

THE
 BAVIAN INSCRIPTION OF SENNACHERIB.

TRANSLATED BY
 THEOPHILUS GOLDRIDGE PINCHES.

THIS Inscription, a translation of which is now published in full for the first time, is engraved upon a rock at Bavian, a district to the North-east of Mosul. There are three tablets, more or less injured, all bearing the same legend. It is of great chronological value on account of the notice it contains (line 50) of the period of 418 years intervening between the reign of Sennacherib and that of Tiglath-Pileser I., who reigned from B.C. 1120 to B.C. 1100. The text itself is printed in the *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, Vol. III., pl. xiv.

Sennacherib, the son of Sargon, and father of Esarhaddon, began to reign "on the twelfth day of the month Abu, in the eponymy of Pakhir-Bel, prefect of Amida; that is, according to our reckoning, about the sixteenth of July, B.C. 705; and was assassinated

about the month Dhabitu, in the eponymy of Nabu-akhi-eris, prefect of Samalla (December, B.C. 681), having reigned about twenty-four years and four months.”¹

The records of Sennacherib's reign are numerous and very perfect. Translations of the Inscriptions on the Bellino and Taylor cylinders, as well as the Bull Inscription, have already appeared in these volumes.² The Bavian Inscription gives an account of his turning the course of the Khosr for the purpose of irrigating the arable land around Nineveh. It then narrates the events of his first campaign against Merodach-Baladan, King of Babylon, Ummanninu, King of Elam, and many petty kings of the mountainous country West of Elam, and of the islands of the Persian Gulf. The second expedition to Babylon mentioned in this text, is identical with the fourth of the Taylor Cylinder, which describes how Sennacherib defeated the Babylonians under Suzub, who, after the flight of Merodach-Baladan, had proclaimed himself king, and become so powerful that Sennacherib was obliged to go against him in person.

¹ Smith's *History of Assyria*.

² *Records of the Past*, Vols. I., VII.



BAVIAN INSCRIPTION OF SENNACHERIB.

- 1 ASSUR, ANU, BEL, HEA, SIN, SAMAS, RIMMON, MARDUK,
 NEBO, (NERGAL,) ISTAR, the 7 spirits, and the great gods
 2 who among all the Rulers to the supremacy of the Dark
 Races, lo, they raise, they proclaim the Majesty of
 3 SENNACHERIB, the great King, the powerful King, the
 King of multitudes, the King of Assyria, King of the four
 regions. The Prince the establisher of them at this time.
 Fixing the laws
 4 from the Upper Sea to the Lower Sea. To the countries
 I went and the Kings of the regions I made submissive
 to my yoke, and
 5 they performed my pleasure. In those days when Nine-
 veh, that great seat (I caused to extend), its fortress and
 its outer wall which in former (days)
 6 (were) not made, I caused to make anew, and I remem-
 bered the woody places surrounding it, which (were)
 without water. Murmurings ascended on high
 7 from the assemblies (of) the (Princes) and its people :
 Drinking water they know not, and to the rains from the
 vault of heaven their eyes are directed.
 8 I had drunk ; and from the midst of the cities of
 Masiti, Kimbagabna, Sapparisu, Kar-Samsi-zakir, Kar-
 nuri, Rimusa,
 9 Khata, Dalain, Res-eni, Sulu, Duran,¹ Sibaniba, Izparirra,

¹ Duran or Deri, the seat of a governor whose business it was to watch the Elamites who held the fortress of Bit-imbi, was capital of Yamutbal, a district on the south-eastern border of Assyria, near the frontier of Elam.

- 10 Gingilinis, Nampagate, Tulu and Alumtsusi, waters which (were) against Khadabiti, sixteen rivers, I excavated; to the midst of
- 11 the river Khusur¹ I fixed their course. From the coast of the city Kisiri to (the midst of) Nineveh I excavated, their waters
- 12 I let flow within it: "The opening of Sennacherib," I proclaimed its name. (I brought?) the strength of those waters from the midst of the country of Taz,
- 13 a difficult mountain of the frontier of Akkad, within my country. Formerly that river the river . . . ² was called. The boundary lines again I, by command of
- 14 ASSUR, Lord of the great, my Lord, right and left of the mountains of the wall and foundations (fixed.) The city Me . . . ², Kuqqut, Bit-Urra,³
- 15 the cities surrounding it, to it I added. With stones of the river . . . " . . . ² Sennacherib," I recorded
- 16 its name. Above the waters the beautiful country and the waters before it I ex(cavated, to the midst of the river Khusur I) fixed their course,
- 17 to Nineveh, the mighty stronghold, the seat of My Majesty. From . . . ² its seat he had not extended
- 18 he had not turned them; below, completely . . . ² it I (made.) I, Sennacherib, King of Assyria, first of the Kings, who from the rising of the sun
- 19 to the set(ting of the sun the nations rule); the flowing

¹ Still called Khosr or Khausser, it passes through the mound of Koyounjik, and after rain becomes an impetuous torrent, capable of doing great mischief.

² Lacunæ.

