

AN EARLY TABLET OF THE BABYLONIAN CHRONICLE

TRANSLATED BY THEO. G. PINCHES

THE text, of which a translation is here for the first time given, is inscribed on a large tablet of unbaked clay, originally about eight inches square. The upper part, however, has now, to the extent of nearly two-thirds, completely disappeared, as well as a portion of the right-hand columns, many of the lines being incomplete in consequence. On the whole, probably less than one-third of the text remains. The writing is, in general, clear, though it is not in the best style. Portions of the surface preserved have also suffered severely in the course of the twenty-three centuries or thereabouts that have passed since the inscription was written.

Judging from the wording and arrangement of the text, it would seem that a copy of the series fell, about 630 B.C. or earlier, into the hands of the Assyrians, who probably compiled from it the series known as "The Synchronous History of Assyria and Babylonia," leaving out, however, every reference which might be considered damaging to the reputa-

tion of the Assyrian arms, or too laudatory to the Babylonians.

COLUMN I

(Several lines wanting)

1. who (?)
2. king of KAR-DUNIAS and
3. made [covenants] between themselves, and fixed their common boundary
4. he prepared (?) and made and restored to its place
5. [Kadisman-Mur]us son of Kar-indas, son of Muballidhat-Serûa
6. daughter of Assur-uballidh king of ASSYRIA, who dispersed the broad 'SUTĪ,
7. sent from the rising of the sun to the setting of the sun,¹ and there was not a lord. In their passage
8. BIRĀTU² in the midst of the land of SARSAR³ banded together, advanced to the boundary (?) and
9. were strengthened for the watch. The people in their midst he settled comfortably. Afterwards
10. men of KASSĪ revolted against him and killed him, Su-zigas, a KASSITE
11. a plebeian, they raised to the dominion over them. Assur-uballidh
12. [king] of ASSYRIA, to revenge Kara-Murdas, his daughter's son,
13. went [to] KAR-DUNIAS. Su-zigas, the KASSITE
14. Kara-Murdas on the throne

With this may be compared Prof. Sayce's translation of the Assyrian "Synchronous History" in vol.

¹ That is, "sent from east to west."

² Literally "the city Birātu" (*āl Birātu*). *Birātu*, however, is the plural of *birtu*, "fortress," so that a kind of confederacy of strongholds is probably meant. The verb (*ukatsšir*) is singular.

³ [According to *W. A. I.*, ii. 51, 19, it was either Syria or a part of Syria.—Ed.] The group is equivalent to Akharri, generally translated "Phoenicia."

iv. p. 27. It simply mentions the killing of Karamurdas,¹ son of Muballidhat-Serua, by the Kassites, and the raising of Su-zigas, there called Nazi-bugas, to the throne of Babylonia. Evidently it was Kadisman-Murus who "dispersed the broad Suti," and who did not find "a lord" from "the rising to the setting sun," hence the omission of these lines in the "Synchronous History." We see from this part of the text that the military system of the Babylonians was very like that of the Assyrians, for they, too, transported conquered nations from place to place, and made them "keep watch"² with their new fellow-subjects.

COLUMN II

(Several lines wanting)

1.
2. furniture (?)
3. over them [he set ?] and a cry they (?)
4. the enemy took (?) him, they became estranged (from) each other
5. He caused [them] to be slain, the whole of them ; a soul he did not leave, and
6. He . . . life, (as) a great sea by their blood the land of TAM[TIM ?] [was covered ?]
7. An agreement (?) he sent forth. His soldiers we honoured, we proclaimed. Famine (?)
8. The soldiers rested, they collected (?) the extensive property of the enemy
9. He caused to be brought up for the feast (?).³ He returned, and with the advantage
10. we did not know, and Durri-galzu like all the men of ba[ttle?]

¹ This is probably a mistake of the scribe for Karaindas (=Kar-indas).

² See line 7, and compare col. iii, line 6.

