the plants growing on the mountains, and I fixed the limits of its extent.

Three hundred and fifty ancient kings had exercised before

<sup>1</sup> It is said in other texts during twelve years. We have some "olives" dating down till the twelfth year, and which were destined, probably, to serve for control to the women in the temple of Astarte at Babylon. They were brought by Sargon from Babylon to Khorsabad when Place discovered them. I published these curious monuments in my *Dour-Sarkayan*, p. 27. Mr. Boscawen believes that there were olives dating down to the twentieth year of Merodach-Baladan. But this statement is erroneous, and rests only upon a *misprint* in my book, p. 27, l. 32, in the Assyrian text; my translation gives, line 33, the true reading of the *tenth* year. Mr. Boscawen says, that the number 20 is to be found in one of the Louvre documents without stating his author. At any rate, he scarcely saw it in the Louvre, as the original is in my own writing-desk, and affords the number "ten."

<sup>2</sup> The *kasbu* is a *parasang*, 30 stades, 5923<sup>m</sup>8, 6478 yards. The double of it was the *kasbuqqar*, the *schœnus* of the Greeks, 11847<sup>m</sup>6, or 12956 yards, seven miles and three furlongs. The word *parasang* is Persian, *parūthaṅga*, new Persian, *farsakh*; the measure is still used in the East.

<sup>3</sup> Here the style is in the first person.

<sup>4</sup> "Fort of Sargon."

me sovereign power over Assyria, and had embellished the empire of BEL;<sup>1</sup> but not one of them had touched this place, nor had proposed to people it, nor had thought of digging canals, nor of driving in measuring pegs. In the depth of my heart I have resolved peopling this city, erecting altars,<sup>2</sup> the footstools of the great gods, and palaces, the abodes of royalty; I have decided upon its foundation.

On the propitious day of the happy month, the month of Sivan, on the day *ap ap*,<sup>3</sup> I measured the ground,<sup>4</sup> and I moulded bricks. In the month of Ab, the month of the god who lays the founding stone of towns and of houses, all the people assembled performed the ceremony of *sulul*<sup>5</sup> (of the hand bells) on gold, on silver, on copper, on metals, on stones, on the trees of Amanus, and according to the rule distributed the various employments. I laid the foundations and placed the bricks. I constructed smoking altars which are like part of the debt which we owe for the foundation to the gods HEA, SIN (LUNUS), SAMAS (SUN), NEBO, BIN<sup>6</sup> and NINIP.

<sup>1</sup> This is a very important statement, and almost the only one which alludes to the universal history of anterior kings. The actual figures of Berosus' Babylonian kings give a very inferior number; they bear out only 222 kings. It is therefore probable, that Sargon included also the independent kings of Assyria in this number of 350.

<sup>2</sup> *Makkkhi*. An obscure word.

<sup>3</sup> A designation of a certain day, which is unknown.

<sup>4</sup> The former translation, "I burnt aloes," *allu usadrig*, must be abandoned.

<sup>5</sup> It may be also the deposition of several things, thrown on the foundation ground, and which were found by M. Place in the sand stratum under the bulls. The word *sulul* may signify "launching."

<sup>6</sup> The name of this god is really Bin, or Ben. The Sumerian word *beni* expresses the letter *u*, "master." The fanciful readings of Vul, Raman, and others are to be abandoned. The name of Benhadar, the antagonist of Ahab, is not Vul-idri, Raman-idri, but Bin-hidri.

With their assistance I constructed palaces of skins of *takhash*,<sup>1</sup> of sandal-wood, of ebony, of tamarisk, of cedar-wood, and of pistachio-tree, for the purpose of lodging my royalty in them.

Above I disposed of the cedar and the cypress beams. As to the doors of cypress and tamarisk, I surrounded them with stripes of brass, and I symmetrically ornamented the interstices. I had a winding staircase made like the one of the palace of Syria, which in the Phœnician language is called *bit appati*. Eight double lions weighing 1 *ner* (ton) 6 *soasses* (quintals), and 50 talents,<sup>2</sup> and of first-rate bronze, in honour of MYLITTA were sculptured on the doors; and four beams of *timmi* and of bent cedar exactly corresponding to their 64. *kubur*, coming from Mount Amanus were placed on the lions<sup>3</sup> to fill up the *namrir*.<sup>4</sup> I had a garland of field animals and of sacred images hewn in stones from the mountains *iski*, sculptured very artistically on the (arched roof)<sup>5</sup> of the doors. I placed the lintels in the four heavenly directions, under them I arranged cornices of large black stones which came from countries which my arm has conquered; I made strong walls round the partitions, and I opened the doors for the admiration of my subjects.

Three *ners*<sup>6</sup> and a third, one stadium, one fathom

<sup>1</sup> A very obscure word.

|  |   |               |
|--|---|---------------|
| This is 1010 talents, viz., 1 <i>ner</i> | . | 600 talents   |
| 6 <i>soass</i>                           | . | 360 „         |
| 50 talents                               | . | 50 „          |
|  |   | 1010 talents. |

A Babylonian talent is to an English hundredweight Avoirdupois, exactly as three to five; the quantity is therefore 606 cwt., 30600 kilograms.

