

THE STANDARD INSCRIPTION OF ASSUR-NATSIR-PAL

BY THE EDITOR

THIS long inscription of Assur-natsir-pal, inscribed in various forms across the bas-reliefs of his palace, ranks next in geographical importance to the annals of Tiglath-Pileser I. Assur-natsir-pal reigned from B.C. 883 to B.C. 858, more than 200 years after his illustrious predecessor. But this interval of 200 years was almost a blank in the history of Assyria. It witnessed the rise of no great king or conqueror; indeed it would seem that the feeble successors of Tiglath-Pileser lost territory rather than gained it. With Assur-natsir-pal, however, a new era commenced. Once more the armies of Nineveh went forth to conquer, and once more it was towards the north and the west that their marches were usually directed. The Armenian kingdoms on the north, Carchemish and Syria to the west, were the main objects of attack.

Tiglath-Pileser had been unable to penetrate beyond the Hittite fortress of Carchemish, and force the fords of the Euphrates which it protected. If he made his way further to the west it was along the

northern range of mountains which led him into Kilikia or to the fertile plain of Malatiyeh. But Assur-natsir-pal was attended with better fortune. The merchant princes of Carchemish had in his day lost their ancient prowess and military spirit, and they were glad to buy off the threatened attack of the Assyrians with a rich bribe. Assur-natsir-pal left Carchemish in his rear and pressed onward towards Phoenicia and the Mediterranean coast. In the time of his son and successor Shalmaneser II, Assyria has already entered within the horizon of the western nations, and has come into contact, not only with the kings of Damascus, but with the kings of Israel as well.

The annals of Assur-natsir-pal present us with an invaluable picture of Western Asia in the ninth century before our era, before Assyrian conquest had as yet changed the political map of the country. It is interesting to compare it with the picture presented by the annals of Tiglath-Pileser two centuries earlier. It is chiefly in the Armenian highlands that a change has taken place, or, it may be, is in process of taking place. The land of Nahri or "the rivers" of Tiglath-Pileser has shifted its position and has passed from the districts at the sources of the Tigris and Euphrates to the southern shores of Lake Van.¹ The rise of the kingdom of Ararat or Van, which was destined to play a considerable part in the future history of Western Asia, was, it would appear, the immediate

¹ See the *Records of the Past*, new series, vol. i. p. 106, note 7.

consequence of the campaigns of Assur-natsir-pal in the north. The cuneiform inscriptions of Armenia begin with Sari-duris I, the antagonist of Shalmaneser II, the son and successor of Assur-natsir-pal, and are not only written in the syllabary of Nineveh, but are modelled on the inscriptions of the Assyrian king. As the city of Dhuspas or Van was founded by Sari-duris, while his father Lutipri is never given the title of king, it is probable that he was the founder of a new dynasty as well as of a new kingdom. At all events Arrame, who appears in the annals of Shalmaneser as the predecessor of Sari-duris, had his capital at Arzaskun, to the west of Lake Van and at a long distance from what was afterwards the central point of the kingdom of Ararat. The wars of Assur-natsir-pal and Shalmaneser not only introduced Assyrian civilisation into the north, but also resulted in the union of a number of small principalities into a single monarchy, which, under the varying names of Ararat and Armenia, long continued to fill an important place in Asiatic history.

On the whole, however, when the veil which lies for two centuries over the map of Western Asia is lifted, we see that few changes have taken place in it. On the east the Kurdish mountains are still held by wild and independent tribes, who form a barrier between the inhabitants of the valley of the Tigris and the Aryan population of Media. South of them comes the ancient and cultured kingdom of Elam, stretching from its capital of Susa to the shores of

the Persian Gulf. The valley of the Euphrates is occupied by the Babylonian monarchy, whose history and civilisation mount back into the night of time, and whose armies had penetrated to the shores of the Mediterranean, and even to the distant island of Cyprus, ages before the very name of Assyria had been known. The western bank of the Euphrates is the home of the Bedouin 'Sukhi or Shuhites, who extend from the vicinity of Carchemish to the frontiers of Babylonia; and the intervening district of Mesopotamia is filled with flourishing cities, each governed by a prince who claims jurisdiction over a small tract of surrounding country. They all belong to the Semitic family, and to the north press hard upon the Hittites, who are already in full retreat towards their old homes in the Taurus mountains. Carchemish, however, now Jerablûs, with its command of the caravan trade from east to west, is still in their hands.

