THE INSCRIPTIONS OF TELLOH

By M. ARTHUR AMIAUD

THE names of Telloh and of the French Consul M. de Sarzec are no longer strange to the Orientalist of to-day. The situation of the mounds, which have hidden and preserved to our day the ruins of one of the most ancient centres of civilisation, is well known. The history of the excavations has been often written, and I shall not dwell upon it. Nor shall I discuss the results of these excavations from the point of view of art or archæology. This work has been undertaken by a master hand in the *Découvertes en Chaldée*. At present I shall only essay to follow in the steps of Dr. Oppert by making the monuments of stone and brick tell their own tale, and by questioning them summarily on the geography, history, politics, and religion of their age and country.²

I. The first question one thinks of asking is what was the name of that flourishing city of ancient Chaldæa which the Bedouin now knows only as

² On all these points, see Hommel's Geschichte Babyloniens und Assyriens (Berlin, 1885-87).

¹ See also M. Léon Heuzey's Un Palais Chaldéen (Paris, Leronx, 1888).

Telloh? Considering that all the princes whose names occur on the monuments are entitled "kings" or "patesis" of Shirpurla-ki, it was generally answered at first: This city was Shirpurla.1 As often happens, the first impression has proved to be correct. I was wrong in questioning the identification in an article in the Zeitschrift für Keilschriftforschung (i. p. 151). I had remarked that except in the title of the kings and patesis the name of Shirpurla-ki appeared very rarely in the inscriptions of Telloh, and that whenever a prince mentioned the site where a temple was erected he gave it another name-Girsu-ki, Uru-azagga, Ninâ-ki, Gishgalla-ki. I now believe, and shall attempt to prove, that Telloh really represents the ruins of Shirpurla; that it was the general name of a great centre of population, of which Girsu-ki, Uru-azagga, Ninâ-ki, and Gishgalla-ki were only divisions or quarters.

Let us first remove a hypothesis which could present itself to the mind. Might not Shirpurla be the name of a country, of which Girsu-ki and the three other cities mentioned above were the chief places? This supposition is forbidden by the inscription of the statue F of Gudea, which states formally that Shirpurla was the beloved "city" of the goddess Gatumdug (col. i., cases 15, 16). It is also forbidden

¹ According to Mr. Pinches (*Guide to the Kouyunjik Gallery*, London, 1885, p. 7, note 2), Sliir-pur-la-ki would be an ideographic mode of writing the word Lagash. We should then perhaps have to compare W. A. I., ii. 52, α 60, which seems to connect a city Lagashu-ki with Urama or ''Ur" (?).

by W. A. I., ii. 61, 2, 37, where we learn that a temple otherwise unknown was situated in Shirpurla-ki.

The list of temples given in this passage might open the door to another hypothesis, which must be removed in its turn, for it would be inconsistent with the relations existing between Shirpurla and the four other towns. In lines 34 and 35 two temples are named as temples of Girsu-ki. If Girsu-ki had been only a quarter of Shirpurla, would there not be some inconsistency on the part of the Assyrian scribe in saying: Such and such temples belong to Girsu-ki, such another to Shirpurla-ki? Might one not conclude that Shirpurla and the four other towns were separate cities?

Now it is certain that Gudea tells us (in the inscription on statue C) that he has constructed the temple of E-anna for the goddess Ninni or Istar in Girsu-ki (col. 3, cases 11, 12). We further know that the same Istar, the presiding deity of Erech, had a celebrated temple in that city which also bore the name of E-anna. Moreover, certain texts of Gudea and Dungi, which mention the construction of temples in Girsu-ki, come, it is believed, from other sites than Telloh, some from Warka or Erech, others from Babylon, from Zerghul and from Tel-Eed. But this proves nothing in favour of Erech, and still less against Telloh. From the fact that Istar had a temple named E-anna at Erech, we cannot infer that the same goddess had not a temple of the same name in another city. We know that Nebo had a temple called E-Zida in Borsippa, and there were at least two others of the same name at Babylon and Calah.

