

RECORDS OF THE PAST

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BEING ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

OF THE

ANCIENT MONUMENTS OF EGYPT AND
WESTERN ASIA

NEW SERIES

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Multæ terricolis linguæ, coelestibus una

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PREFACE

I HAVE again to deplore the death of one of my colleagues, Mr. G. Bertin, whose contributions to Assyriology had secured for him a foremost place in the small band of Assyrian scholars. Like M. Amiaud, he had especially devoted himself to the study of Sumerian, in which, therefore, his loss will be particularly felt. His valuable contribution to the third volume of the present series of *Records of the Past* on the precepts of early Sumerian agriculture was one of the last literary works upon which he was engaged.

The tablets discovered at Tel el-Amarna naturally continue to absorb a large part of the attention both of Assyriologists and of Egyptologists, so far, at least, as they have been published, since the collection contained in the British Museum is still, at the moment of my writing this, inaccessible to scholars. Repeated examination of the originals is clearing up doubtful points in the text and correcting the readings of the first copyists. Thus, as will be seen from the translations I give in this volume, the important passage referring to the deity worshipped at Jeru-

saalem which occurs in one of the letters of Ebed-tob, and which I have quoted in my preface to the last volume of the series, must be amended in more than one respect (see p. 72, line 16, and note 9). In another tablet published in the *Mittheilungen aus den orientalischen Sammlungen*, ii. No. 39, the Rev. Dr. Scheil has pointed out that mention is twice made of "the Yaudu." In the Assyrian inscriptions of a later period the name of the Jews is written in the same manner, and the question accordingly presents itself whether the "Yaudu" of Tel el-Amarna can be identified with the descendants of Judah. The mutilated letter, however, in which the name is found is shown, both by its phonology and by the references it contains, to have been despatched from Syria, or at all events from the northern part of Palestine, where it is difficult to account for the presence of Jews. So far as the shattered condition of the tablet permits we may translate it as follows: "Thou hast made me stand in front of the great gate, and thou art my lord, and let my lord listen to the servants of his servant. Send Aziru thy servant into the places (for which) thou didst not *commission* (?) him, and let him defend the provinces of the king my lord. A second time (I say) to Dûdu my lord: Hear the words of the kings of the country of Nukhasse (which) they have spoken unto me: Thy father with gold . . . the king of Egypt, and . . . the end of his levy from Egypt and all the provinces and the soldiers of the Yaudu . . .

[thus] they have spoken . . . [send therefore] Aziru from Egypt, and now I will *remove* (?) the Yaudu from the country of [Tu]nip." Tunip was the modern Tennib, north-west of Aleppo, while Nukhasse lay between Aleppo and Hamath. How any body of soldiers with the name of Yaudu could be found in this region is a puzzle.

Two inscriptions, however, discovered by German explorers, may hereafter help to throw light on the question. The more important of the two, now at Berlin, was found near Sinjerli, a little to the north-east of the Gulf of Antioch. It is a monument erected by Bar-tsor in honour of his father Panammu, king of Samahla, who is mentioned among the tributaries of Tiglath-pileser III. The inscription, which is in Aramæan letters, refers to "Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria," the names both of Tiglath-pileser and of Assyria being written as they are in the Old Testament. The language of the inscription is to a certain extent Aramaic, but to a much greater extent Hebrew, and thus presents a philological problem of the highest interest, for the solution of which we must look to Prof. Sachau and his colleagues at Berlin. In any case it points to Hebrew influence in the extreme north of Syria as far back as the eighth century before our era.

The past year has added to our knowledge of Babylonian history and chronology. In the *Academy* of 5th September 1891 Mr. Pinches gives an account of the historical results of the American excavations

at Niffer, the ancient Nipur. Not only have contemporaneous inscriptions of Sargon of Accad and his son Naram-Sin (3800 B.C.) been found there, but also texts of another king of the same age called Erimus. It seems probable that the name of a fourth king, Garde, belonging to the same period, has also been discovered.

Objects inscribed with the names of certain kings of the Kassite dynasty, one of which is new, have also been disinterred. Two of the names are written phonetically, and read Kadas-man-Turgu and Kadas-man-Urbe, which, as Mr. Pinches points out, must signify "my trust is the god Turgu" and "my trust is Bel." This settles the reading of the name which I have given as Kara-Urus in the first volume of this series (p. 16), and which must accordingly be corrected into Kadas-man-Urbe, and it further shows that the identification of the latter with Kudur-Bel, the father of Sagasalti-Buryas, must be given up. Moreover, Mr. Pinches is clearly right in regarding Gandis, the founder of the Kassite dynasty, as identical with Gaddas, a prince who styles himself "king of Sumer and Accad," and "king of Babylon" (*Babylonian and Oriental Record*, i. 4).

