

RECORDS OF THE PAST



# RECORDS OF THE PAST

BEING ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

OF THE

ANCIENT MONUMENTS OF EGYPT AND  
WESTERN ASIA

*NEW SERIES*

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## PREFACE.

THANKS to my contributors, I have this year been able to redeem my promise of issuing two volumes of the *Records of the Past* during the same season. The monumental records of the ancient oriental world are so numerous, and so much new material is continually being brought to light, that it is difficult for either contributors or editors to keep pace with the discoveries that are constantly being made. All we can hope to do is to lay before the public the most important of the documents which have thus been rescued from forgetfulness, and the latest and most authoritative renderings of the texts.

The latest discovery of interest to the student of the Old Testament has been announced from Berlin. Among the tablets from Tel el-Amarna which have been acquired for the Museum at Berlin, five are found to have been despatches sent from the king or governor of Jerusalem to the kings of Egypt. I had already recognised the name of Uru'salim or "Jerusalem" in a tablet now in Cairo (*Academy*, 19th April 1890, p. 273); the tablets at Berlin

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give us further and unexpected information in regard to the later capital of the Judæan kingdom. In the fifteenth century before our era Jerusalem was governed by a certain Abdi-dhaba, or Ebed-tob as his name would have been written in Hebrew; and it is his letters which have just been deciphered by the German Assyriologists. He claims to have occupied a more independent position than the governors of the other cities of Palestine at the time. They were merely Egyptian officials, whereas he, though owning allegiance to the Egyptian monarch, claims to have been appointed to his office by "the oracle of the mighty king." This "mighty king" is shown by one of the despatches to have been the deity who was worshipped at Jerusalem. Abdi-dhaba, accordingly, must have been a priest-king like Melchizedek, "the priest of the most high God." A broken tablet which I copied in M. Bouriant's collection tells us what was the local name of the deity in question. Here we read: *al sad Uru'salim-KI al bit AN NIN-IP: sumu Mar-ruv al sarri padarat asar nisi al Kilti-KI*, "the city of the Mountain of Jerusalem, the city of the temple of the god Uras, (whose) name (there is) Marru, the city of the king, *defending* (?) the locality of the men of the city of Keilah." Consequently "the most high God," of whom Abram was blessed, was locally known under the name of *Marru*, which seems to be connected with the Aramaic *marê*, "lord," and was identified with the Babylonian Uras, the Eastern Sun. It is

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possible that the name of the god may throw light on that of Moriah, "the mountain" on which his sanctuary was erected.

Abdi-dhaba describes himself as having had dealings with the Kassi or Babylonians, and in one of his letters he says: "so long as a ship crosses the sea—this is the oracle of the mighty king—so long shall there be a continuance of the conquests of Nahrima and the Babylonians." Nahrima represents the Aram Naharaim of Scripture, and it is interesting to find that the conquests of a king of that country were known and feared in southern Palestine a hundred years before Israel was oppressed by Chushan-rish-athaim, the king of Aram Naharaim (Judg. iii. 8-10). The mention of the Babylonians is also interesting since Manetho avers that when the Hyksos were expelled from Egypt they built Jerusalem as a defence against the "Assyrians." In the age of Manetho "Assyrians" and "Babylonians" were synonymous terms.

While we are thus learning the inner history of Palestine in the century before the Israelitish invasion, the history of the fall of the Assyrian empire, late as it comparatively is in time, is still shrouded in obscurity. Two new facts only have been acquired of recent years in regard to it. One is that the Assyrian king whose name was doubtfully restored as [Bel-sum-]iskun was really called Sin-sar-iskun; the other is that Assur-etil-ilâni-yukinni, the son and successor of Assur-bani-pal, was acknow-