³ It was the custom of the Assyrians to give their cities very fanciful names, thus Kar-Samsi-zakir means: "The fortress of Shamas renowned;" Kar-nuri, "The fortress of Light;" Res-eni, "The raising of the Eyes;" Sulu and Tulu, "Mound" or "Ascent;" Bit-Urra, "House of Light." The exact positions of the cities mentioned in the text are unknown, but they were probably not far from Duran.

- waters which I had excavated, (to) Nineveh, for its surroundings, enclosures, vines,
- 20 hedges, (I fixed their course) . . .¹ the inhabitants of the forest-land, all of them, to choose the rulers
- 21 all . . .¹ and¹ the waters which were not channelled, to the arid lands I abandoned (them) and I (settled)
- 22 the boundaries . . .¹ of all in the coasts in the entrances of the delightful places above and below. From the midst of the city of Tarbitsi
- 23 to the city of the Assurites, a seat for the measuring-out of corn and barley, (which) I caused to be exchanged yearly . . .¹ to the Kings
- 24 my sons who with my heart were perfect and to disobedience turn not . . .¹ those hosts going forth
- 25 that river I caused to excavate. The worship of ASSUR, my great god . . .¹ thus in the midst of those hosts, I did not excavate that river
- 26 and in that year, the third month, I did not cut out its writing . . .¹ they were completed, I cut out its ditch
- 27 to the openings of that river. The Masmasu (and) the Usku I (urged) and I . . .¹ blue stone, white stone, marble, *zadhu* stone, diamonds
- 28 (and other) choice precious stones, brass, (pleasant) odours, . . .¹ the sum of the measure of a beautiful altar for HEA, Lord of fountains,
- 29 and gifts for BEL, the Lord, the great Overlooker of rivers, the god of Lords, were poured forth, rich things to the great gods I (offered) and
- 30 my (prayer) they heard and they caused to bless the work of my hands. The gate of the river¹ and an enclosure of corn for himself. It was opened and
- 31 I let flow in the waters of the great canal. By an

¹ Lacunæ.

- inscription from the hands of the (builder) of its gate
 . . . ¹ the hearts of the gods, I excavated (and) the
 waters from
- 32 the river I gathered and I directed. The inscription
 which to the great gods going by my side and establishing
 . . . ¹ oxen . . . ¹
- 33 sheep, gazelles, sacrifices I killed, I sacrificed. Those
 men who had excavated that river, (with) costly linen
 clothing I covered them,
- 34 . . . ¹ rings of gold, necklaces of gold I placed upon
 them. In that year the sum was (paid) for that river
 which I had excavated. Against UMMAN-MINANU,
- 35 King of Elam, and the King of Babylon, with the many
 Kings of the mountains and the sea, who were their
 helpers, in sight of the city of Khalulē
- 36 I placed my line of battle. By command of ASSUR,
 Lord of the great, my Lord, cutting through (their) ranks
 I drove. Into their midst I went and an overthrow of
 their armies
- 37 I made: their army I did destroy, and I marched
 against their country. The great men of the King of
 Elam, with NABU-ZIKIR-ISKUN, son of MERODACH-BALA-
 DAN,
- 38 King of Gan-Dunyas, alive within the battle my hands
 captured. The King of Elam and the King of Babylon,
 the overwhelming number of my strong army
- 39 destroyed them and in their chariots they abandoned
 their people; to save their lives (to) their country they
 fled and
- 40 they returned not. Afterwards the King peace to
 Sennacherib, King of Assyria, speedily sent and to Elam
 fixed the return.
- 41 Terrible fear against the country of Elam (over) all of

¹ Lacunæ.

- them was poured, and their country they forsook, to save their lives, like an eagle
- 42 a difficult mountain they (ascended), and like to a *šusudi* bird I turned, and their hearts for battle failing them, the mountain pass
- 43 they opened not, and they did not make battle. In my second expedition to Babylon, which I went forth to capture, I saw the destruction of its power.
- 44 I went and like the coming of storms I poured out (my men); like a rushing wind I swept it. The city of Niti I besieged and by
- 45 fire and rebellion the hands¹ (one) of its people, small and great, I did not leave, and their corpses the streets of the city
- 46 filled. To save the life of the King of Babylon, himself, his family¹ alive to the midst of my country I took him.
- 47 The valuables of that city I destroyed. Gold, precious stones, furniture, valuables, to the hands (of my men) I distributed and to the place of their army they returned.
- 48 The gods dwelling within it, the hands of my men captured them and broke (them) and (their furniture) and valuables they brought out. RIMMON and SALA² the gods
- 49 of the temples; which MARDUK-NADIN-AKHI, King of Akkad, in the time of TIGLATH-PILESER, King of Assyria, had brought out and to Babylon had taken
- 50 for 418 years; from Babylon I caused to come forth and

¹ Lacunæ.

² In a list containing the names and titles of the gods, *W. A. I.*, Vol. III., pl. 67, after naming Rimmon with the usual titles of god of lightning, storms, deluge of rain, etc., Rimmon and Sala are mentioned together, with the title of gods *sa sadi*, "of the mountains," showing that the Assyrian deities often changed their attributes when mentioned in conjunction with other gods.

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