

THE BIRS-NIMRUD
 INSCRIPTION OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

TRANSLATED BY
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THIS text was first published in the *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, Vol. I., pl. 51, from the cylinders found at the corners of the third stage of the temple of the Seven Spheres at Birs-Nimrud (anciently Borsippa), and now deposited in the British Museum.

It was first translated by Sir Henry Rawlinson, in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. XVII., and soon afterwards in Vol. XVIII., p. 35, published in 1860, I added various remarks upon it. I have

now revised my translation and made a few emendations.

The ruins of the Birs-Nimrud still rise 153 feet above the level of the plain. It appears from the researches carried on by Sir H. Rawlinson in the year 1854 that it was originally a building in seven receding stages, which were coloured so as to represent the seven planetary spheres, according to the tints regarded by the Sabæans as appropriate to each. See Rawlinson's *Herodotus*, Vol. II., p. 583.



THE BIRS-NIMRUD
 INSCRIPTION OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

COLUMN I.

- 1 NEBUCHADNEZZAR King of Babylon
 2 the noble King, proclaimed to you by the will of MARDUK :
 3 the great high priest, beloved by NEBO :
 4 the wise Mage who unto the doctrines of the gods
 5 raised his intelligence :
 6 the high priest ever active in adorning the temple of
 SAGGATHU
 7 and the temple of ZIDA :
 8 the eldest son of NABOPOLASSAR
 9 King of Babylon, I am he.
 10 When MARDUK the great Lord
 11 had created me a King
 12 he commanded me to complete his holy buildings.
 13 NEBO who bestows the thrones of heaven and earth
 14 placed the sceptre of justice in my hand,
 15 the temple of SAGGATHU, the great temple of heaven and
 earth
 16 the dwelling of MARDUK Lord of the gods ;
 17 the temple of KUA, the (shrine) of his Lordship
 18 with shining gold I splendidly adorned.
 19 The temple of ZIDA I built anew.
 20 With silver, gold, and precious stones
 21 *mesukan* wood and cedar
 22 I completed its roof.
 23 The temple of the Planet, which is the tower of Babylon
 24 I built, and I finished it.

- 25 With slabs of precious *zamat*^x stone
26 I finished its summit.
27 The temple of the Seven Planets, which is the tower of
Borsippa
28 which former Kings had built
29 and raised it to the height of forty-two cubits,
30 but had not finished its upper part
31 from extreme old age had rotted away.
32 The water springs beneath it had not been kept in order :

^x The *zamat* stone appears generally to have been the onyx (Hebrew שחמם): but when large slabs of it are said to be used, it was probably alabaster. The onyx pavements of the Romans were almost certainly alabaster; vide the line in Martial:

“Calcatusque tuo sub pede lucet onyx.”

COLUMN II.

- 1 the rain and the tempest
 2 had ruined its buildings :
 3 the slabs that covered it had fallen off.
 4 The bricks of its wall lay scattered in heaps.
 5 To repair it, the great Lord MARDUK
 6 incited my heart.
 7 Its site had not been disturbed :¹ its *timin*² had not
 been destroyed.
 8 In a fortunate month, and on a lucky day
 9 the bricks of its wall, and the slabs that covered it
 10 I collected the finest of them
 11 and I rebuilt the ruins firmly.
 12 Inscriptions written in my name
 13 I placed in the finest apartments
 14 and so of rebuilding (the ruin)
 15 and of completing the upper part, I made an end.
 16 O NEBO ! noble son, exalted (messenger)
 17 and beloved offspring, of MARDUK !
 18 my works of piety
 19 behold joyfully !
 20 A long life, abundant offspring,
 21 a firm throne, a prolonged reign, the subjection of all
 rebels
 22 the conquest of my enemies' land, grant to me as a re-
 compense !
 23 By thy noble favour, O founder of the (fabric)
 24 of heaven and earth,
 25 may my days be blessed with vigorous children.

¹ *I.e.*, by an earthquake.

² Platform containing the dedication cylinders.

26 In the presence of MARDUK King of heaven and earth
27 thy father, present these my works !
28 and may my fortunate name
29 NEBUCHADNEZZAR
30 or, the "Heaven-adoring King"¹
31 dwell continually in thy mouth !

¹ This seems to be a fancy name, assumed by Nebuchadnezzar, to express his great zeal in building temples and worshipping the gods.



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