³ Or, "he caused to be raised to heaps" (*ana gurunē usêli*).

11. Among the soldiers we had not our rival. Again the countries (?)
12. We took, we held (?) thy place, and we brought away our friend (?)
13. . . . we caused to be captured, thy hands returned them and placed (?)
14. . . . them and a letter (?) thou

COLUMN III

1.
2.
3.
4. 1000 horses he gave (?) them
5. who took the language and brought offspring
6. I caused the watch to be kept, I completed the time
7. The return of your road. Silver, gold, precious stones
8. I brought, a quantity (?) of gold and silver [I dedicated] to MERODACH my lord
9. BABYLON and BORSIPPA then I added to my country
10. Khurba-tila, king of ELAM [sent] to Durri-galzu
11. thus: "Come, I and thou, at DÛR-DUNGI, [battle?]
12. together will make." Durri-galzu heard and
13. to ELAM to capture it he went, and Khu[rba-tila]
14. king of ELAM, at DÛR-DUNGI, battle against th[em made, his men]
15. before him revolted, and Durri-galzu [accomplished] his defeat. [Khurba-tila],
16. king of ELAM, his hands captured. The whole of ELAM
17. a portion among his portions Khurba-tila, king of ELAM
18. then set. The king, Durri-galzu, when [he heard?] these things,
19. with the kings of all the lands, tribute
20. against Rammānu-nirari, king of ASSYRIA, to capture [him, went].

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21. In the city SUGAGA, which is upon the river ZALZALLAT,
[he fought with him],
22. he killed his soldiers, his great men he
-
23. Nazi-Murudas, son of
24. king of ASSYRIA

The long account of what seems to have occurred in the land of Tamtim (?) (the coast of the Persian Gulf, if this be correctly read) is omitted in the "Synchronous History," and it is a great pity that the text is so mutilated here, for the Babylonian narrative was not a mere outline of what took place, but a circumstantial history, probably quoted from the account of some trustworthy eye-witness, and seemingly not without literary merit. A letter of Durri-galzu, of the nature of a royal proclamation, referring to his successes, is there quoted. That this also refers to the events in Babylonia may be gathered from the fact that Durri-galzu says he added Babylon and Borsippa to his country (*Bâbili u Barsip éli tséri-ia lu-usadhahir*¹), these cities not having, seemingly, accepted his rule on account of his having been set on the throne by Assyria (see vol. iv. p. 28). The account of Khurba-tila's challenge to Durri-galzu, and of its disastrous results to the former, are also omitted in the "Synchronous History."

¹ As *satâru* means "to write," and is only used in the Kal with this meaning, I take this phrase to mean that Durri-galzu caused Babylon and Borsippa to be written down as part of his dominions.

COLUMN IV

1. kings
2. he placed before NINIP
3. . . . [Tukulti]-Ninip¹ returned to BABYLON and
4. . . . approached (?), the fortress of BABYLON he captured, the BABYLONIAN(s) with the sword
5. [he caused to be slain], the property of ÊSAGGIL and BABYLON, the . . . of the great lord, MARDUK
6. in his hand (?) he gathered and caused to be taken to ASSYRIA. The policy of his prefects
7. in KAR-DUNIAS he settled. Seven years Tukulti-Ninip KAR-DUNIAS
8. governed. Afterwards the great men of AKKAD (and) of KAR-DUNIAS revolted against him and
9. Rammānu-nadin-akhi² on the throne of his father they set. Tukulti-Ninip, who BABYLON to evil
10. had brought, Assur-natsir-apli, his son, and the great men of ASSYRIA, revolted against him, and
11. [from] his throne they threw him, and in KAR-TUKULTI-NINIP, in the house,³ they shut him up, and killed him with the sword.
12. [For] 5 years, until (the time of) Tukulti-Assur-Bêl, he was dwelling in ASSYRIA. In the time of Tukulti-Assur-Bêl to
13. BABYLON he went.

