THE BLACK OBELISK

INSCRIPTION OF SHALMANESER II.

Translated by
Rev. A. H. Sayce, M.A.

This inscription is engraved on an obelisk of black marble, 5 feet in height, found by Mr. Layard in the centre of the Mound at Nimroud, and now in the British Museum. Each of its four sides is divided into five compartments of sculpture representing the tribute brought to the Assyrian king by vassal princes, Jehu of Israel being among the number. Shalmaneser, whose annals and conquests are recorded upon it, was the son of Assur-natsir-pal, and died in 823 B.C., after a reign of 35 years. A
translation of the inscription was one of the first achievements of Assyrian decipherment, and was made by Sir H. Rawlinson; and Dr. Hincks shortly afterwards (in 1851) succeeded in reading the name of Jehu in it. M. Oppert translated the inscription in his *Histoire des Empires de Chaldée et d'Assyrie* and M. Ménant has given another rendering of it in his *Annales des Rois d'Assyrie* (1874). A copy of the text will be found in Layard's *Inscriptions in the Cuneiform Character* (1851).
BLACK OBELISK OF SHALMANESER.

FACE A.

1 Assur, the great Lord, the King of all
2 the great gods; Anu, King of the spirits of heaven
3 and the spirits of earth, the god, Lord of the world;
4 Bel,
5 the Supreme, Father of the gods, the Creator;
6 Ea, King of the deep, determiner of destinies,
7 the King of crowns, drinking in brilliance;
8 Rimmon, the crowned hero, Lord of canals;¹ the
9 Sun-god,
10 the Judge of heaven and earth, the urger on of all;
11 (Merodach), Prince of the gods, Lord of battles;
12 Adar, the terrible,
13 (Lord) of the spirits of heaven and the spirits of earth,
14 the exceeding strong god; Nergal,
15 the powerful (god), King of the battle; Nebo, the
16 bearer of the high sceptre,
17 the god, the Father above; Beltis, the wife of Bel,
18 mother of the (great) gods;
19 Istar, sovereign of heaven and earth, who the face of
20 heroism perfectest;
21 the great (gods), determining destinies, making great
22 my kingdom.
23 (I am) Shalmaneser, King of multitudes of men,
24 prince (and) hero of Assur, the strong King,
25 King of all the four zones of the Sun (and) of multi-
26 tudes of men, the marcher over
27 the whole world; Son of Assur-Matsir-Pal, the
28 supreme hero, who his heroism over the gods

¹ Or, "fertility."
18 has made good and has caused all the world to kiss his feet;

FACE B.

19 the noble offspring of Tiglath-Adar
20 who has laid his yoke upon all lands hostile to him, and
21 has swept (them) like a whirlwind.
22 At the beginning of my reign, when on the throne
23 of royalty mightily I had seated myself, the chariots
24 of my host I collected. Into the lowlands of the
25 country of Sime’si
26 I descended. The city of Aridu, the strong city
27 of NINNI, I took. In my first year
28 the Euphrates in its flood I crossed. To the sea of
29 the setting sun
30 I went. My weapons on the sea I rested. Victims
31 for my gods I took. To mount Amanus I went up.
32 Logs of cedar-wood and pine-wood I cut. To
33 the country of Lallar I ascended. An image of my
34 Royalty in the midst (of it) I erected.
35 In my second year to the city of Tel-Barsip I ap-
36 proached. The cities
37 of Akhuni the son of Adin I captured. In his city I
38 shut him up. The Euphrates
39 in its flood I crossed. The city of Dabigu, a choice
city of the Hittites
40 together with the cities which (were) dependent upon
41 it I captured. In my third year Akhuni
42 the son of Adin, from the face of my mighty weapons
43 fled, and the city of Tel-Barsip,

FACE C.

44 his royal city, he fortified. The Euphrates I crossed.