We cannot look for Ninâ-ki, any more than Girsuki, outside Telloh, or identify it with the Assyrian Nineveh.¹ As for the inscription cited by Dr. Hommel in support of the contrary view, the Museum of the Louvre possesses several similar ones discovered by M. de Sarzec at Telloh. If the text translated by Dr. Hommel does not come from Telloh, it must have been moved from its original place, like the tablet of black stone, with a Semitic inscription of Dungi, believed to have been found at Nineveh, and accordingly quoted by Dr. Hommel to show that the empire of the kings of Ur extended as far as that city. The text itself of the inscription, imperfectly copied by Lenormant, proves that its primitive resting-place was Cutha.² But yet more. Two princes of Shirpurla, Uru-Kagina in his barrel-inscription, and Gudea in the cylinder-inscription A, state that they have worked upon a canal, Ninâ-ki-tum-a, "the favourite river of the goddess Ninâ." In order to find this canal I believe it will be useless to ascend as far as the Khausser, the river of Nineveh, if we compare with the context these lines of M. de Sarzec: "In going from the Shatt-el-Haï to the ruins, at 500 metres from the enceinte of Telloh we meet with the bed of an immense canal, still visible, though filled with sand, running from N.W. to S.E. It is possibly the

The pronunciation of the name of the goddess Nina and of the city called after her is still problematical.
 See the Zeitschrift für Assyriologie, iii., p. 94.

original channel of the Shatt-el-Haï, possibly also some canal derived from that great artery, and intended to supply the city with water." 1

Uru-azagga and Gishgalla-ki still remain. first must be sought near Telloh, if not in Telloh itself, since M. de Sarzec has found in the ruins: (1) at least one brick commemorating the erection by Gudea of a temple of the goddess Gatumdug situated in Uru-azagga;2 (2) the forepart of a lion or griffon of calcareous stone, which bears the same inscription as the brick of Gudea, some insignificant variants excepted; 3 (3) a doorstep of the patesi Nammaghâni, intended for the temple of the goddess Bau, which the inscriptions on several statues of Gudea place in Uruazagga;4 (4) a buttress of the patesi Entena intended for the temple of the goddess Gatumdug in Uru-azagga.5 As for Gishgalla-ki, which is known only from two passages in the inscription on the statue of Ur-Bau, one of which calls the patesi "servant of the divine king of Gishgalla-ki," and the other places in Gishgalla-ki a temple of the goddess Ninni, its name even remains an obscure problem. It must have been some locality in Telloh or its immediate vicinity. Otherwise the inscription of Ur-Bau would offer us the only example in our texts of a foreign temple constructed by the princes of Shirpurla, and the sole

² Not yet published.

5 Not yet published.

¹ Découvertes en Chaldée, p. 12.

³ I owe my knowledge of this fact, as well as of several others, to the kindness of M. Heuzey.

⁴ Découvertes en Chaldée, pl. 27, 1.

example also of the title of "servant" of a foreign god assumed by one of them.

It will now be easy for me to show that the four centres, Girsu-ki, Uru-azagga, Ninâ-ki, and Gishgalla-ki, were only quarters of a large city, which bore the name of Shirpurla-ki. Whenever the princes who have reigned at Telloh wished to indicate the whole of their capital or their domain, we shall see that they called it Shirpurla-ki. Only when they preferred to mark the extent of their domain by means of its extreme or most important points, or when they wanted to indicate a particular spot, they employed the names Girsu-ki, Uru-azagga, Ninâ-ki, and Gishgalla-ki.

It is thus that all call themselves "kings" or "patesis" of Shirpurla-ki. There is but one exception, and only in one of the three inscriptions he has left us; Uru-Kagina entitles himself on his cylinder "king of Girsu-ki." This exception can be easily explained, since Girsu-ki was without doubt the most important quarter of Shirpurla. It is thus again that Gudea, wishing to inform us what were the distant countries from which he derived the materials necessary for the buildings of his capital, expresses himself as follows: "By the power of Nina and Nin-girsu, to Gudea who holds his sceptre from Nin-Girsu, the countries of Mâgan, Melughgha, Gubi, and Nituk, rich in trees of every species, have sent him at Shirpurla-ki ships laden with all sorts of trees" (statue D, col. 4). Thus, too, if I understand the passage rightly, after

having enumerated the reforms which followed his accession to the throne, he describes the peace resulting therefrom to his country: "On the territory of Shirpurla-ki no one has sued him who has right on his side; a brigand has entered the house of no one" (statue B, col. 5).