<sup>3</sup> *Nirgalli*.

<sup>4</sup> These technical architectural terms are not clear.

<sup>5</sup> *Tappi*.

<sup>6</sup> Miles.

and a half, two spans,<sup>1</sup> this is the dimension of the

<sup>1</sup> This is the capital passage for the restoration of Assyrian measurements. The passage was explained in 1872, in the *Journal Asiatique*. Here are the leading principles of this restoration of Assyrian metrology. Neither at Persepolis, nor at Nineveh, is there to be found an exact square; everywhere, and very likely by an unknown superstition, we meet always with oblongs differing slightly from an exactly quadrate form. It is also to be proved, that the smaller two sides of this rectangular parallelogram, contain a round number, and that the others afford an excess of unconstant proportion. In the present instance Botta's exact measurements give to the small side of the Khorsabad walls 1645, and to the large one 1750 metres. The proportion of these sides are as 1 : 1.06. The whole circumference is therefore 6790 metres, 7426 yards; it is styled in the round number and in the excess thus, 6580 (4 × 1645) + 210 (2 × 105) as following:—

|  |   |   |   |   |               |
|--|---|---|---|---|---------------|
| 3½ <i>ners</i> , at 7200 spans             | . | . | . | . | 24000 spans   |
| 1 <i>soos</i> or stade, at 720 spans       | . | . | . | . | 720 „         |
| 1 fathom and a half, at 12 spans (variant: |   |   |   |   |               |
| 3 canes at 6 spans)                        | . | . | . | . | 18 „          |
| 2 spans                                    | . | . | . | . | 2 „           |
|  |   |   |   | — |               |
|  |   |   |   |   | 24,740 spans. |

Why do we not find 3 *ners*, 4 *soos*, and 21 fathoms, and 8 spans, or 43 canes, and 2 spans? Because the author would express this idea: If the square would have been regular, it would have been 24000 spans long, 4 sides at 6000 spans each; but as the greater sides have each 370 spans more, 6370 spans, the 740 spans are pointed out *apart*. The formula of Khorsabad is very important for the history of mathematical terms: the perimeter of a rectangle is enunciated in order to determine in the mean time the four sides and the area.

|                  |   |   |   |   |                     |
|------------------|---|---|---|---|---------------------|
| 2 sides at 6,000 | . | . | . | . | 12,000 spans        |
| 2 sides at 6,370 | . | . | . | . | 12,740 „            |
|                  |   |   |   | — |                     |
|                  |   |   |   |   | Total 24,740 spans. |

The exactness of this explanation is demonstrated in a stringently mathematical way: 6000 to 6370, or 600 to 637, is as 1 : 1.06166, just as 1650 is to 1750 (or more exactly 1646½ to 1748, as Botta measured only at a limit of half a decameter). This marvellous coincidence affords thus the discovery of Assyrian metrology. This proportion of two sides of 1650<sup>m</sup>, 1799 yards, and two sides of 1750<sup>m</sup>, 1914 yards, corrected to 1801 and 1912 yards, which bear out the 7426 yards of the circumference, are also in the proportion of 1 : 1.0616. As 1801 yards are just 6000 spans, or



wall.' I laid the founding stone on the bare rock. At the

3000 cubits, the proportion of the yard to the Assyrian span is as *three to ten*, and that of the yard to the Assyrian cubit as *three to five*. This is a statement with mathematical force and rigour.

The Assyrian span is therefore exactly  $10\frac{4}{5}$  inches, and the cubit  $21\frac{3}{5}$  inches. We have consequently with an almost strict assimilation for the Assyrian stade 216 yards, for the parasang 6480 (6478) yards, and for the schoenus 12,960 yards, 7 miles, 2 furlongs, 200 yards, where the error can only amount to the trifling one of four yards.

The two smaller walls of Khorsabad were 3000 cubits long, and the larger ones 3000 cubits, and 185 cubits or 100 ells. An ell had 37 *uban*. The little oblong of the excess was a surface of 555,000 square cubits, as the palace itself was 2,220 square double fathoms. We meet elsewhere with multiple of 37.

My distinguished friend, Professor Lepsius asks, if instead of  $3\frac{1}{3}$  *ners*, we ought not to admit 4 *sars* and 3 *ners*, that is 27 *ners*. If the eminent Egyptian scholar had studied, I do not say the Assyrian documents, but only the two passages of the Bull inscription, he would not have raised this question in his paper at the Berlin Academy; he would have been aware that the *ner* is only alluded to, as it can be shown by this very document, in the statement of the weight of the copper lions. The calculation of 191,540 spans (*U*) would give 1 inch 5 lines for a span, 2 inches 10 lines for the cubit, 21 yards for the stade, and 630 yards for the parasang of three miles!!!