1 Or, "the countries the whole of them.

2 Or, "the descendings."

3 That is, the Mediterranean.

4 Namely, in sacrifice.

5 Khamanu in Assyrian.
38 The city unto Assyria I restored. I took it. (The
town) which (is) on the further side
39 of the Euphrates which (is) upon the river 'Sagurri,
which the Kings
40 of the Hittites call the city of Pitru;'
41 for myself I took. At my return
42 into the lowlands of the country of Alzi I descended.
The country of Alzi I conquered.
43 The countries of Dayaeni (and) Elam, (and) the city
44 of Arzascunu, the royal city
45 of Arame of the country of the Armenians, the country
46 of Gozan (and) the country of Khupuscia.
47 During the eponymy of Dayan-Assur from the city of
48 Nineveh I departed. The Euphrates
49 in its upper part I crossed. After Akhuni the son of
50 Adin I went.
51 The heights on the banks of the Euphrates as his
52 stronghold he made.
53 The mountains I attacked, I captured. Akhuni with
54 his gods, his chariots,
55 his horses, his sons (and) his daughters I carried
56 away. To my city Assur
57 I brought (them). In that same year the country of
58 Kullar I crossed. To the country of Zamua
59 of Bit-Ani I went down. The cities of Nicdiara of
60 the city of the Idians
61 (and) Nicdima I captured. In my fifth year to the
62 country of Kasyari I ascended.
63 The strongholds I captured. Elkhitti of the Serru-
64 rians (in) his city I shut up. His tribute
65 to a large amount I received. In my sixth year to the
66 cities on the banks of the river Balikhi'

FACE D.

67 I approached. Gi'ammu, their Governor, I smote.

1 Pethor in the Old Testament.
To the city of Tel-abil-akhi I descended.
The Euphrates in its upper part I crossed.
The tribute of the Kings of the Hittites
all of them I received. In those days Rimmon-Idri\textsuperscript{4}
of Damascus, Irkhulina of Hamath, and the Kings
of the Hittites and of the sea-coasts to the forces of
each other
trusted, and to make war and battle
against me came. By the command of Assur, the
great Lord, my Lord,
with them I fought. A destruction of them I made.
Their chariots, their war-carriages, their war-material\textsuperscript{1} I
took from them.
20,500 of their fighting men with arrows I slew.
In my seventh year to the cities of Khabini of the
city of Tel-Abni I went.
The city of Tel-Abni, his stronghold, together with the
cities which (were) dependent on it I captured.
To the head of the river, the springs of the Tigris, the
place where the waters rise,\textsuperscript{2} I went.
The weapons of Assur in the midst (of it) I rested.
Sacrifices for my gods I took. Feasts and rejoicing
I made. An image of my Royalty of large size I
constructed. The laws of Assur my Lord, the records
of my victories, whatsoever in the world I had done,
in the midst of it I wrote. In the middle (of the
country) I set (it) up.

FACE A., base.

In my eighth year, Merodach-Suma-Iddin King of
of Gan-Dunias\textsuperscript{4}

\textsuperscript{1} This is the Ben-hadad of Scripture whose personal name seems to have been Rimmon-idri.
\textsuperscript{2} Or, “furniture of battle.”
\textsuperscript{3} Or, “the place of the exit of the waters situated.” The tablet is still to be seen near the town of Egil.
\textsuperscript{4} That is, Chaldea.
74 did Merodach-Bila-Yu'sate his foster-brother against him rebel;
75 strongly had he fortified (the land). To exact punishment
76 against Merodach-Suma-Iddin I went. The city of the waters of the Dhumat ² I took.
77 In my ninth campaign a second time to the land of Accad I went.
78 The city of Gana-nate I besieged. Merodach-Bila-
    Yu'sate exceeding fear
79 of Assur (and) Merodach overwhelmed, and to save his life to
80 the mountains he ascended. After him I rode. Mero-
Dach-Bila-Yu'sate (and) the officers
81 the rebels ³ who (were) with him (with) arrows I slew. To the great fortresses
82 I went. Sacrifices in Babylon, Borsippa, (and) Cuthah I made.
83 Thanksgivings to the great gods I offered up. To the
    country of Kaldu ⁴ I descended. Their cities I captured.
84 The tribute of the Kings of the country of Kaldu I
    received. The greatness of my arms as far as the sea
    overwhelmed.
85 In my tenth year for the eighth time the Euphrates I
    crossed. The cities of 'Sangara of the city of the Car-
    chemishians I captured.
86 To the cities of Arame I approached. Arne his royal
    city with 100 of his (other) towns I captured.
87 In my eleventh year for the ninth time the Euphrates
    I crossed. Cities to a countless number I captured. To
    the cities of the Hittites
88 of the land of the Hamathites I went down. Eighty-

