

## INSCRIPTION OF ESARHADDON.

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TRANSLATED BY

H. F. TALBOT, F.R.S., etc.

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[I]T is recorded in 2 Kings xix. 37 and in Isaiah xxxvii. 38

“So Sennacherib King of Assyria departed and went, and returned and dwelt at Nineveh.

“And it came to pass as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Armenia.

“And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.”

The Inscription of which I here offer a translation relates to this important event. It is always a pleasure to find an Assyrian inscription which describes, in its own way, events corresponding to those mentioned in Scripture. The clay tablets

which have been brought home from Assyria are for the most part miserably fractured, but in no instance is there greater reason to regret the loss of a part of an inscription than here. For, it is evident that the portion of it which is lost, described the murder of Sennacherib by his unnatural sons and the receipt of the sad intelligence by Esarhaddon, who was then commanding an army on the northern confines of his father's empire. Had it been preserved, we should possibly have found in it the names of Adrammelech and Sharezer and many particulars of the tragic event.

This Inscription found at Kouyunjik, is now in the British Museum. It was first published by Layard in plates 54—58 of his volume of *Inscriptions*, and since then, much more accurately, in the 3rd volume of *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, plates 15 and 16. 1st column translated in the *North British Review*, 1870, p. 379.



## THE INSCRIPTION.

## COLUMN I.

(All the upper part of this column is lost.)

- 1 (This line is broken.)  
 2 From my heart I made a vow. My liver was inflamed  
 with rage.<sup>1</sup>  
 3 Immediately I wrote letters (*saying*) that I assumed the  
 sovereignty of my Father's House.  
 4 Then to ASHUR, the MOON, the SUN, BEL, NEBO,  
 NERGAL,  
 5 ISHTAR of Niniveh, and ISHTAR of Arbela  
 6 I lifted up my hands. They accepted my prayer.  
 7 In their gracious favour, an encouraging oracle  
 8 they sent to me: "Go! fear not!  
 9 We march at thy side! We aid thy expedition!"  
 10 For one or two days<sup>2</sup> I did not stir from my position;  
 I did not move the front of my army,  
 11 and I did not move my rear: the tethering ropes of  
 my horses, trained to the double yoke,<sup>3</sup>  
 12 I did not remove. I did not strike my camp.  
 13 But I made haste to provide the needful for the  
 expedition.  
 14 A great snow storm in the month of January<sup>4</sup> darkened  
 the sky, but I did not recede.

<sup>1</sup> The liver was the seat of rage or anger according to the ancients—  
 "quantâ jecur ardeat irâ." (Juvenal.)

<sup>2</sup> The army was in winter quarters, not expecting any service, when it  
 was thus suddenly called upon to act. Hence the delay of some days in  
 getting ready.

<sup>3</sup> Their chariots were drawn by 2 horses.

<sup>4</sup> He was then in the mountains, where the snow-drifts would soon make  
 the ways impassable to an army.

- 15 Then, as a *sirin* bird spreads its wings  
 16 so I displayed my standards, as a signal to my allies ;  
 17 and with much toil, and in haste, I took the road to  
 Niniveh.
- 18 But, getting before my troops, in the hill country of the  
 Khani-Rabbi, all their warriors  
 19 powerful attacked the front of my army and discharged  
 their arrows.
- 20 But the terror of the great gods my Lords overwhelmed  
 them.
- 21 When they saw the valour of my great army they  
 retreated backwards.
- 22 ISHTAR queen of war and battle, who loves my piety,  
 23 stood by my side. She broke their bows.  
 24 Their line of battle in her rage she destroyed.
- 25 To their army she spoke thus : "An unsparing deity  
 am I."
- 26 By her high command (or favour) I planted my  
 standards where I had intended.<sup>1</sup>

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COLUMN II.

(The commencement of this column is broken off. The meaning is doubtful : but it seems that during the time of trouble which followed the death of SENNACHERIB, a son of MERODACH BALADAN named NEBO-ZIR-ZIZ or NEBO-ZIR-GISIDI took the opportunity to rebel in lower Chaldæa. The following lines appear to refer to this event.)

- 1 . . . . . the insurgent King . . . . .  
 2 assembled his camp, and marching against NIN-GAL  
 . . . . .

<sup>1</sup> This probably means, "I planted them at Niniveh:" but the rest of the column being broken off, the necessary explanation of the phrase is wanting.