Westward of them are the Patinians, a tribe of Hittite origin, whose territory stretches from Khazaz (now Azaz), near Aleppo, across the Afrin to Mount Amanus, with its forests of cedars, and to the shores of the Gulf of Antioch. But south of the Patinians we are again among the Semites. The sea coast is held by the wealthy trading cities of the Phœnicians, foremost among them being Arvad and Gebal, Sidon and Tyre; while Syria proper is divided into two kingdoms, that of Hamath, which has ceased to be Hittite, and that of Damascus. Damascus had risen upon the ruins of David's empire, which for a brief

space had extended from the Gulf of Aqabah to the banks of the Euphrates. With Damascus, Samaria was brought into close relation, sometimes friendly, but more usually hostile. Its first mention on the Assyrian monuments, however, is in connection with the battle of Qarqar in B.C. 853, when "Ahab of Israel" sent a contingent to the help of Hadadezer or Ben-hadad against his Assyrian assailants.

The wars of Assur-natsir-pal, like most of those of the first Assyrian empire, did not lead to permanent conquest or annexation. They were little more than raids, carried on partly for the sake of plunder, partly in order to exalt the glory and power of the great god Assur, partly to open a road to the west for the merchants of Nineveh. It is possible also that the wars against the hardy mountaineers of Kurdistan or Armenia were intended to prevent the latter from descending into the fields of Assyria and disturbing their more peaceful neighbours. It was not until the rise of the second Assyrian empire, until the age of Tiglath-Pileser III, of Sargon and of Sennacherib, that Assyrian conquest meant absorption into a single great organised power.

Assur-natsir-pal, whose name signifies "Assur has defended the son," was the son and successor of Tiglath-Uras II, and was himself succeeded by his son Shalmaneser after a reign of twenty-five years. His "Standard Inscription" proved of high value in the early days of cuneiform decipherment, on account of the numerous variants presented by the different

copies of it which we possess. It has been partly published in Layard's *Inscriptions in the Cuneiform Character*, pll. I-II, and more fully and accurately in the *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, vol. i. pll. 17-26.

The translation of it given in the first series of *Records of the Past* (vol. iii. pp. 37-80) belongs to the earlier days of Assyrian study, and it has therefore become necessary to replace it by one more accurate and trustworthy. Not only is it now possible to identify the chief localities mentioned in the text, but the progress of Assyrian philology has also made it possible to translate the text with a precision which fifteen years ago was unattainable. Like most of the historical inscriptions, it now offers but few words the rendering of which is doubtful. And its geographical importance and historical interest alike make it desirable that the student who is not an Assyriologist should possess the text in a trustworthy form. A translation of the introductory lines has been published by Lhotzky, *Die Annalen Assurnazirpal's* (Munich, 1884), and the whole inscription has been translated by Dr. Peiser in Schrader's *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek* (1889), vol. i. pp. 51-129.

THE ANNALS OF ASSUR-NATSIR-PAL

COLUMN I

1. TO URAS, the strong, the almighty, the supreme, the firstborn of the gods, the lusty warrior, the unique one, whose onset in battle is unrivalled, the
2. eldest son, the crusher of opposition, the firstborn of EA, the powerful warrior of the angels (*Igigi*), the counsellor of the gods, the offspring of the temple of the earth,¹ the binder of the bonds
3. of heaven and earth, the opener of fountains, who treads down the widespreading earth, the god without whom the laws of heaven and earth are unmade,
4. the strong *champion* (?) who changes not the command of his mouth, the firstborn of the zones, the giver of the sceptre and law to all cities, the forceful
5. minister, the utterance of whose lips alters not, in power far-reaching, the augur of the gods, the exalted one, the meridian Sun-god, the lord of lords, who the extremities of heaven
6. (and) earth superintends with his hand, the king of battle, the illustrious one who overcomes opposition, the sovereign, the unique one, the lord of fountains and seas,