¹ Or, "to return benefits."
² The Tornadotus of classical geographers.
³ Or, "the Lord of sin."
⁴ This is the primitive Chaldea. The Caldae or Chaldeans afterwards overran Babylonia and gave their name to it among classical writers.
nine cities I took. Rimmon-idri of Damascus (and) twelve of the Kings of the Hittites
89 with one another's forces strengthened themselves. A destruction of them I made. In my twelfth campaign for the tenth time the Euphrates I crossed.
90 To the land of Pagar-khubuna I went. Their spoil I carried away. In my thirteenth year to the country of Yaeti I ascended.
91 Their spoil I carried away. In my fourteenth year the country I assembled; the Euphrates I crossed. Twelve Kings against me had come.
92 I fought. A destruction of them I made. In my fifteenth year among the sources of the Tigris (and) the Euphrates I went. An image
93 of my Majesty in their hollows I erected. In my sixteenth year the waters of the Zab I crossed. To the country of Zimri
94 I went. Merodach-mudammik King of the land of Zimru to save his life (the mountains) ascended. His treasure
95 his army (and) his gods to Assyria I brought. Yan'su son of Khanban to the kingdom over them I raised.¹

FACE B, base.
96 In my seventeenth year the Euphrates I crossed. To the land of Amanus I ascended. Logs
97 of cedar I cut. In my eighteenth year for the sixteenth time the Euphrates I crossed. Hazaäl
98 of Damascus to battle came. 1,221 of his chariots, 470 of his war-carriages with
99 his camp I took from him. In my nineteenth campaign for the eighteenth time the Euphrates I crossed. To the land of Amanus
100 I ascended. Logs of cedar I cut. In my 20th year for the 20th time the Euphrates

¹ Or, "I made."
² The king counts his passage of the river on his return from Syria the seventeenth time of his crossing the Euphrates.
I crossed. To the land of Kāhuc I went down.
Their cities I captured. Their spoil
I carried off. In my 21st campaign, for the 21st
time the Euphrates I crossed. To the cities
of Hazael of Damascus I went. Four of his for-
tresses I took. The tribute of the Tyrians,
the Zidonians (and) the Gebalites I received. In my
22nd campaign for the 22nd time the Euphrates
I crossed. To the country of Tabalu I went down.
In those days (as regards) the 24
Kings of the country of Tabalu their wealth I
received. To conquer the mines of silver, of salt and of stone for sculpture
I went. In my 23rd year
the Euphrates I crossed. The city of Uetash, his
strong city,
(which belonged) to Lalla of the land of the Mil-
dians I captured. The Kings of the country of Tabalu
had set out. Their tribute I received. In my 24th
year, the lower Zab
I crossed. The land of Khalimmur I passed through.
To the land of Zimru
I went down. Yan'sur King of the Ziniri from the face
of my mighty weapons fled and to save his life
ascended (the mountains). The cities of Sikhsatkh, Bit-Tamul, Bit-Sacci
(and) Bit-Sedi, his strong cities, I captured. His
fighting men I slew.
His spoil I carried away. The cities I threw down,
dug up, (and) with fire burned.
The rest of them to the mountains ascended. The
peaks of the mountains
I attacked, I captured. Their fighting men I slew.
Their spoil (and) their goods

† The Tabal of the Old Testament and Tibareni of classical
geographers.
I caused to be brought down. From the country of Zimru I departed. The tribute of 27 Kings of the country of Par'sua I received. From the country of Par'sua I departed. To the strongholds of the country of the Amadai, the countries of Arazias (and) Kharkhar I went down. The cities of Cua-cinda, Khazzanabi, Ermul, (and) Cin-abilia with the cities which were dependent on them I captured. Their fighting men

I slew. Their spoil I carried away. The cities I threw down, dug up (and) burned with fire. An image of my Majesty in the country of Kharkhara I set up. Yan'su son of Khaban with his abundant treasures his gods, his sons, his daughters, his soldiers in large numbers I carried off. To Assyria I brought (them). In my 25th campaign the Euphrates at its flood I crossed. The tribute of the Kings of the Hittites, all of them, I received. The country of Amanus I traversed. To the cities of Cati of the country of the Kaliuians I descended. The city of Timur, his strong city,

I besieged, I captured. Their fighting men I slew. Its spoil I carried away. The cities to a countless number I threw down, dug up,

(and) burned with fire. On my return, the city of Muru, the strong city of Arame the son of Agusi, (as) a possession for myself I took. Its entrance-space I marked out. A palace, the seat of my Majesty, in the middle (of it) I founded.

