

INSCRIPTION OF TIGLATH-PILESER I
KING OF ASSYRIA

TRANSLATED BY THE EDITOR

THIS inscription of Tiglath-Pileser I. is the longest and most important of the early Assyrian records that have come down to us. The genealogical details given in it are of great value for determining the chronology and succession of the earlier monarchs of Assyria, while the description of the campaigns of the king throws a brilliant and unexpected light on the ancient geography of Western Asia. To the geographer, indeed, the care with which Tiglath-Pileser enumerates the countries he overran and the cities he sacked is of inestimable importance. A new chapter has been added to the history of ancient geography, and we now possess a fairly complete map of the districts north and north-west of Assyria before the overthrow of the Hittite power had brought with it revolution and change. We find geographical names of similar form stretching westwards from the neighbourhood of Lake Van to the confines of Asia Minor, together with evidence that tribes like those

of the Moskhi and Tibareni, whose scanty relics in later days found a refuge on the shores of the Black Sea, once inhabited extensive tracts on the slopes of the Taurus Mountains. A new world has, in fact, been opened up to the geographer.

Equally new is the world that has been opened up to the historian. The date of Tiglath-Pileser I can be approximately fixed by the help of an inscription of Sennacherib. On the rock of Bavian (W. A. I. iii. 14, 48-50) Sennacherib refers to "Rimmon and Sala, the gods of the City of Palaces (*Ekallati*), which Merodach-nadin-akhi, King of Accad, had taken and carried away to Babylon in the time of Tiglath-Pileser, King of Assyria"; and he goes on to say that he himself had "brought them out of Babylon 418 years afterwards." As the restoration of the images took place after Sennacherib's destruction of Babylon in B.C. 688, the date of their capture by Merodach-nadin-akhi would be B.C. 1106. The conquests and campaigns described in Tiglath-Pileser's inscription must therefore be placed before this year.

The expeditions of Tiglath-Pileser, however, bore but little fruit. They were not much more than raids, whose effects passed away after the death of the king who conducted them. In a fragmentary inscription of his son and successor, Assur-bil-kala, mention is made of "the land of the west," or Phœnicia, but it is doubtful whether any further campaigns were carried on in this direction. Assyria

fell into a state of decay ; its frontier cities passed into other hands, and for nearly two hundred years it is hidden altogether from sight. It was not until the ninth century before our era that under the war-like Assur-natsir-pal and his son Shalmaneser II it once more became a name of terror to Western Asia. Tiglath-Pileser I remained the central figure of the older empire, towering above his fellows on the Assyrian throne. When the ancient line of princes became extinct, and the crown was seized by the usurper Pul, the new king knew of no better way in which to legitimise his claim to sovereignty than by assuming the time-honoured name of Tukulti-pal-Esar or Tiglath-Pileser, "the servant of (Uras) the divine son of Esarra."

Though Tiglath-Pileser was not brought into direct relations with Palestine, it is probable that his wars, followed as they were by the temporary decay of Assyria, had much to do with the rise of the empire of David. The wars of Tiglath-Pileser weakened the power of the Hittites in the north, and allowed the small states of Syria to make head against them. For more than a century the latter had no powerful neighbours to fear or court. Egypt had passed under eclipse, and was divided between rival dynasties of kings, while Assyria had equally ceased to be formidable. When David and Joab built up the empire of Israel, there was no strong enemy to oppose and attack them. Hadadezer of Zobah might go "to recover his border at the river"

Euphrates; there was no Hittite or Assyrian monarch to stand in his way.

The inscription of Tiglath-Pileser I is inscribed on four large octagonal cylinders of clay, originally buried under the foundations of the four corners of the great temple of Kileh Sherghat, the ancient city of Assur, and now in the British Museum; and it has been published in the *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, i. pl. ix.-xvi. In 1857 the inscription was selected for testing the substantial correctness of the method employed by the Assyriologists, and of the results obtained by them. On the proposal of the Royal Asiatic Society, four translations of it, more or less complete, were made independently by Sir Henry Rawlinson, Mr. Fox Talbot, Dr. Hincks, and Dr. Oppert, and submitted under seal to the secretary of the Society. When opened and compared, it was found that they exhibited a remarkable resemblance to one another as regards both the transliteration of proper names and the rendering of individual passages. The resemblance, in fact, was greater than could be accounted for, except on the assumption that the method employed by the decipherers was a sound one, and that they were working on a solid basis. Since 1857 immense advances have been made in our knowledge of Assyrian. Characters whose values were then unknown, and words whose meaning was obscure, are now familiar to the student; and a historical inscription like that of Tiglath-Pileser presents

but few difficulties to the Assyriologist of to-day.

In 1880 the inscription was re-edited and translated with notes and glossary by Dr. W. Lotz under the auspices of his teacher, Prof. Fr. Delitzsch. The translation embodied all the stores of increased knowledge which the incessant labour of twenty-three years had accumulated, and it is only in a comparatively few passages that it can be improved. The English reader may now consider that he has before him the actual words of the old Assyrian king, and can use them for historical and geographical purposes without fear or reservation. The foot-notes will be found to contain all the geographical information at present attainable relative to the localities mentioned in the text.

A word or two must be added on the name of the divinity to whom Tiglath-Pileser was dedicated by his parents. This deity represented the Sun-god primitively worshipped at Nipur (now Niffer) in Babylonia, who afterwards came to be regarded as a sort of Chaldean Herakles. He is the only deity of the first rank whose name is still a matter of dispute. It is generally given as Adar in default of anything better, but the reading is certainly false. According to the monuments he was called Uras in Accadian, and also in Semitic, when regarded as "the god of light." But he was further known in Assyrian as Baru "the revealer," though we learn from a Babylonian text recently discovered in Upper

Egypt that his more usual title was Masu, "the hero," a word which is, letter for letter, the same as the Hebrew Mosheh, "Moses." Masu is defined as being "the Sun-god who rises from the divine day." As such he was identified with one of the primæval gods of Accadian cosmology, and so became "the son of Ê-sarra," or "the house of the firmament." See my *Lectures on the Religion of the Ancient Babylonians*, pp. 151-153.

INSCRIPTION OF TIGLATH-PILESER I

THE BEGINNING !

COLUMN I

1. ASUR the great lord, the director of the hosts of the gods,
 2. the giver of the sceptre and the crown, the establisher of the kingdom ;
 3. BEL, the lord (*bilu*), the king of all the spirits of the earth,
 4. the father of the gods, the lord of the world ;
 5. SIN (the Moon-god), the sentient one, the lord of the crown,
 6. the exalted one, the god of the storm ;¹
 7. SAMAS (the Sun-god), the judge of heaven and earth, who beholds
 8. the plots of the enemy, who feeds the flock ;
 9. RIMMON (the Air-god), the prince, the inundator of hostile shores,
 10. of countries (and) houses ;²
 11. URAS, the hero, the destroyer of evil men and foes,
 12. who discloses all that is in the heart ;
 13. ISTAR, the eldest of the gods, the lady of girdles,
 14. the strengthener of battles.
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15. Ye great gods, guiders of heaven (and) earth,
 16. whose onset (is) opposition and combat,
 17. who have magnified the kingdom
 18. of Tiglath-Pileser, the prince, the chosen

¹ Identified with Ea in W. A. I., ii. 60, 21.

² Or "hollows."

END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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