But if the same Gudea wants to insist on the peace which he has given his country, and to prove that no part of his city was excluded from his care, he tells us: "Gudea, patesi of Shirpurla-ki, has proclaimed peace from Girsu-ki to Uru-azagga" (statue G, col. 2). So, too, in describing the position of a temple, the princes of Telloh never say that it was situated in Shirpurla, but more precisely in Girsu-ki, in Uru-azagga, in Ninâ-ki, or in Gishgalla-ki.

It is very difficult at present to determine the approximate situation in Telloh of these different quarters. I will, however, make some suggestions in regard to them.

The four tels or mounds on the west side of Telloh perhaps represent the site of Ninâ-ki. From one of them M. de Sarzec has recovered the beautiful bull and the tablet of black stone which bear the name of Dungi, and mention the erection of the temple of the goddess Ninâ. All the other tels, including the great tel on which stood the palace, appear to have formed part of Girsu-ki. It is in this region that bronzes and votive tablets have been discovered with the names of the god Nin-Girsu and of his soils Gal-alim and Dun-shagâna; now we cannot doubt, though we

are not directly assured of it, that the temples of these three gods were situated in Girsu-ki. As for Uru-azagga, it is not certain that it lay in the part of Telloh excavated by M. de Sarzec. With the exception of some statues, which have certainly not been found in their original position, the monuments intended, according to their inscriptions, for this quarter of Shirpurla-ki are little numerous; and some, if not all, appear to have been displaced, and, to use the expression of M. Heuzey, to have been replaced by the successive occupants of Telloh, which was still inhabited in the Parthian epoch. Nothing can be said concerning Gishgalla-ki, which is mentioned only on the statue of Ur-Bau.

II. We now possess the names of twelve or thirteen princes of Shirpurla, four or five of whom bear the title of "king," and eight the title of "patesi." M. Heuzey has shown by arguments derived from the more archaic character of their monuments and writing that the most ancient of these princes were the He has also established that among the patesis the group comprising Entena and En-annatumma was the oldest. The script used by these patesis is still linear like that of the kings, and not yet cuneiform like that of the later princes. Of course I refer only to the inscriptions engraved on hard materials, bronze or stone. For we possess a clay cylinder of the king Uru-Kagina, where the wedge already appears as distinctly as on the bricks and cylinders of Gudea. We know that it is just by

the form of the stylus employed by the scribes when writing upon soft clay that the wedge which characterises the cuneiform script is explained. It is by imitation only that it has passed from writing on clay to writing on stone.

The dynasties of Telloh were the following:

(1) Kings of Shirpurla-ki:-

The earliest king known is perhaps Ur-Ninâ, "the man of Ninâ," of whom we have three inscriptions. This prince was the son of a personage called Ninighal-gin (the reading Ghal-gin being uncertain). It is doubtful whether Nini-ghal-gin had himself been king, since his son never gives him the title of sovereign.

After Ur-Ninâ, according to the "Stêlê of the Vultures," his son, A-Kurgal ("the son of Bel"?) reigned.

Another passage in the Stêlê of the Vultures appears to mention a certain Igi-ginna ("he who goes before") as king of Shirpurla.

So far as we can judge from the writing, it was after these monarchs that Uru-kagina reigned, whose three inscriptions have come down to us. Two of them call him "king of Shirpurla"; in a third, on a clay cylinder, he bears, as was first recognised by Dr. Oppert, the title of "king of Girsu-ki." ²

(2) Patesis of Shirpurla-ki:-

The first series comprises three patesis, whose suc-

¹ See Heuzey: "Un nouveau roi de Tello," in the Revue Archéologique of 1884.

² It would seem that a prince more ancient than Urn-Kagina and perhaps as ancient as Ur-Ninâ bore the title of "patesi" and not of "king." But his name still remains unknown. See below, p. 67.

cession cannot at present be exactly determined. The museum of the Louvre possesses a portion of a buttress inscribed with the name of a patesi Entena, who does not record the name of his father, and another block bearing the name of a patesi En-annatumma, son of a patesi Entena. As the British Museum possesses a block inscribed by a patesi Entena, son of a patesi En-anna-tumma, we have a choice of two hypotheses. Either the patesi Entena of the British Museum is the same as the patesi Entena of the Louvre, in which case the succession will be: En-anna-tumma I, Entena, and En-annatumma II; or else the Entena of the British Museum is the grandson of that of the Louvre, the order of the patesis being Entena I, En-anna-tumma, Entena II.