The important fragments of the Babylonian Chronicle recently discovered by Mr. Pinches and translated by him in this volume, throw fresh light on the date to which the Kassite dynasty must be referred. We now know that Rimmon-suma-natsir, or Rimmon-nadin-akhi (for the name may be read

either way), the 32d king of the Kassite dynasty, drove the Assyrian conqueror, Tiglath-Uras, out of Babylon, and that the seven years' reign of the latter has been omitted by the patriotic compiler of the list of Babylonian kings. Now Sennacherib tells us that when he conquered Babylon he recovered a seal of Tiglath-Uras which had been there for 600 years. The seal seems to have been made to commemorate the conquest of Babylonia by the Assyrian monarch, since the inscription upon it describes it as "the property of the land of Kar-Dunis," or Chaldæa.¹ Sennacherib sacked Babylon 691 B.C., and consequently the seal would have been engraved by order of Tiglath-Uras in 1291 B.C. The Assyrian domination would have lasted till 1284 B.C., which would accordingly be the first year of Rimmon-suma-natsir, and the Kassite dynasty would have come to an end in 1222 B.C.

My conjecture, therefore, that the Babylonian

¹ The account of the seal given by Sennacherib is as follows (*W. A. I.*, iii. 4, No. 2): "[The seal] of 'Tiglath-Uras, king of multitudes, the son of Shalmaneser, king of Assyria; the property of the country of Kar-Du(nis). Whoever buries my writing (and) my name, may Assur (and) Rimmon destroy his name (and) his land.' This seal accompanied the king from Assyria to Accad. I, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, after 600 years captured Babylon, and brought (it) out (and) carried (it) away from the treasure of Babylon. 'Whoever makes the seal legible (?) [ensures?] the preservation of my life.'—'Tiglath-Uras, king of multitudes, the son of Shalman, king of Assyria; the property of the country of Kar-Dunis. Whoever buries [my writing and my name], may Assur and Rimmon [destroy] his name [and his land]. Whoever makes the seal legible (?) [ensures?] the preservation of my life.' (This is) what (was) on the seal of crystal." *Iktadin*, "accompanied," has the same root as *kidinu*, a synonym of *talmutu*, "companionship." I read doubtfully *sa PUR-RA PUR-RA GAR*, "whoever makes (the seal) intelligible" or "legible." For the Sumerian *PUR-RA* in the sense of "interpreting" see *W. A. I.*, ii. 32, 67; iv. 16, 9.

princes who were contemporary with the Assyrian kings, Tiglath-pileser I. and his son, belonged to the dynasty of Isin, is disproved, and we shall have to look for them among the kings of the Babylonian dynasty which succeeded the "Elamite" of unknown name (*Records of the Past*, New Series, i. p. 17). According to Sennacherib, the defeat of Tiglath-pileser I. by the Babylonians took place 418 years before his own conquest of Babylon, and consequently 1109 B.C. On the other hand, the "Second Dynastic Tablet" counts 120 years from the commencement of the reign of Rimmon-suma-natsir to the death of the "Elamite" usurper, which would bring us to 1102 B.C. It is therefore evident that the compiler of it has included the seven years' rule of the Assyrians in Babylon in the reign of Rimmon-suma-natsir, and that therefore the Kassite dynasty must have ended, not in 1222 B.C., but in 1229 B.C. The round number of 600 years given by Sennacherib for the length of time during which the seal of Tiglath-Uras remained in Babylon is seven years in excess, the error having been occasioned by the omission of the reign of Tiglath-Uras in the official lists of the Babylonian kings.

Between the date thus obtained and that given by Alexander Polyhistor from Bêrôssos for the beginning of the Assyrian dynasty at Babylon there is a difference of eleven years. We learn from the extract preserved in the Armenian Chronicle of Eusebios that after a short period of Assyrian

domination in Babylonia, symbolised by the name of Semiramis, a dynasty of 45 kings governed the country for 526 years, and was followed by Nabonassar in 747 B.C. The Assyrian domination consequently would have ended in 1273 B.C., so that according to this calculation the conquest of Tiglath-Uras took place in 1280 B.C. It is plain that we must read 536 for 526.¹

The Kassite dynasty will have begun in 1806 B.C., that of Uru-azagga (or Tello) in 2174 B.C., and that of Babylon in 2468 B.C. The reign of Khammurabi will therefore have extended from 2356 B.C. to 2301, and the raid of the Elamite Kudur-Nankhundi with Babylonia in 2285 B.C. will have happened in the reign of his son and successor. But too much confidence must not be placed in the earlier dates given in the dynastic tablets. The reigns of the kings are suspiciously long, and the same number of regnal years recurs with almost impossible frequency. Moreover, it is not till we come to the Kassite dynasty that any notice is taken of months as well as of years. I am therefore inclined to believe that the reign of Khammurabi must be placed about