I have replied to the views of Dr. Lepsius in the *Monatsberichte* of the Berlin Academy (Dec., 1877, and March, 1878), where my learned friend opposed some remarks to mine; but these are easily to be refuted. The German scholar doubts ultimately whether the now existing ramparts are really the outer wall, or *dur*, mentioned in this inscription! Now the identity of the *dur* is ascertained undoubtedly by the *eight* entrance doors, which still exist, and were excavated by M. Place. All persons who have seen, or who will visit the Khorsabad remains, will be satisfied with the certainty that never a fancy wall existed exterior to the now existing wall, where the foundation tablets were discovered. This apocryphical outer rampart has only been invented in order to find the theoretical 8547 metres, which Dr. Lepsius calculated by his interpretatory system of the Khorsabad text; in reality, these 8547<sup>m</sup> cannot be employed by any surveyor of the spot itself, and the perimeter of the Khorsabad walls bears out only 6790 metres.

An English writer, M. Flinders Petrie, has arrived at the same valuation of the Assyrian cubit in his valuable work on *Inductive Metrology*.

<sup>1</sup> The wall is the *dur*, that is, this outer rampart.

extremities of each side, near the angles of the circumvallation,<sup>1</sup> I opened 8 gates in the direction of the four cardinal points.

SAMAS<sup>2</sup> makes my designs successful, BIN affords me abundance; I have named the large gates of the East the gates of SAMAS and of BIN.

BEL-EL lays the foundation of my city, MYLITTA TAAUTH grinds the painting stone in his bosom; I have given the names of BEL-EL and of MYLITTA TAAUTH to the large gates of the North.

ANU executes the works of my hand, ISHTAR excites the men; I have named the large gates of the West, the gates of ANU, and of ISHTAR.

HEA arranges the marriages,<sup>3</sup> the Queen of the gods presides over child-birth; I have dedicated the large gates of the South<sup>4</sup> to HEA and to the Queen of the gods.

ASSUR lengthens the years of the kings he has appointed, he protects the armies of the enclosure of the town. NINIP, who lays the foundation stone, fortifies its rampart<sup>5</sup> to distant days.

<sup>1</sup> The words *ina sili kilallan*, a most difficult term, may signify "in the flank of the two angle branches;" *sili* is literally "ribs."

<sup>2</sup> The Sun.

<sup>3</sup> This explanation of *naqbi*, "to perforate," is possible, but it may have here a double sense, because *naqbi* signifies also the perforation of the earth, "a canal."

<sup>4</sup> I accept provisionally the mutual change of North and South, on the authority of the Talmud passages: but the difficulty seems very great.

<sup>5</sup> The Assyrians always distinguish the outer bulwark (*dur*) from the inner, or special, rampart (*salhu*). The measures are expressly given for the *dur*.

The four dominions,<sup>1</sup> each of different language, the people exempt from all taxes living on the mountains and in the plains which the SUN, the light of the gods, the master of the spheres, illuminates, I have subdued them, in the remembrance of ASSUR my god, under the realm of my *sibirr*;<sup>2</sup> I caused them to dwell separately, and I established them there. The men of Assyria, acquainted with all the sciences, I had confided to sages and learned men,<sup>3</sup> for the instruction of right and for the adoration of their god and their king. I separated them from the *sibir* of the town and from my Palaces.

In the month of Tisri<sup>4</sup> I worshipped the great gods who inhabit Assyria, and I made the inauguration thereof when I had taxed the kings of the rising sun and of the setting sun in gold, in silver, and in slaves, to increase the treasures of these Palaces by their munificent offerings. O ye gods who inhabit this town may all the work of my hands be augmented! May they in their presence dedicate to eternity the inhabitant of these regions and the duration of my victorious reign.

But he who spoils the works of my hand, who effaces my

<sup>1</sup> The four dominions are without Akkad, situated in the middle, Gutu to the North, Hubur to the South, Elam to the East, Akharri to the West.

<sup>2</sup> The sense of the *sibirr* is very obscure.

<sup>3</sup> "Astronomers." The word *safir* seems to mean "learned man, explainer," but at first, the explainer of the celestial movements, "astronomer."

<sup>4</sup> This quite agrees with the statement in an eponymic tablet (*W. A. I.* II., pl. 69), that Dur-Sarkin was inaugurated the 22nd of Tisri, of Sa-Assur-dubbu (Oct., B.C. 706). In the next spring, 6th of Iyar (May, B.C. 705), were finished the walls of the new city. This fact is not stated in the Sargon texts; for the king survived this fact only 15 months. He was followed on the throne by his son Sennacherib in August, B.C. 704.

sculptures, who takes away the vessels containing my riches, who distributes my treasures; may ASSUR, BIN, and the great gods who inhabit this town destroy his name and his race in his country, may they let him be treated as an insurgent by those who rebel against him!



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