¹ *E-kur*, opposed to *E-sarra*, the temple of the firmament. It represented the earth and the lower world, and so became synonymous with *Aralu* or Hades. Temples were built after the supposed likeness of this "temple of the earth," and the name consequently came to signify a "temple" in general. Uras was the messenger of Mul-lil "the lord of the ghost-world," worshipped at Nipur or Niffer, and identified by the Semites with their supreme Bel. His connection with the ghost-world or Hades explains why Uras should be called "the offspring of the temple of the earth."

7. the strong, the unsparing, whose onset is the deluge that sweeps away the land of the enemy, the slayer of the wicked, the lusty god whose counsel is unchanging,
8. the light of heaven (and) earth, the illuminator of the recesses of the deep, the destroyer of the evil, the subduer of the disobedient, the uprooter of the hostile, whose name in the assembly of the gods
9. no god has changed, the giver of life, the god of mercy to whom prayer is good, who dwells in CALAH,¹ the great lord, my lord; [I] Assur-natsir-pal the powerful king,
10. the king of hosts, the king unrivalled, the king of all the four regions (of the world), the Sun-god of multitudes of men, the favourite of BEL² and URAS, the beloved of ANU
11. and DAGON,³ the hero of the great gods who bows himself (in prayer), the beloved of thy heart, the prince, the favourite of BEL whose high-priesthood
12. has seemed good to thy great divinity so that thou hast established his reign, the warrior hero who has marched in the service of ASSUR his lord, and among the princes
13. of the four regions (of the world) has no rival, the shepherd of fair shows who fears not opposition, the unique one,⁴ the mighty, who has not
14. an opponent, the king who subdues the unsubmissive, who has overcome all the multitudes of men, the powerful hero, who treads
15. upon the neck of his enemies, who tramples upon all that is hostile, who breaks in pieces the squadrons

¹ Now represented by the mounds of Nimrūd at the junction of the Upper or Great Zab and the Tigris.

² This is Bel of Nipur, the Accadian Mul-lil, not the younger Bel-Merodach of Babylon.

³ The Assyrian Dagon was a word of Accadian origin meaning "exalted." He was usually associated with Anu the sky-god, and the worship of both was carried as far west as Canaan. Anat, the wife of Anu, gave her name to the Canaanite town of Beth-Anath (Josh. xix. 38).

⁴ *Eddū*, which of course does not mean "a flood" here.

- of the mighty, who in reliance on the great gods,
his lords,
16. has marched, and whose hand has conquered all lands,
has overcome the mountains to their furthest bounds,
and has received their tribute, who has taken
17. hostages, who has established empire over all lands.
At that time ASSUR the lord, the proclaimer of my
name, the enlarger of my kingdom,
18. entrusted his weapon that spares not to the hands of
my lordship, (even to me) Assur-natsir-pal the ex-
alted prince, the adorer of the great
19. gods, the mighty monster,¹ the conqueror of cities and
mountains to their furthest bounds, the king of
lords, the consumer of the violent, who is crowned
with
20. terror, who fears not opposition, the valiant one, the
supreme judge who spares not, who overthrows
resistance, the king of all princes,
21. the lord of lords, the shepherd-prince, the king of kings,
the exalted prophet, named by URAS the warrior-
god (and) hero of the great gods, the avenger of his
fathers,
22. the king who has marched with justice in reliance
on ASSUR and SAMAS,² the gods his helpers, and
powerful countries and princes his foemen
23. he has cast down like a reed (and) has subjugated all
their lands under his feet, the supplier of the free-
will offerings for the great
24. gods, the established prince, who is provident to direct
the laws of the temples of his country, the work of
whose hands and
25. the gift of whose sacrifices the great gods of heaven and
earth desire and have established his high-priest-
hood in the temples for ever ;
26. their strong weapons have they given for the spoil of
my lordship ; the terror of his weapon, the glory of
his lordship, over the kings

¹ *Usumgal*, a fabulous beast which was supposed to devour the corpses
of the dead. Comp. Isaiah xiii. 21, 22 ; xxxiv. 14.