Later in date than this family of princes comes the patesi Ur-Bau ("man of Bau") whose statue is in the Louvre, together with a number of monuments of less importance.

A short time after Ur-Bau comes Gudea ("the elect"), followed by his son and probable successor Ur-Nin-girsu ("man of Nin-girsu").¹ It is of Gudea that the larger and more important part of the monuments of Telloh preserve the memory: eight statues, two large cylinders of clay, and hundreds of fragments or small texts. Of his successor we have a few bricks and a small object of uncertain use.

Here must be placed, I believe, the patesi Nam-

¹ Cf. Ledrain: Communication à l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 12th July 1882.

maghâni (" His supremacy ") whose reign is assigned by Dr. Hommel to a period before Ur-Bau. his monuments are too few (only a door-step and some bricks) to allow us to determine with certainty his relative date.

M. Heuzey has also made us acquainted with another patesi, Luka-ni ("His glory"). His son Ghalalamma, who does not, like his father, take the title of patesi, offers homage in an inscription on the fragment of a statue to Dungi, king of Ur.2

It is difficult to determine, even approximately, to what remote epoch the dynasties of Telloh must be referred. We gather but little from the fact that the son of one of the last patesis of Shirpurla was the contemporary of Dungi. For we cannot yet fix the age of the early kings of Ur. Let me, however, hazard a hypothesis, in consideration of any light it may throw on the dark problem of Chaldean chronology.

I have already had occasion to cite an inscription of Gudea (on statue D) in which this patesi tells us that he received from "the countries of Magan, Melughgha, Gubi, and Nituk," vessels laden with all sorts of trees. The situation of Nituk is known. It was the Isle of Tilmun³ in the Persian Gulf. It is not

^{1 &}quot;Le Roi Dounghi" in the Revue Archéologique, April 1886.

² I omit a patesi of Shirpurla, En-anna, made known to us by George Smith in his Early History of Babylonia, and two other patesis whose names are quoted by Dr. Hommel from some seals (Geschichte Bab. und Ass., pp. 290, 293). The text translated by George Smith has not yet been published, and the reading of the inscriptions on the seals does not seem absolutely certain.

^{3 [}Identified with the Tylos of classical geography by Dr. Oppert, and with the modern Bahrein by Sir H. Rawlinson, though Professor Delitzsch

possible, in my opinion, to look for Mâgan and Melughgha anywhere else than in the vicinity of the Sinaitic Peninsula.1 Gubi, sometimes written Gubin, alone remains, which Dr. Hommel would identify with Byblos in Phœnicia, the Gapuna of the hieroglyphic texts. I should, however, prefer to see in Gubi a name of Egypt, and more precisely the name of Coptos, the ancient Qubti. Gudea would thus in his list of names have followed the route of his vessels, starting from the most distant points to the north of the Red Sea, coasting along Egypt and turning round Arabia. If the identification of Gubi or Gubin with Oubti meets with the approval of Egyptologists and Assyriologists, the reign of Gudea might perhaps be placed in the interval between the sixth Egyptian dynasty, when the monuments of Pepi seem already to testify to the commercial importance of Coptos,2 and the eleventh, when the cities of Upper Egypt obtained political supremacy. No one of course will dream of bringing the reign of Gudea down to a later date.

How must we explain the fact that the last princes of Shirpurla contented themselves with the title of "patesi," while the most ancient took that of "king"? I believe that it is difficult not to see in this fact an indication of the loss of its earlier independence on

considers it to form part of the delta which has accumulated at the mouth of the Euphrates.—Ed.]

¹ This is the opinion long ago maintained by Messrs. Lenormant, Oppert, and Sayce. M. Delattre has ably defended it in the memoir L'Asie occidentale dans les Inscriptions Assyriennes, pp. 149 seq.

