THE INSCRIPTION
ON THE
SARCOPHAGUS OF KING ESMUNAZAR,
NOW IN THE LOUVRE AT PARIS.

TRANSLATED BY
PROF. DR. JULIUS OPPERT.

THIS splendid monument was discovered on the 20th of February, 1855, by M. Peretié, Chancellor of the French’ consulate at Beyrut, near the ruins of Sidon, the modern Safda. The Duke de Luynes bought it, and a munificent Maecenas, he made a present of it to the Museum of the Louvre. The noble donor himself published also the first translation of the Phoenician inscription in a work, entitled, Mémoire sur le Sarcophage et l’inscription funéraire d’Es-munazar roi de Sidon, par H. d’Albert de Luynes, Paris, 1856. Since that time, perhaps some forty
different scholars have endeavoured to explain this important text, either in voluminous works, or in short articles in which some passages only were commented. Among the principal writers on this sarcophagus we must mention MM. Bargès, Munck, Schlottman, Schröder, and lately Kömpf, as those who have made considerable progress in the explanation of the text.

The author of this present translation has himself been the last to write upon and to explain some difficult passages in the original text, in an article in the *Journal Asiatique*, 1876, Vol. I.
SARCOPHAGUS OF KING ESMUNAZAR.

In the month of Bul, in the fourteenth year of the royalty of King Esmunazar, King of the two Sidons, son of King Tabin, King of the two Sidons, King Esmunazar, King of the two Sidons, said as follows:

I am carried away, the time of my non-existence has come, my spirit has disappeared, like the day, from whence I am silent, since which I became mute.

1 The eighth month of the Phoenician year which was identical with the Judaic. Unfortunately we know only the co-relative names of the 1st, 2nd, 7th, and 8th months from the Biblical texts, and the names of two or three other months from the Phoenician texts alone; but the position of these months in this year is unknown.

2 King Esmunazar must have lived in the fourth century B.C., this is generally admitted on account of the form of the sarcophagus, which was certainly Egyptian; there are even in the middle of it traces of hieroglyphs which have been erased.

The King Tabin may be the Tennes of Greek authors.

3 This is the thirtieth or fourtieth translation of this passage, each author having proposed a version differing from all his predecessors. I do not pretend to have said the last word about this question, but it seems to me that this difficult passage is by no means a speech merely personal to Esmunazar. On the contrary, it is a quotation of a hymn or of a funeral chaunt, otherwise it would not have been repeated. If it were a historical account referring to Esmunazar’s life-time, it would have been sufficient to state the fact once. This is the capital point, the misunderstanding of which misled all the former translators. I divide the words thus:

With the Masoretic punctuation it would be:

nizgatti, bā la-iti.

bin mas kayyum mēa dammōti mūbō neelantti.

"Abreptus sum: venit non-tempus meum: intellectus evanuit sicut dies illa ex qua silui, inde a qua obmutui."
And I am lying in this coffin, and in this tomb, in the
place which I have built.

O thou (reader) remember this: May no royal race and
no man open my funeral couch, and may they not seek
after treasures, for no one has hidden treasures here, nor
move the coffin out of my funeral couch, nor molest me in
this funeral bed, by putting another tomb over it.

Whatever a man may tell thee, do not listen to him:

For the punishment (of the violators) shall be: Every
royal race and every man, who shall open the covering of this
couch, or who shall carry away the coffin where I repose, or
who shall molest me in this couch: they shall have no funeral
couch with the Rephaim, nor shall be buried in graves, nor
shall there be any son or offspring to succeed to them, and
the sacred gods shall inflict extirpation on them.