² The Sun-god.

27. of the four regions (of the world) have they made strong for him ; the enemies of ASSUR to their furthest bounds above and below he has combated, and tribute and gifts
28. he has laid upon them ; (he), the conqueror of the foes of ASSUR, the powerful king, the king of ASSYRIA, the son of Tiglath-Uras, the high priest of ASSUR, who upon all his foemen
29. has laid the yoke, has set up the bodies of his adversaries upon stakes ; the grandson of Rimmon-nirari the high-priest of the great gods,
30. who brought about the overthrow of those who would not obey him, and overcame the world ; the great-grandson of Assur-dân, who
31. founded fortresses (and) established shrines :¹ in those days from the mouth of ASSUR (and) the great gods kingdom, sovereignty (and) majesty issued forth.
32. I am king, I am sovereign, I am exalted, I am strong, I am glorious, I am lusty, I am the firstborn, I am the champion, I am the warrior,
33. I am a lion, I am a hero ; Assur-natsir-pal, the powerful king, the king of ASSYRIA, named of the MOON GOD, the favourite of ANU, the beloved of RIMMON mightiest among the gods,
34. (am) I ; a weapon that spares not, which brings slaughter to the land of his enemies, (am) I ; a king valiant in battle, the destroyer of cities and mountains,
35. the leader of the conflict, the king of the four regions (of the world), who lays the yoke upon his foes, who *enslaves* (?) all his enemies, the king of all the zones of all princes,
36. every one of them, the king who subjugates the un-submissive to him, who has overcome all the multitudes of men. This is the destiny which from the mouth of the great gods

¹ *Isriti* or *csrite*, of the same origin as the Hebrew *ashêrâh*, the symbol of the goddess of fertility, mistranslated "grove" in the authorised version of the Old Testament.

37. has issued forth for me, and they have established (it) firmly as my destiny. According to the desire of my heart and the stretching forth of my hand ISTAR,¹ the lady who loves
38. my high-priesthood, looked with favour upon me and set her heart to make combat and battle, and in those days Assur-natsir-pal, the exalted prince, the worshipper of the great gods,
39. whom BEL has caused to obtain the desire of his heart so that his hand conquered the lands of all princes who submitted not unto him, the conqueror
40. of his foes who in difficult places has broken through the squadrons of the mighty—at that time ASSUR my great lord, the proclaimer of my name,
41. the enlarger of my kingdom over the kings of the four regions (of the world), has mightily magnified my name, the weapon that spares not unto the hands of my lordship
42. he has given to hold. To effect the submission and homage of countries and mighty mountains powerfully has he urged me. In reliance on ASSUR my lord
43. I traversed impassable paths (and) trackless mountains with the forces of my armies: a rival unto me existed not. At the beginning of my reign,
44. in my first year, when the SUN-GOD the judge of the zones (of the world) had thrown his kindly shadow over me, on the throne of royalty mightily I had sat, (and) the sceptre
45. that shepherds mankind he had caused my hand to hold, I collected my chariots (and) armies. Impassable roads (and) trackless mountains, which for the passage
46. of chariots and armies were not suited, I traversed; against the land of NIMME² I marched: LIBÊ³

¹ The Ashtoreth of the Old Testament.

² This must be a different Nimme from the Armenian one, in the neighbourhood of the modern Mush, mentioned by Tiglath-Pileser I. See vol.

i. p. 106, note 1.

³ The name can also be read, but with less probability, Gubbê.

