

INSCRIPTION OF MENUAS, KING OF
ARARAT, IN THE VANNIC LANGUAGE

TRANSLATED BY THE EDITOR

SINCE the publication of my Memoir on "The Cuneiform Inscriptions of Van Deciphered and Translated" in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, xiv. 4, 1882, we have begun to learn something about a race of kings who ruled on the shores of Lake Van in Armenia, from the ninth to the seventh centuries before our era. The founder of the dynasty, Sardanuris I, the son of Lutipris, who reigned in B.C. 833, introduced the cuneiform system of writing as well as other elements of Assyrian culture into the country over which he was king. The inscriptions he has left us are in the Assyrian language; but his successors discontinued the use of a foreign tongue, and the language of their texts is invariably their native one. It is semi-flectional in character, and possibly belongs to the same family of speech as that of which Georgian is the modern representative. For want of a better name it is known as Vannic. The story of its decipherment will be found in the Memoir above cited.

The grandson of Sarduris I was Menuas, a prince who carried his arms far and wide, and has bequeathed to us numerous records of his wars and buildings. Far away from his capital of Dhuspas or Tosp, near the mountain of Rowandiz and the Lake of Urumiyeh, on the summit of the pass of Keli-shin, 12,000 feet above the level of the sea, is a monument of his campaigns, which is wrapt during the greater part of the year in a coating of ice; in the north he engraved his inscriptions beside the banks of the Araxes, while the record of his campaign against "the land of the Hittites" is inscribed on the cliff of the Euphrates at Palu, about midway between Malatiyeh and Van.

The inscription translated here was copied by Schulz and Sir A. H. Layard from a stone built into the wall of a vault under the church of Sts. Peter and Paul at Van, and a squeeze of it has been taken by Captain Clayton. The transliterated text and analysis will be found in my Memoir, xxxii. p. 555. The text is mutilated in parts, and at the time my Memoir was published I was unable to restore some of the passages in it. The progress that has since been made, however, in the study of the Vannic inscriptions, enables me now to supply their deficiencies, and also to correct and supplement the translation I then gave. For the sake of Vannic scholars I append here a transliterated text of the inscription as it should read after the restoration of the missing characters:—

1. [*god* Khal-di-]ni-ni us-ma-si-ni *man* Me-nu-a-s *man* Is-pu-u-i-ni-[khi-ni-s]
2. [a-li-e] i-u tu-su-kha-a-ni *land* Ma-a-na-a-i-di us-ta-a-di
3. [*land* e-ba-]a-ni-a tu-u-bi a-ma-as-tu-u-bi i-ku-u-ka-a-ni
4. [sali si-su-kha-ni-]e *person* Khu-ra-di-ni-li *plural* kid-da-nu-u-li kha-a-i-tu-u
5. [*man* Sa-da-ha-li-]e-khi-ni-ni *land*-ni-ni *city* Su-ri-si-li-ni *city* Tar-khi-ga-ma-a-ni
6. [*city* . . .]-dhu-ra-a-ni *man* Sa-da-ha-li-e-khi-ni-da-a-ni ap-ti-ni
7. [*city* . . .]-li-e-i *stone* gar-bi-e *land* Kha-ti-na-as-ta-a-ni ap-ti-ni
8. i u-e *land* Al-zi-i-ni-ni IIMCXIII *person* ta-ar-su-a-ni
9. [sa-li-]e a-li-ke za-as-gu-u-bi a-li-ke *alive* a-gu-u-bi
10. [*god* Khal-di-]e a-li-ma-a-nu a-ru-u-bi *person* Khu-ra-di-na-u-e *plural*

We learn from the inscription that the land of the *Khate* or Hittites extended as far north as Alzi, the situation of which is given in the inscription of Tiglath-Pileser I (i. 64; see above, p. 94, note 4), and that Sada-hadas, whose name was perhaps pronounced Sanda-hadas, was the king of that portion of the Hittite nation with which Menuas was brought into contact. The mention of the name of the *Khate* or Hittites on this and other Vannic monuments shows that the name was not confined to the Hittites of the south.

INSCRIPTION OF THE VANNIC KING MENUAS

1. (To the KHALDIS-gods),¹ the gracious, Menuas the son of Ispuinis²
2. (speaks) thus: In the *spring* (?), when I had approached the land of MINNI³
3. I carried away the people of (that distant country), I partitioned (them). The same
4. (year), after collecting the (baggage) of the army, the fruits (?)⁴
5. of the country of the son of Sada-halis, the cities of SURISILIS, TARKHI-GAMAS,⁵

¹ The supreme god of Van was Khaldis, but as each tribe or district also worshipped a god of the same name, there were many Khaldis-gods who are invoked by the Vannic kings along with the supreme Khaldis of Van. It was from the worship of Khaldis that the population of a part of Armenia became known to the Greeks as Khaldæi, a name naturally confounded with that of the Chaldeans of Babylonia.

² The Vannic kings usually call themselves kings of Biainas or Bianas, a name which has passed through the Byana of Ptolemy into the modern Van. Van is now, however, the name of the city which the Vannic kings called Dhuspas or Tosp, instead of denoting a district as it did in their time, Tosp being now the name of the district. Biainas was known to the Assyrians under the name of Urardhu, the Ararat of the Old Testament. Mount Ararat, it may be noted, is a modern designation, the name of Ararat not being applied to the country north of the Araxes in the Biblical age, and "the mountains of Ararat" of Genesis viii. 4 signifying, as in the Assyrian inscriptions, the Kurdish mountains to the south of Lake Van.

³ The Mâna of the Vannic texts are the Mannâ of the Assyrians, the Minni of the Old Testament, whose position is shown by the inscriptions to have been immediately to the west of the kingdom of Van, from which they were separated by the Kotûr range.

⁴ *Khai-tû* may be connected with *khai-di-a-ni*, "fruits" (from *khai*, "to grow"), but it may also be a compound of *tu* and *kha*, "to possess," like *'sui-du*, "to set for a possession," or *abili-du*, "to set on fire."

⁵ Tarkhi-gamas seems to be compounded with the name of the Hittite god Tarkhu, like Tarkhu-lara, king of the Gamgumâ, and Tarkhu-nazi, king of Malatiyeh, mentioned on the Assyrian monuments.

6. (and) . . . DHURAS, which is called the seat of the son of Saḍa-hālis,
7. the stones of (the city of) . . . lis, which is called the seat of the HITTITES,
8. (I captured), and 2113 soldiers of (the year),¹ belonging to the country of ALZIS,
9. partly I killed, partly I took alive.
10. (To KHALDIS) I brought all and each of those who belonged to the army.

¹ This expression is of frequent occurrence in the Vannic texts, and its literal translation is certified by ideographs; but what it means is doubtful.

END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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