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14. . . . Bêl-nadin-sum,⁴ the king, came also Kidin-Khutru to the king of ELAM
 15. . . . his hand, at NIFFER his people he gathered, DÛR-ILI and Ê-TIM-GAL-KALAMA

¹ [Or Tiglath-Uras: *Records of the Past*, New Series, ii. p. 206.—ED.]

² [I have transcribed this name Rimmon-suma-natsir, *Records of the Past*, New Series, i. p. 16, ii. p. 207. The succession of the Assyrian kings seems to have been: (1) Tiglath-Uras, (2) Assur-natsir-pal, (3) Tiglath-Assur-Bel (?), (4) Assur-narara, (5) Nebo-dân.—ED.]

³ Palace.

⁴ [The last king of the Kassite dynasty; *Records of the Past*, New Series, i. p. 16.—ED.]

16. . . . its people they spoiled, drove away, and Bêl-nadin-sum, the king, [renounced?] his dominion.
17. . . . Rammānu-sarra-iddina¹ returned, and Kidin-Khutru to AKKAD in his second advance (?)
18. he removed (?), ISIN he entered, the TIGRIS all
19. at MARAD the overthrow of the numerous people evilly
20. him and on the oxen a claim
21. took and caused to be removed to a distance. The waste places (?)
22. him also.
-
23. ruled
24. him
- (*The remainder lost*)

This portion, so little creditable to Assyria, is entirely omitted in the "Synchronous History" (see vol. iv. p. 32). It is, however, a most interesting narrative, and one cannot help wondering how it is that the Assyrian who "edited" the record in his own country has not at least mentioned Tukulti-Ninip's seven years' rule in Babylon. Was it that this paragraph got destroyed? or that Tukulti-Ninip had such a bad name among his own countrymen that they would not mention his glories? Evidently he was not a model ruler, and "the policy of his prefects" (*kharran*² *saknūti-su*) was probably not all

¹ Or, Rammānu-sum-iddina. [Probably the second king of the dynasty of Isin: *Records of the Past*, New Series, vol. i. p. 17.—ED.]

² *Kharran* really means "road," but it is also used for "conduct," "business." In the infinitive the phrase would be *sakānu sa kharrani*, "to fix, of a road," and it is of common occurrence, in various forms, in the later business documents, with the meaning of "to decide a course of action."

that could have been wished, hence the revolt in Akkad and Kar-Dunias (Babylonia). Whatever may have been his faults, however, they cannot justify Assur-natsir-apli, his son, for the part that he took against him—indeed, as the chief personage in the kingdom after the king, he was probably leader of the revolt, and would be therefore directly responsible for his father's murder; and it is not surprising that this ruler, who must, during his reign, have been renowned for his cruelties, began his public career as a parricide. From line 12 onwards the sense is doubtful in consequence of the mutilation of the record, but it would seem that the person referred to as dwelling in Assyria and going to Babylon was Tukulti-Ninip. In line 14 the upright wedge meaning "to" is probably a mistake of the scribe, unless we are to read Kidin-Khutrudis, in which case lines 14-17 might be rendered as follows: "[In the . . . year?] of Bêl-nadin-sum, the king, came also Kidin-Khutru(dis), king of Elam—[he filled?] his hand (with spoil), he gathered his soldiers at Niffer, [he captured?] Dûr-îli and Ê-tim-gal-kalama, they spoiled and drove away its (Dûr-îli's) people, and Bêl-nadin-sum abdicated." ". . . Rammānu-sarra-iddina returned, and Kidin-Khutru(dis), in his second advance (?), [captured?] Akkad," etc. These paragraphs, likewise, do not occur in the "Synchronous History," so that we have no help as to the translation. If, as is to be hoped, a duplicate of this important text comes to light, doubtless all

the passages now obscure will be cleared up. Mutilated, however, as the record unfortunately is, it must be taken as a welcome and interesting addition to our knowledge of Babylonian history during a very important period.

END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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