² See Maspero: Histoire ancienne (4th edit.), p. 81.

the part of Shirpurla and of its subjection to some other city, probably Ur. All the other instances we have of the use of the title of "patesi," lend it the sense of "lieutenant" before the name of a country, of "vicar" before a divine name.1 We possess inscriptions in which the patesis of Nipur and of Ishkun-Sin acknowledge their dependency on the kings of Ur. Nebuchadnezzar II calls himself the patesi of the god Merodach, Sargon the patesi of the god Assur. The title of the earliest sovereigns of Assyria, "patesi of the god Assur," defines their power as being that either of a kingdom predominantly religious, or of a viceroyalty under a suzerain, who was without doubt Babylonian. It always implies the idea of lieutenant or dependant. Why should we admit an exception in the case of Shirpurla? It is true that Gudea comes before us as a powerful prince. In one of his inscriptions (statue B) he boasts of having overthrown the city of Anshan in the land of Elam. But for aught we know he may have made this expedition in the company of his suzerain. Dependence, moreover, admits of degrees, and it can even be purely nominal. France has known powerful vassals who have resisted rovalty.

III. The campaign of Gudea in Elam, in the course of which the city of Anshan was captured, is the only fact of military history of which we know. We have a little better information, thanks to two inscriptions

¹ [I should rather render it "High-Priest." See my Lectures on the Religion of the Ancient Babylonians, pp. 59-60.—Ed.]

of the same patesi (those of statue B and cylinder A), concerning the commercial relations of his country. Unfortunately it is always very difficult to identify the geographical names recorded in the texts.

From a passage cited above it appears that Shirpurla enjoyed commercial intercourse with the countries of Nituk, Gubi or Gubin, Mâgan, and Melughgha. These four countries furnished Chaldæa with wood for building. But Melughgha also furnished gold, and Mâgan a hard stone, diorite, which was employed by the sculptors. Chaldaa was also in connection with the country of Martu, that is to say, with Phœnicia and Syria. From a mountain which seems to have been Amanus, it derived cedars and other trees; from two other mountains of Martu-Susalla and Tidanum 1two species of stones. It is stones again that were imported from a mountain of Barsip, which I should look for in the neighbourhood of the Syrian city of Til-Barsip. For I believe that it is the same country as that which appears in W. A. I., ii. 53, a 3, under the varying forms of Barsip-ki and Bursip-ki. We know that the name of Til-Barsip was also written Til-Bursip. The inscription of statue B, moreover, tells us that the stones coming from Barsip were conveyed in vessels which, according to my view, would have had only to descend the Euphrates. I am greatly tempted to ascend still farther to the north, towards the sources of this river, in order to find two other coun-

¹ The reading Susalla is uncertain. Dr. Hommel has compared Tidanum with Tidnu, the Sumerian equivalent of Akharru (the Semitic term for Syria).

tries—the city of Ursu-ki, in the mountains of Ibla (or rather, Tilla 1), which furnished wood, and Shamalum, or Shamanum, in the mountains of Menua, which furnished stones. But I can suggest nothing in regard to three other geographical names which I shall confine myself to mentioning: the mountain of Ghaghum, from whence Gudea procured gold; the city of Abullat or Abulla-Abishu ("the great gate of his fathers"), situated in the mountains of Ki-mash,2 whence he procured copper; and the country or city of Madga, in the mountains of the river Gurruda (?),3 from whence he procured a product whose precise nature I am unable to determine.

Certain cities of Babylonia are mentioned in our texts. They are the three ancient cities of Eridu (Nun-ki), Larrak (Barbar-ki), and the unknown city of Kinunir-ki. They always appear to figure as sacred cities, and the last of the three only after the name of a goddess, Duzi-abzu, "the mistress of Kinunir"

The names of the Euphrates and Tigris frequently occur on the two cylinders of Gudea. I believe I have also found in them the names of Shumer and Accad-"Kiengi" and "Ki-burbur." But it is not

¹ Dr. Hommel has proposed to read Dalla.

² [Ki-mash seems to be "the country of Mas," or Arabia Petræa; comp. the Mash of Genesis x. 23. The Babylonians derived a name for "copper," kemassu, from its Sumerian appellation.—Ed.]

³ Can the river Gurruda have been the Dead Sea, and can the product

derived from the neighbouring district have been bitumen, as Dr. Hommel has conjectured? It is not probable that all the bitumen required for the buildings of Babylonia was exclusively provided by the little river of Hit. (See Hdt. i. 179.)

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