ledged in northern Babylonia as late as the 4th year of his reign, tablets of that date having been found at Niffer by the American expedition. Since Sin-sar-iskun seems evidently to be the Sarakos of Abydênos and Alexander Polyhistor, we must regard him as the last king of Assyria, of whom it was said that he had burnt himself to death in his palace. But between Assur-etil-ilâni-yukinni and Sin-sar-iskun it would appear that there was at least one king, possibly two. A tablet (K 195) was discovered by Mr. George Smith from which he translates the following passage: "Sin-inadina-pal son of Assur-akh-iddin (Esar-haddon), king of Assyria, whose name on this tablet is inscribed, to the government in the earth, in the presence of thy great divinity Shamas great lord, he is proclaimed and established."<sup>1</sup> The name of Sin-inadina-pal, or rather Sin-iddina-pal, reminds us of the classical Sardanapallos, and the tablet on which his name occurs belongs to a peculiar group, distinguished from all others in the Kouyunyik collection by their style of writing and expression. They begin with the words: "O Sun-god, great lord, I beseech thee; remove (our) sin."

Two tablets of this group (K 4668 and S 2005) were published by myself for the first time in 1877, in the Appendix to my *Babylonian Literature* (pp. 78-82).<sup>2</sup> I there pointed out that they belong to the closing days of the Assyrian Empire, and that

<sup>1</sup> *History of Assurbanipal*, p. 324.

<sup>2</sup> See *Records of the Past*, xi. first series, pp. 79-84. Other tablets belonging to the same group are K 4270, S 384, and S 2002.



the Esar-haddon mentioned in them must be a later king than the Esar-haddon otherwise known to history. I have since seen no reason to change my opinion. Before examining their contents, however, it is as well to translate such portions of them as give a continuous sense.

## K 4668.

1. "O SUN-GOD, great lord, I beseech thee; O god of fixed destiny, remove [our] sin!
2. From this day, [from] the 3rd day of this month, even the month Iyyar, to the 15th day of Ab of this year,
3. for these 100 days (and) 100 nights religious ordinances (and) holy days the prophets have proclaimed in *writing* (?).
4. Whether Kastariti with his soldiers, or the soldiers of the GIMIRRÂ (Kimmerians),
5. or the soldiers of the MADÂ (Medes), or the soldiers of the MANNÂ (Minni), or (some other) enemy are capturing,
6. overflow, (and) plot, as to whether on the seventh day or . . .
7. or on a holy day with the weapons of war and combat, or with fire or engines that discharge bolts and missiles,
8. or with a *battering-ram* (?) or *siege* (?), or with famine,
9. or by oaths in the names of god and [king], or by . . .
10. or by a covenant in writing they shall occupy the . . . of the city.
11. The city of KISA's'SU they have taken; a [trophy? in] the midst of the cities of KHARTAM (and) KISA's'SU they erect:
12. the cities of KHARTAM (and) KISA's'SU their hands capture.
13. Into their hands is delivered thy great divinity.  
The . . .

14. . . . of the cities of KHARTAM (and) KISA'S'SU the enemy sieze with the hands.
15. From this day to the day of the lesser feast, in the land, in the presence of thy great divinity
16. during the day within their . . . .
17. . . . . they plot, they return and . . . .
26. Since that this day, even the 3rd day of this month Iyyar, until the 11th day of the month Ab of this year,
27. Kastariti with [his] soldiers, the soldiers of the GIMIRRÂ, the soldiers of the MANNÂ,
28. the soldiers of the MADÂ and [the enemy] are capturing,
29. the cities of KHARTAM (and) KISA'S'SU [they have taken], the cities of KHARTAM (and) KISA'S'SU they have entered,
30. the cities of KHARTAM (and) KISA'S'SU [their hands] capture; to their hands they are delivered."

## S 2005.

1. "[O SUN-GOD], great [lord], I beseech thee, O god of fixed destiny remove [our sin]!
2. [Kas]tariti the lord of the city of KAR-KASSÎ, who to Mamiti-arsu
3. [the lord of the city] of the MADÂ sent, saying: We are confederate with one another, from the country [of ASSYRIA let us revolt.]
4. [Mami]ti-arsu listens; he is obedient; he sets his face
5. [to revolt] this year from Esar-haddon king [of ASSYRIA.]"