- their strong city (and the cities of) SURRA,
APUQU,
47. ARURA (and) ARUBÉ, which are in sight of the mountains of URINI, ARUNI (and) ETINI,¹ strong cities, I captured; their fighting-men
48. in numbers I slew; their spoil, their goods (and) their oxen I carried away. (Their) soldiers sought the inaccessible mountain. The inaccessible mountain they reached. With (my) forces after them
49. I marched.² The summit of the mountain was like the point of an iron blade, and the flying bird of heaven had not swooped upon it. Like a nest
50. of *hawks* (?) in the midst of the mountain they made their stronghold. Into the midst of them where none among the kings my fathers had penetrated, in three days
51. the hero beheld the mountain; against it did his heart offer opposition: he ascended the mountain on his feet; he overthrew (and) destroyed their nest; their forces
52. he shattered; 200 of their warriors he slew with weapons. Their spoil, multitudinous as a flock of sheep, I carried away.
53. With their blood I dyed the mountain like *wool* (?). The ravine (and) torrent of the mountain devoured³ what was left of them. Their cities
54. I overthrew, dug up (and) burned with fire. From the country of NIMME I departed; into the country of KIRRURI⁴ I descended, the tribute of the countries of KIRRURI
55. 'SIME'SI,⁵ (and) 'SIMERA, the city of ULMANIA, (and)

¹ The Mount Etini in eastern Kurdistan mentioned in col. ii. line 62.

² *Lallik* for *lu allik*.

³ *Akul* for *yakul* after *sade*.

⁴ KIRRURI (or Gurruri) was the district under Mount Rowandiz in Kurdistan, eastward of Assyria, from which a pass led directly into the city of Arbela.

⁵ 'Sime'si lay immediately to the north-east of the pass of Holwan.

- the countries of ADAUS,¹ of the MURGIANS, (and) of the MURMA'SIANS,² horses, mules,³
56. oxen, sheep, wine, (and) a bowl of copper, as their tribute I received. I established a governor over them. When in KIRRURI
57. I was slaying, the glory of ASSUR my lord overwhelmed the people of GOZAN and KHUPUSKA:⁴ horses, silver,
58. gold, lead, copper (and) a bowl of copper as their tribute they brought before me. From KIRRURI I departed,
59. into the lowlands of the city of KHULUN, into the country of QURKHI⁵ of BETANI I descended. The cities of KHATU,⁶ KHATARU, NISTUN, IRBIDI,
60. MITQIA, ARZANIA,⁷ TELA,⁸ (and) KHALUA, the cities of QURKHI which in sight of the mountains of U'SU, ARUA
61. (and) ARARDHI,⁹ mighty mountains, are situated, I captured; their soldiers in multitudes I slew; their spoil (and) their goods I carried away.
62. [Their] soldiers sought the peak (of the mountain); they reached the summit which (is) at the entrance to the city of NISTUN, which hangs from the sky like a cloud. Into the midst of them, where none

¹ Adaus is mentioned by Tiglath-Pileser I; see vol. i. p. 102.

² Or Kharga'sians.

³ The word is expressed by ideographs which signify "animals with large feet." It is therefore probable that a species of horse, like our cart-horse, is meant rather than mules.

⁴ Gozan lay to the south of the kingdom of Ararat between the northern bank of the Tigris and Lake Van. Whether the country of Gozan had anything to do with the city of Gozan which gave its name to Gauzanitis in classical times is doubtful. The city seems to be meant by the Gozan of Scripture (2 Kings xix. 12) which lay on the river Khabour. Khupuska lay to the north of Assyria and the Upper Zab.

⁵ Qurkhi of Betani or Armenia extended eastward of Diarbekir along the northern bank of the Tigris. See vol. i. p. 96, note 3. Qurkhi formed the eastern boundary of the Hittite tribes.

⁶ The name of this city seems to signify "Hittite."

⁷ A variant text gives Artsuain. It may be the Artsuinis of the Vannic inscriptions, the modern Sirka near Van.

⁸ Perhaps the modern Tilleh, at the junction of the Sert river and the Tigris.

⁹ This seems to be the earliest form of the name of Urardhu, the Biblical Ararat.

