

A VOTIVE INSCRIPTION OF ASSUR- NATSIR-PAL

TRANSLATED BY S. ARTHUR STRONG

THE following inscription is on a tablet of alabaster, which, with a duplicate copy, was found in a marble coffer by Mr. Rassam in the course of his excavations at Balawât in 1878, and is now in the British Museum. It begins with the genealogy of Assurnatsir-pal and a short account of his conquering advance from east to west, from beyond the Tigris to the Mediterranean, which is repeated almost word for word from his great inscription. (Col. ii. lines 125-131. See *Records of the Past*, new series, vol. ii. p. 161.) The king then records how he recaptured and brought once more within the sphere of his dominion a town or fortress, to which he gave the name Imgur-Bel or "Bel's Delight." The position of this place, which was not far east of the ancient Kalah, is now marked by the mound of Balawât. Here he built a temple to Makhir, whom we know only as the god of dreams, but who doubtless possessed other and more important attributes and functions. It was among the ruins of this temple

that the coffer containing the tablets was discovered. The inscription closes with the usual appeal to the future king to respect the pious memory of his predecessor, and to restore the building and replace the tablet in the event of their removal or decay. To him who shall thus act the blessing of Assur is promised; while, on the other hand, the curse of Ishtar is invoked upon him who, with the tablet in view, should insult the memory of Assur-natsir-pal. This work of construction and restoration at Imgur-Bel, left unfinished by the great king at his death in 858 B.C., was taken up and completed by his son and successor, a ruler of kindred spirit, Shalmaneser II.

The tablets are in a state of good preservation, and the writing is regular and clear. They are remarkable for the use made throughout by the scribe of vertical lines of division between words or groups of words, thus:—

Assur-natsir-pal | *sarru rab-u* | *sarru dan-nu* |
sar kissati sar Assur |

Instances of such a use of dividing-lines are extremely rare in Assyrian inscriptions, whereas on the Persian cuneiform monuments the words are invariably separated, but by a wedge placed diagonally.

The lid of the coffer in which this text was found bears a somewhat defaced inscription of the same character, which, however, ends with the words of line 40 of the present translation.

The text has been published (with an introduction, transliteration, and translation) by Mr. Budge in the seventh volume of the *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, p. 59, and in the fifth volume of *The Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, plates 69 and 70.

A VOTIVE INSCRIPTION OF ASSUR-
NATSIR-PAL

1. Assur-natsir-pal, the great king, the mighty king, king of the world, king of ASSYRIA,
2. son of Tukulti-Uras, the great king, the mighty king, king of the world, king of ASSYRIA, son of Rimmon-nirari,
3. the great king, the mighty king, king of the world, king of the same ASSYRIA,
4. the warrior chief, who with the help of ASSUR his lord has marched, and among the princes of the four regions¹
6. his rival has not had ; the king who from
7. beyond the TIGRIS to LEBANON and the great sea,
8. LAQI throughout its circuit,
9. 'SUKHI² as far as the city of RAPIQU to his feet
10. subdued ; from the source³
11. of the 'SUPNAT⁴ to the passes of
12. KIRRURI, to GILZANI,⁵
13. from the other side of the lower ZAB
14. to the city of TIL-BARI, which (is) above
15. ZABAN, from the city of TIL-SABTANI
16. to the city of TIL-SA-ZABDANI,

¹ The translator in the *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, p. 71, reads *ina maliki sar sa kiprat arbata*, having evidently mistaken the wedges of the plural-sign for the character for "king."

² The Shuhites of the Old Testament (Job ii. 11), on the west bank of the Euphrates between the Balikh and the Khabour.

³ *Ris ini*, the source : not *riseni*, as one word, which would be, if anything, an anomalous plural from *risu*.

⁴ The Sebbeneh Su, which forms one of the sources of the Tigris north of Diarbekir.

⁵ [Or Guzan (Gozan).]

17. the city of KHIRIMU, the city of KHARUTU, the fortresses
18. of KAR-DUNIAS¹ to the territory
19. of my country I restored, and the broad
20. lands of NAIRI throughout its whole extent
21. I conquered. That city I took anew ;
22. IMGUR-BEL its name I called ;
23. this temple with the brick of my palace
24. verily I built ; an image of MAKHIR² my lord
25. in the midst verily I set up ; to LEBANON
26. verily I went ; beams of cedar,
27. of cypress, of juniper I cut ;
28. beams of cedar upon this temple
29. I fastened ; doors of cedar
30. I made ; with a rim of copper I overlaid (them) ;
31. at its gates I fixed (them) ; this temple
32. I furnished, I made great ; MAKHIR the great lord
33. in the midst I seated ; an inscribed tablet in his temple
34. I placed. O later prince of the kings
35. my sons, whom ASSUR shall call,
36. (if) this temple decay, (and) the tablet thou see, and
37. read, its ruins do thou restore ; thy name with my name write ;³
38. to its place do thou bring (it) back ! ASSUR the lord, the great one, MAKHIR,
39. who dwells in this temple by their favourite⁴ rightly
40. shall triumph ; his tablet, his name, his seed in their land may they establish !
41. He who the tablet shall see, and offence in plenty
42. speak, may ISHTAR, lady of fight and battle,

¹ Babylonia.

² In *W. A. I.*, ii. 58, 12, Makhir is called "the daughter of Samas" ; but the same deity is invoked as a male in one of the penitential psalms (*W. A. I.*, iv. 66, 2) translated by Zimmer (*Busspsalmen*, p. 100), and Sayce (*Hibbert Lectures*, p. 355), "May Makhir, god of dreams, rest upon my head !"

³ There is no need here for an amendment of the text, which is plainly as follows : *sumi-ka itti sumi-ya sudhur.*

⁴ The phrase *nisi ini*, literally "the raising of the eyes," means "grace" or "favour," hence the object of such grace or favour, a favourite or darling (*Liebling*, Delitzsch).

43. his weapons break in pieces, his throne
 44. take from him!¹ He who the tablet shall see, and
 45. read, (and) anointing the pavement-stones, sacrificing
 a lamb,
 46. to its place shall restore (it), Assur the great lord his
 prayers
 47. shall hear, (and) in the battle of kings, the field
 48. of engagement, his heart's desire²
 49. shall cause him to attain.

¹ By separating *lu* from the verb and giving it a temporal meaning the translator in *T. S. B. A.* (p. 78) has missed the force of this passage, which is clearly precative. See Delitzsch, *Assyrian Grammar*, p. 260.

² *Ammar libbi* = *māla libbi*, literally "the fulness of the heart;" cp. Esarhaddon, Hexagonal Prism, Col. iv. 41, *amtsu māla libbi*, "I attained my heart's desire."

END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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