The rest of the tablet is too broken for translation, but mention is again made in it of "Mamiti-arsu" or "Vavit-arsu," "the lord of the city of the Medes," and we are told that the city of Zaz was captured. Reference is also made in the tablets to

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the city of 'Sandu-litir and the 'Sapardâ or Sepharad of Obadiah (20), as well as to the fact that the enemy had "entered the city of Kilman."

The language of the tablets is not that of a powerful conqueror like Esar-haddon the son of Sennacherib. Moreover, the historical situation presupposed by them does not suit the history of his reign. He defeated the Gimirrâ on the northern frontier of his kingdom and drove them to the west. Their leader was Teuspa, not Kastarit, and he is called a Manda or "nomad." The Gimirrâ, furthermore, who were led by Teuspa, were not in alliance with the Medes or with any other of the populations of the north. The war of Esar-haddon with the Medes did not take place until long after the defeat of the Kimmerians, and so far were the Medes from being the aggressors that it was Esar-haddon who invaded their territory in the distant east. The Medes, in fact, were not yet in contact with the frontiers of Assyria. Finally, their leader was not Mamiti-arsu. The "city-lords" who were attacked and subjected by Esar-haddon bore the names of Sidirparna, Eparna, Uppiz, Zana'sana, and Ramateya. There is a plentiful choice of names here, but that of Mamiti-arsu does not appear among them.

On the other hand, the confederacy of which Kastarit was the head strikingly resembles that which is called upon in the prophecies of Jeremiah (li. 27, 28) to destroy the empire of Babylon. The prophet summons the "kingdoms of Ararat, Minni,

and Ashkenaz," and "the kings of the Medes" to march upon Babylonia. Ararat or Van and Ashkenaz, the Assyrian Asguza, take the place of Kastarit and the Gimirrà, but otherwise the situation is the same as that which is represented in the tablets. It is clear from Jer. l. 17, li. 34, that the prophecy was written while Nebuchadrezzar was still upon the throne of Babylon, and it would follow that the tablets which depict a similar political situation cannot belong to a much earlier date.

The Esar-haddon of the tablets, therefore, must be a later prince than Esar-haddon the father of Assur-bani-pal. The conclusion is confirmed by a tablet, published in *W. A. I.*, iii. 16, No. 2, which has been the subject of a special study by M. Amiaud.<sup>1</sup> It reads as follows: "Order of the daughter of the king to the lady Assur-sarrat. Now do not inscribe thy tablet, do not utter thy word, lest perhaps they say: 'This (is) the mistress of Serua-edherat, the eldest daughter of the harem of Assur-etil-ilâni-yukinni, the great king, the powerful king, the king of legions, the king of Assyria.' Yet thou (art) a mighty princess, the lady of the house of Assur-bani-pal, the eldest royal son of the harem of Esar-haddon king of Assyria." It would appear from these words that the wife of Assur-bani-pal, the eldest son of Esar-haddon, "king of Assyria," had attempted to assume authority over the dowager queen of Assur-etil-ilâni-yukinni. As the latter king

<sup>1</sup> "Esarhaddon II" in *The Babylonian and Oriental Record*, ii. 9.

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was the successor of Assur-bani-pal, it is obvious that the Esar-haddon referred to in the tablet could not have been the father of Assur-bani-pal, and that the Assur-bani-pal whose wife was Assur-sarrat must have been a different prince from the famous Assyrian monarch. We must see in him a brother of Sin-iddina-pal, and it is possible that the Greek Sardanapallos has originated out of a fusion of the names of the two brothers Assur-(bani-pal) and (Sin)-iddina-pal.

However this may be, we must regard the existence of Esar-haddon II as an ascertained fact of history. Whether he was succeeded by one of his two sons Sin-iddina-pal and Assur-bani-pal II we do not know. All that seems clear is that between Assur-etil-ilâni-yukinni, the immediate successor of Assur-bani-pal, and Sin-sar-iskun the last Assyrian king there intervened the reign of Esar-haddon II, and that under him the foes of the empire first began to gather against it from the north-east. The king turned for help to the gods and the prophets ; and the armies that had once made the name of Assyria terrible throughout the eastern world could no longer defend the cities they had garrisoned.

A. H. SAYCE.

QUEEN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD,  
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