Thou whoever (thou art who wilt) be King (hereafter),
inspire those over whom thou wilt reign, that they may exter-
minate the members of the royal race (like those men) who
will open the covering of this couch, or who will take away

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1 I separate entirely from the remainder of the phrase, the letters ın ܬܐ. The last word seems to be the personal of the second person, ܢܐ; if it were the preposition ܐ, it ought to be repeated before ܐܕܐ
“man,” which is not the case. The ܢ is the usual Arabic and Aramean
interjection, although it be not preserved in our Hebrew texts. The
formula “O thou,” is also to be found frequently in Greek epitaphs; and
it refers to the second person, which appears in the following lines. The
usual interpretation is: “My imprecation is against all royal races and all
men;” but besides the awkward sense, it cannot stand on account of the
aforesaid omission of the second ܐ, which would be indispensable.

2 The word ܪܒܗܐ is to be found here, like in Psalm lxxxviii. 11, with
the sense of “deceased,” not “shadows of dead;” the passage seems to
exclude the notion of immortality. The same thing may be put forth on
account of the passage in the Psalms; here, as in the Phœnician passage,
the word seems to be purely a synonymous one for “dead.”

3 I believe my translation to be quite acceptable, also in this passage,
I reject absolutely the interpretation of ܐ as a preposition, and I explain it
likewise as the second person, ܐܬܢ ܡܐ ܠܥܠܢ, tu quivis regnas.
this coffin, and (exterminate) also the offspring of this royal race, or of these men of the crowd.

There shall be to them no root below, nor fruit above, nor living form under the sun.

For graced by the gods, I am carried away, the time of my non-existence has come, my spirit has disappeared, like the day, from whence I am silent, since which I became mute.

For I, ESMUNAZAR, King of the two Sidons, son of King TARBIT, King of the two Sidons (who was), the grandson of King ESMUNAZAR, King of the two Sidons,

And my mother AMASTARTE, the Priestess of ASTARTE, our mistress, the Queen, the daughter of King ESMUNAZAR, King of the two Sidons:

It is we who have built the temple of the gods, and the temple of ASTAROTH, on the seaside Sidon, and have placed there the image of the ASTAROTH, as we are sanctifiers (of the gods).

And it is we who have built the temple of ESMUN, and the sanctuary of the Purpleshells River on the mountain, and have placed there his image, as we are sanctifiers (of the gods).

And it is we who have built the temples of the gods of the two Sidons, in the seaside Sidon, the temple of BAAL-SIDON

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1 The sentence of "non-existence," which intervenes here a second time with the same words, shows clearly that it is not personal to the buried king.

2 The seaside Sidon, Sidon eses yam, seems to be one of the two Sidons; the other may have been the Sidon of the mountain. Sennacherib speaks also of the two Sidons, the great and the little one.

3 A careful inspection proves that the only one letter defaced is a waw. We read: יְרֹם נָבְרָט בֵּית אֵשׁ, "et penetrale fluminis maricus in monte." The translation, of course, is doubtful.

4 All former translations of this passage, inconsistent with the real text of the document, must, I think, be abandoned.
and the temple of Astarte who bears the name of this Baal.¹

May in future the Lords of the Kings² give us Dora³ and Japhia, the fertile corn-lands, which are in the plain of Saron, and may they annex it to the boundary of the land, that it may belong to the two Sidons for ever.

O thou, remember this: May no royal race and no man open my covering, nor deface (the inscriptions of)¹⁺ my covering, nor molest me in this funeral bed, nor carry away the coffin, where I repose.

Otherwise, the sacred gods shall inflict extirpation on them and shall exterminate this royal race and this man of the crowd and their offspring for ever.

¹ There is no mystical hypostasis of the Baal whatever, as some authors suggested. All Phœnician gods were Baal, and all goddesses Astarte (Compare Jud. x. 6). As there existed a Baal of Sidon, there was also an Astarte of Sidon, bearing the same name. That seems to be the real and very simple meaning of the words Astarte nominis Baalis.

² The "lords of the kings" seem not to be the kings of Persia, but an epithet applicable to a divine king.

³ Dora and Japhia (Joppe) are both situated at the shore on the plain of Saron.

⁴ The word ἔρημος may be very probably understood as erase; we see herein a threat against anyone attempting to deface the inscription engraved on this sarcophagus.
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