¹ The six "Arab" kings mentioned by George the Synkellos are evidently the first six kings of the dynasty of Isin, though the regnal years attached to their names are wide of the truth. The Third dynasty of Bérossos (as reported by Alexander Polyhistor) is the First dynasty of Babylon of the cuneiform tablets, the Fourth and Fifth dynasties representing the dynasties of Uru-azagga and the Kassites down to the conquest of Babylon by Tiglath-Uras. But the Greek writer has not divided his dynasties in the same way as the compiler of the tablets, and it has long been recognised that the number of years they are severally said to have ruled is impossible. The number of kings (58) belonging to the two dynasties of the Greek writer corresponds with the number of kings in the three first dynasties of the cuneiform record.

seventy years later than the date assigned to it in the dynastic tablets, and to abide by the conclusions I arrived at in the first volume of this series, pp. 10, 11. Further discoveries can alone settle the matter.

The length of time during which Babylonia was governed by Kassite kings must have left a deep impression upon the population. Accordingly, we find that in the Tel el-Amarna tablets the Babylonians are called the Kassî, or people of Kas, a name which appears in the Old Testament as Cush. The Babylonian conquests in Palestine and the profound influence they long exerted there, as revealed to us by the letters of Tel el-Amarna, at last show light on the personality and origin of Nimrod. The Hebrew or Canaanitish proverb which is quoted in Genesis in reference to him shows that he must have been a familiar figure in Canaanitish tradition, and the fact that he was the son of Cush—which has, of course, nothing to do with Cush or Ethiopia—indicates his Kassite origin.¹ The seat of Kassite supremacy was in Babylon and the adjoining cities; it never seems to have been very strong in Sumer or Shinar; and we can therefore understand how it could be said of Nimrod that “the beginning of his kingdom” was “Babel and Erech and Accad,” Calneh or Kulunu being the only town in Sumer over which he claimed rule. Moreover, it was during the Kassite period of Babylonian history that the kingdom of

¹ It may be noted that, according to George the Synkellos, the Chaldeans made war against the Phœnicians in the year of the world 3945, that is 1556 B.C.

Assyria was founded, thus explaining the statement of Genesis, that the kingdom of Nimrod, which began in northern Babylonia, was continued in Assyria ; as well as the passage in Micah (v. 6), where the parallelism proves that Assyria and " the land of Nimrod " are synonymous terms.

That Nimrod is to be identified with the hero of the great Chaldaean Epic has been exploded by the discovery made by Mr. Pinches of the true pronunciation of the latter's name. This was Gilgames, a name which, as I pointed out in the *Academy* (8th November 1890), is found in Ælian (*Hist. Anim.* xii. 21) under the form of Gilgamos. Gilgamos was the grandson of the Babylonian king Sakkhoras, or Seuekhoras, who, in consequence of a prophecy that he should die by the hand of his grandson, imprisoned his daughter in a lofty tower. The daughter, however, contrived to marry a man of plebeian rank, and though the child which was born to them was thrown from the tower, he was saved by an eagle which caught him in mid-air, so that he survived to fulfil the prophecy. In the Gilgamos of the Babylonian legend we thus have the prototype of the Greek Perseus, the double, in so many respects, of Hêrâklês.

To pass from legendary to historical times, Dr. Oppert has made a discovery which explains the reason of the harsh measures adopted by Xerxes towards the Babylonians, and his destruction of the great temple of Bel. One of the contract-tablets published by Dr. Strassmaier is dated in the first

year of an otherwise unknown king of Babylon, Samas - erba. The witnesses whose names are attached to the contract show that it belongs to the reign of Xerxes, and consequently that the Babylonians must have taken the opportunity of the disastrous expedition of Xerxes to Greece to rise in revolt against their Persian masters and establish once more a king of their own. The return of Xerxes to the East brought with it the punishment of the Babylonian rebels.

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QUEEN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD,
25th September 1891.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. THE STELE OF KUBAN. By PHILIPPE VIREY	I
II. A STELE OF KING SMENDES. (Twenty- first Dynasty.) By Professor MASPERO . .	17
III. THE LISTS OF THE PLACES IN NORTHERN SYRIA AND PALESTINE CONQUERED BY THOTHMES III. By the Rev. H. G. TOMKINS	25
IV. CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN PALESTINE AND EGYPT IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY B.C. By the EDITOR	54
V. TEXT OF AMMISATANA, KING OF BABYLON FROM ABOUT 2115 TO 2090 B.C. By THEO. G. PINCHES	102
VI. AN EARLY TABLET OF THE BABYLONIAN CHRONICLE. By THEO. G. PINCHES . .	106
VII. THE NIMRUD INSCRIPTION OF TIGLATH- PILESER III. By S. ARTHUR STRONG . .	115

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