In my 26th year for the seventh time the country of

1 The Parthia of classical authors.
2 These seem to be the Madai or Medes of later inscriptions. This is the first notice that we have of them. It will be observed that they have not yet penetrated into Media but are still eastward of the Parthians.
the Amanus I traversed. For the fourth time to the

cities of Cati

133 of the country of the Kahuians I went. The city of
Tanacun, the strong city of Tulca I approached. Ex-
ceeding fear

134 of Assur my Lord overwhelmed him and (when) he
had come out my feet he took. His hostages I took.
Silver, gold,

135 iron, oxen, (and) sheep, (as) his tribute I received.
From the city of Tanacun I departed. To the country
of Lamena

136 I went. The men collected themselves. An inac-
cessible mountain they occupied. The peak of the
mountain I assailed,

137 I took. Their fighting men I slew. Their spoil,
their oxen, their sheep, from the midst of the mountain
I brought down.

138 Their cities I threw down, dug up (and) burned with
fire. To the city of Khazzi I went. My feet they took.
Silver (and) gold,

139 their tribute, I received. Cirri, the brother of Cati
to the sovereignty over them

140 I set. On my return, to the country of Amanus I
ascended. Beams of cedar I cut,

141 I removed, to my city Assur I brought. In my
27th year the chariots of my armies I mustered. Dayan-
Assur

142 the Tartan, the Commander of the wide-spreading
army, at the head of my army to the country of Armenia
I urged,

143 I sent. To Bit-Zamāni he descended. Into the low
ground of the city of Amnas he went down. The river
Arzane he crossed.

144 Seduri of the country of the Armenians heard, and
to the strength of his numerous host

1 The Ellasar of Genesis, now Kalah Shergat.

2 Tartanu ("chief prince") in Assyrian.
he trusted; and to make conflict (and) battle against me he came. With him I fought.

A destruction of him I made. With the flower of his youth his broad fields I filled. In my 28th year when in the city of Calah I was stopping news had been brought (me, that) men of the Patinians Lubarni their Lord had slain (and) 'Surri (who was) not heir to the throne to the kingdom had raised.

David-Assur the Tartan, the Commander of the widening army at the head of my host (and) my camp

I urged, I sent. The Euphrates in its flood he crossed. In the city of Cinalua his royal city a slaughter he made. (As for) 'Surri the usurper, exceeding fear of Assur my Lord overwhelmed him, and the death of his destiny he went. The men of the country of the Patinians from before the sight of my mighty weapons

fled, and the children of 'Surri together with the soldiers, the rebels, (whom) they had taken they delivered to me.

Those soldiers on stakes I fixed. 'Sasittur of the country of Uzza my feet took. To the kingdom over them I placed (him). Silver, gold, lead, bronze, iron, (and) the horns of wild bulls to a countless number I received.

An image of my Majesty of great size I made. In the city of Cinalua his royal city in the temple of his gods I set it up. In my 29th year (my) army (and) camp I urged, I sent.

1 Or, “the chiefs of his young warriors.”

2 The word properly means “baggage,” and sometimes signifies “standard,” which may be the translation here.

3 That is, he died as was fated.
To the country of Cirkhi\textsuperscript{1} I ascended. Their cities I threw down,

158 dug up, (and) burned with fire. Their country like a thunderstorm I swept. Exceeding fear over them I cast. In my 30th year when in the city of Calah I was stopping, Dayan-Assur

160 the Tartan, the Commander of the wide spreading army at the head of my army I urged, I sent. The river Zab

161 he crossed. To the midst of the cities of the city of Khupuscâ he approached. The tribute of Datana of the city of the Khupuscians I received. From the midst of the cities of the Khupuscians

163 I departed.\textsuperscript{2} To the midst of the cities of Maggubbi of the country of the Madakhirians he approached. The tribute

164 I received. From the midst of the cities of the country of the Madakhirians he departed. To the midst of the cities of Udaci

165 of the country of the Mannians he approached. Udaci of the country of the Mannians from before the sight of my mighty weapons

166 fled, and the city of Zirta, his royal city, he abandoned. To save his life he ascended (the mountains).