- among the kings my fathers had penetrated, my warriors flew upon them like birds :
64. 260 of their fighting-men I slew with weapons ; their heads I cut off (and) built into a pyramid. The rest of them like a bird
65. made (their) nest in the rocks of the mountain. Their spoil (and) their goods from the midst of the mountain I brought down. The cities which in the midst
66. of the mighty ranges were situated I overthrew, I dug up, I burned with fire. All the soldiers who had fled from the face of my weapons descended ; my feet
67. they embraced. Tribute, gifts, and a satrap I imposed upon them. Bubu the son of Bubâ,¹ the son of the chief of the city of NISTUN,
68. I flayed in the city of ARBELA (and) clothed the wall of the fortress with his skin. At that time I made an image of my person ; the glorious deeds of my abundant power
69. I inscribed upon (it). I erected (it) in the mountains of the land of EQI in the city of ASSUR-NATSIR-PAL at the head of the river-source.² In the year when I was eponym³ on the 24th day of the month Ab,⁴
70. by the command of ASSUR (and) ISTAR the great gods my lords I departed from the city of NINEVEH ; against the cities which at the foot of the mountains of NIBUR and PAZATE, mighty mountains,
71. are situated I marched ; I conquered the cities of ATKUN, USKHU, PILAZI (and) 20 (other) cities dependent on them. Their numerous fighting-men I slew ;
72. their spoil (and) their goods I carried away ; the cities I burned with fire. All the soldiers who had fled from the face of my weapons descended
73. (and) embraced my feet. I imposed tribute upon them. I departed from the cities which (are) at

¹ A variant text gives Babua.

² The Tigris seems to be referred to rather than the Euphrates.

³ B. C. 883.

⁴ July.

- the foot of the mountains of NIBUR (and) PAZATE.
The river TIGRIS I crossed ;
74. to the land of KUMMUKH¹ I approached. I received the tribute of the countries of KUMMUKH (and) MUSKI,² plates of copper, oxen, sheep (and) wine. While in the land of KUMMUKH
75. I was staying, they brought me back news that the 'SURU of BIT-KHALUPE³ had revolted (and) had murdered their governor Khamatâ.⁴
76. Akhi-yababa a plebeian⁵ whom they had brought from BIT-ADINI,⁶ they raised to the sovereignty over them. With the help of ASSUR (and) RIMMON,
77. the great gods, the enlargers of my sovereignty, I assembled (my) chariots (and) armies, I occupied the banks of the KHABUR.⁷ On my march the tribute
78. abundant of Sallimmanu-khaman-ilani of the city of SADIKAN,⁸ the son of Ilu-Rimmon⁹ of the city of QATNA,¹⁰ silver, gold,
79. lead, plates of copper, variegated cloths, (and) linen vestments I received. To the city of 'SURI of BIT-KHALUPE I approached ;
80. the fear of the glory of ASSUR my lord overwhelmed

¹ The Komagênê of classical geography ; see vol. i. p. 95, note 1.

² The Moskhi of classical geography, the Meshech of the Old Testament ; see vol. i. p. 94, note 3.

³ The modern Helebi on the western bank of the Euphrates, midway between the mouths of the Balikh and the Khabour. The classical Sura (now Surieh), a little above the mouth of the Balikh, preserved the name of the 'Suru.

⁴ The name means " the Hamathite."

⁵ Literally " the son of nobody."

⁶ Bit-Adin was on the eastern bank of the Euphrates, not far from its junction with the Balikh. It may be the Eden of Ezek. xxvii. 23 and 2 Kings xix. 12.

⁷ The modern Khabour, which joins the Euphrates at the site of Circesium.

⁸ Now Arban, on the eastern bank of the Khabour, where Sir A. H. Layard discovered the remains of a palace. Dr. Peiser may be right in reading the name Gar-dikan.

⁹ Or Ilu-Dadu, " Hadad is god." Dadu or Hadad was the Syrian name of the deity which the Assyrians identified with their Rimmon. The compound Hadad-Rimmon is found in Zech. xii. 11,

¹⁰ We may compare the name of Yoktan in Gen. x. 25. In W. A. I. ii. 60, 30, mention is made of " Qatnu the god of the city of Qatan."

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