- 3 Prefect of Ur, who was my loyal subject,  
 4 killed him with the sword ; and seized his . . . . .  
 5 and even after the time that ASHUR, the SUN, BEL,  
 NEBO, ISHTAR of Niniveh  
 6 and ISHTAR of Arbela had me, ESARHADDON,  
 7 on the throne of my father happily seated,  
 8 and the sovereignty of the land had given to me, even  
 then he worshipped me not :  
 9 he gave me no more gifts, he would not do homage  
 to me,  
 10 and his envoy to my presence  
 11 he would not send. He would not even enquire after  
 the health of My Majesty.<sup>†</sup>  
 12 When I heard at Niniveh of his evil doings,  
 13 my heart swelled : my liver was inflamed with rage.  
 My Officers  
 14 and Magistrates who were nearest his land I sent  
 against him.  
 15 Then he, NEBO-ZIR-ZIZ who was a gluttonous vile  
 ignoble man  
 16 hearing of the march of my troops, fled away con-  
 temptibly to the land of Elam.  
 17 Nevertheless the *anger* of the great gods whose worship  
 he had abandoned, ASHUR, the MOON, the SUN,  
 18 BEL and NEBO laid great affliction upon him  
 19 and in the land of Elam slew him with the sword.  
 20 NEITH-MARDUK his brother, the deeds in the land of  
 Elam  
 21 which I had done to his brother, seeing,  
 22 from the land of Elam fled, and to do homage to me  
 23 came into Assyria, and supplicated my Majesty.  
 24 The province of the sea coast, the whole of it, which  
 was the inheritance of his brother, I gave to him.

<sup>†</sup> A universal custom. To neglect it showed hostile intentions.

- 25 Every year without fail, with great presents  
 26 to Niniveh he came and kissed my feet.

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- 27 ABDI-MILKUTTI King of Sidon  
 28 a non-worshipper of My Majesty, and disobedient to  
 my royal words,  
 29 who trusted to his position on the Great Sea and had  
 shaken off my yoke,  
 30 the city of Sidon, his great city, which lay beside the  
 Great Sea

\*                    \*                    \*                    \*

(The rest of the story of the King of Sidon is broken off :  
 but it is preserved on the other inscription marked B.)

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### COLUMN III.

(The third column is a good deal broken but is very well  
 preserved in the other inscription B. I therefore omit it  
 here.)

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### COLUMN IV.

(This column relates the conquest of Batzu an Arabian  
 country, nearly in the same terms as in the inscription B. I  
 therefore omit it, except the following passage which  
 amplifies in an important degree the brief statement of  
 inscription B, namely, "I put to death 8 of their sovereigns"  
 (col. iii. 37) by giving us their names, as follows,)

- 19 KITZU King of Kaldili ; AKBARU<sup>1</sup> King of Dupiati ;  
 20 MANSACA King of Magalani ; YAPAA Queen of  
 Dihutani

<sup>1</sup> A name related to the Arabic *Akbar* (great). It is also probably the  
 same with Abgarus whose name is celebrated in early ecclesiastical history.

- 21 HABITZU King of Kadasiha : NIKHARU King of Gahupani :  
 22 BAILU Queen of Ikhilu : HABANAMRU King of Budahu :  
 23 the eight sovereigns of that country, I put to death.  
 24 The bodies of their soldiers I flung away like so much clay :  
 25 their gods, their wealth, and their people I carried off to Assyria.

(It will be observed that two of the sovereigns were queens. This was a frequent custom in Arabia, according to the cuneiform inscriptions, but as far as I have observed it was confined to that country. This fact is a striking illustration of Scripture History, for it explains how the Queen of Sheba (or the Sabeans of Arabia) was able to display such royal magnificence when she visited Solomon. She was a reigning sovereign.)

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COLUMN V.

(The beginning of this column agrees with the inscription B, and is therefore omitted. But at line 12 an important passage is added.)

- 12 I assembled the Kings of Syria, and of the nations beyond the sea :  
 13 BAAL King of Tyre : MANASSEH King of Judah :  
 14 KADUMUKH King of Edom : MITZURI King of Moab :  
 15 REUBEN? King of Gaza : MITINTI King of Ascalon :  
 16 ITUZU King of Amgarrun : MILKI-ASAPH King of Gubal :  
 17 KULU-BAAL King of Arvad : ABI-BAAL King of Ussimiruna :

# END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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