167 After him I pursued. His oxen, his sheep, his spoil, to a countless amount I brought back. His cities

168 I threw down, dug up, (and) burned with fire. From the country of the Mannians\textsuperscript{3} he departed. To the cities of Sulu'Sunu of the country of Kharru

169 he approached. The city of Mairsuru, his royal city, together with the cities which depended on it he captured. (To) Sulu'Sunu

170 together with his sons mercy I granted. To his

\textsuperscript{1} The mountainous country near the sources of the Tigris.

\textsuperscript{2} That is, in the person of his Commander-in-chief, Dayan-Assur.

\textsuperscript{3} The modern Van.
country I restored him. A payment (and) tribute of horses I imposed.

171 My yoke upon him I placed. To the city of Surdira he approached. The tribute of Arta-irri

172 of the city of the Surdirians I received. To the country of Par'sua I went down. The tribute of the Kings

173 of the country of Par'sua I received. (As for) the rest of the country of Par'sua which did not reverence Assur, its cities

174 I captured. Their spoil, their plunder to Assyria I brought. In my 31st year, the second time, the cyclical-feast

175 of Assur and Rimmon I had inaugurated. At the time while I was stopping in the city of Calah, Dayan-Assur

176 the Tartan, the Commander of my wide spreading army, at the head of my army (and) my camp I urged, I sent.

177 To the cities of Datâ of the country of Khupuscâ he approached. The tribute I received.

178 To the city of Zapparia, a stronghold of the country of Muzatsira, I went. The city of Zapparia together with

179 forty-six cities of the city of the Muzatsirians I captured. Up to the borders of the country of the Armenians

180 I went. Fifty of their cities I threw down, dug up (and) burned with fire. To the country of Guzan I went down. The tribute

181 of Uru of the country of the Guzanians, of the

Parthia.

¹ This refers to his assuming the eponymy a second time after completing a reign of 30 years. At this period the Assyrian kings assumed the eponymy on first ascending the throne, and the fact that Shalmaneser took the same office again in his 31st year shows that a cycle of thirty years was in existence.

² The Gozan of the Old Testament.
country of the Mannians, of the country of the Buririans, of the country of the Kharranians; 

182 of the country of the Sasganiens, of the country of the Andians, (and) of the country of the Kharkhanians, oxen, sheep, (and) horses 

183 trained to the yoke I received. To the cities of the country of . . . I went down. The city of Perria 

184 (and) the city of Sitiyara, its strongholds, together with 22 cities which depended upon it, I threw down, dug up 

185 (and) burned with fire. Exceeding fear over them I cast. To the cities of the Parthians he went. 

186 The cities of Bustu, Sala-khamanu (and) Cini-khamanu, fortified towns, together with 23 cities 

187 which depended upon them I captured. Their fighting-men I slew. Their spoil I carried off. To the country of Zimri I went down. 

188 Exceeding fear of Assur (and) Merodach overwhelmed them. Their cities they abandoned. To 

189 inaccessible mountains they ascended. Two hundred and fifty of their cities I threw down, dug up (and) burned with fire. 

190 Into the lowground of Sime'si at the head of the country of Khaman I went down.

THE EPIGRAPHS ACCOMPANYING THE SCULPTURES.

1. The tribute of 'Su' of the country of the Gûzanians: silver, gold, lead, articles of bronze, sceptres for the King's hand, horses (and) camels with double backs: I received.

11. The tribute of Yahua, son of Khumri: silver, gold, bowls of gold, vessels of gold, goblets of gold, pitchers of gold, lead, sceptres for the King's hand, (and) staves: I received.

1 Haran or Harran in the Old Testament, called Carrhae by the classical geographers.
2 Andia was afterwards incorporated into Assyria by Sargon.
3 Jehu.
4 Omri.
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