

INSCRIPTION OF RIMMON-NIRARI III

TRANSLATED BY S. ARTHUR STRONG

THE following inscription is on a pavement slab found at Nimrud, the ancient Calah, and now in the British Museum. It has been published in the first volume of *The Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, p. 35, No. 3, as well as (from an incomplete duplicate) by Layard on p. 70 of his volume of *Cuneiform Inscriptions*, and Bonomi in his work on *Nineveh*, p. 339. It has been translated by Sayce in the first volume of the former series of *Records of the Past*, and (into German) by Abel in the first volume of Schrader's *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek*.

It contains the genealogy of Rimmon-nirari III, whose reign lasted from 811 to 783 B.C., during which time he was ceaselessly occupied in consolidating and extending the conquests of his predecessors. In fact, on the eponym list for this period there is not a single year not marked by a campaign. Among other exploits he subdued Damascus, and forced its king to pay tribute. His empire extended from the borders of Elam on the south-east to the Mediterranean on the west, and included as vassal-states

Tyre, Sidon, Edom, Philistia, and Israel. After his death the Assyrian power of the first epoch, having reached its furthest limits, began to decline.

One of the most striking events of his reign was the revival in Assyria of the worship of Nebo. The latter had not been unknown to the Assyrians, but his cult was not so important with them as with the Babylonians, as is shown by the fact that up to the time of Rimmon-nirari his name rarely enters into the composition of proper names. Rimmon-nirari built a new temple for him at Calah, which, as we learn from the eponym list, he entered in the year 787.

From the concluding words of the inscription on the statue of Nebo in the British Museum (*W. A. I.*, 35, 2) it might even appear as if it had been intended that the worship of Nebo should dominate, or actually supersede, that of all other gods: "Put thy trust in Nebo; trust in no other god!" But if this was the project, it was not successful.

The inscription here translated is remarkable from the fact that Rimmon-nirari, after tracing his descent back to his great-grandfather, Assur-natsir-pal, begins again, as it were, at a point still more remote, and boasts himself the descendant of Tiglath-adar, son of Shalmaneser I., behind whom again there stand the mysterious forms of the otherwise unknown Belkapkapi and 'Sulili.

But the rendering of the latter part of the inscription is put forward only provisionally, to be contradicted or confirmed by future researches.

GENEALOGY OF RIMMON-NIRARI III

1. The palace of Ramman-nirari, the great king, the mighty king,
2. The universal king,¹ King of ASSYRIA, the king whom, as his child, ASSUR,
3. King of the spirits of heaven (?),² appointed, and (with) a kingdom
4. without rival has filled
5. his hand. From the great sea
6. of the rising of the sun to the great
7. sea of the setting of the sun
8. his hand conquered, and has subdued
9. in all entirety. The son of Samsi-Ramman,
10. the great king, the mighty king, the universal king, King of ASSYRIA,
11. the king without rival, the son of Sulman-asarid,³
12. the king of the four regions, who upon the land of his foes
13. has laid (his) yoke, and has overpowered (them) like a flood.
14. Grandson of Assur-natsir-pal,⁴ the manly warrior,
15. who made wide the dwellings of the troops.
16. Ramman-nirari, the exalted prince, to whom ASSUR, SAMAS,
17. RAMMAN⁵ and MERODACH as his helpers
18. have gone, and have extended his country,
19. descendant of Tukulti-Adar (?),⁶ King of ASSYRIA,

¹ Literally "king of totality."

² *Igigi*, perhaps literally "the strong ones," from *agāgu*.

³ Shalmaneser II, B.C. 859-824.

⁴ B.C. 884-859.

⁵ Or Rimmon, the Air-god.

⁶ Or Tiglath-Uras, B.C. 890-884.

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20. King of SUMIR and ACCAD,
 21. descendant of Sulman-asarid, the mighty king,
 22. who enlarged E-KHARSAK-KURKURRA,¹
 23. the mountain of the lands ; descendant
 24. of Bel-kap-kapi, a former king,
 25. who went before me, belonging to the ancient time of
the kingdom
 26. of 'Sulili (?), of which from
 27. old time ASSUR has proclaimed the report.

¹ E-kharsak-Kurkurra is here the name of a temple, but it had also, and originally, a cosmical meaning as applied to the world-mountain—that is, to the world conceived as a mountain. And the idea of a world-mountain seems to have passed into that of a mountain in the world, or on the earth, which, as the abode of the gods, recalls the Indian Meru. See Jensen, *Kosmologie der Babylonier*, pp. 201-205.

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