

THE INSCRIPTIONS RELATING TO THE RISE OF CYRUS AND HIS CONQUEST OF BABYLONIA

TRANSLATED BY THE EDITOR

THE three texts of which translations follow are of the highest importance for the history of the fall of Babylon and the rise of the Empire of Cyrus. They cast a new and revolutionary light on the character and nationality of Cyrus, as well as on his conquest of Babylon. Cyrus and his ancestors are shown in them to have been kings of Anzan or Ansan, not of Persia, he and his son Cambyses, so far from being Zoroastrian iconoclasts, conform to the worship and ritual of Babylonia, and Babylon surrenders to the invader "without fighting," instead of undergoing the horrors of a siege.

All three texts were first discovered by Mr. Pinches. The Cylinder inscription of Cyrus was first published, with translation and commentary, by Sir Henry Rawlinson in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, xii. 1 (1880). Subsequent translations of it have appeared by M. Halévy in the *Revue des Études juives*, No. 1; by myself in *Fresh*

Light from the Ancient Monuments; by Prof. Hommel in his *Babylonisch-Assyrische Geschichte*, pp. 787 seq.; and by Prof. Schrader in the *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek*, iii. 2 (1890). The original text is printed in the *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, v. pl. 35, and again by Abel & Winckler in their *Keilschrifttexte*, pp. 44 sq. The Annalistic Tablet of Cyrus was published, with transliteration, translation, and notes by Mr. Pinches in the *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vii. 1 (1880), and subsequently translated by myself in *Fresh Light from the Ancient Monuments*, and by Prof. Schrader in the *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek*, iii. 2 (1890). The cuneiform text has been printed in a revised form by Dr. Winckler in his *Untersuchungen zur altorientalischen Geschichte* (1889), No. 5. Of the Cylinder inscription of Nabonidos, discovered by Mr. Hormuzd Rassam at Abu Habba or Sippara, more than one copy exists. One of these is in the British Museum, the other at Berlin. The text, restored by means of duplicates, has been published in the *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, v. pl. 64, and again, according to the Berlin copy, in Abel and Winckler's *Keilschrifttexte*, pp. 40-43. A translation of it has been made by Latrille, together with a commentary, in the *Zeitschrift für Keilschriftforschung*, ii., and *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, i. (1885-6), and also by Dr. Peiser in the *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek*, iii. 2 (1890).

Apart from lacunæ, the Annalistic Tablet and the Cylinder inscription of Nabonidos offer few

difficulties to the translator. The Cylinder inscription of Cyrus is more difficult. This is mainly due to the mutilated character of the text, but it is also in some measure owing to our imperfect acquaintance with the rules of Assyro-Babylonian syntax. It is sometimes difficult, if not impossible, to determine where a sentence ends or begins, and a double translation of the passage consequently becomes possible. Moreover, the construction of the sentences more than once reminds us of the language of the later Hebrew prophets, and is open to the same amount of disputable interpretation. The inscription, in fact, is one of the most Hebraistic of those which have come from Babylonia or Assyria, and in one important particular twice adopts an usage which is Hebraic and not Assyrian. This is the employment of *malke* instead of *sarru* in the sense of "king." Elsewhere in Assyrian and Babylonian literature *malke* signifies the prince who is subordinate to the *sarru* or "king," whereas in Hebrew it is the *sar* who is the subordinate prince, the *melech* who is the supreme king.

One of the first facts which strike us in reading the texts is, that Cyrus and his immediate predecessors were kings of Ansan, a name which is also written Anzan in the older Assyrian inscriptions. It is not until the ninth year of Nabonidos (B.C. 546) that Cyrus receives the title of king of Persia. The occupation of that country must, therefore, have followed closely on the conquest of Astyages.

Attempts have been made by writers who were not Assyriologists to identify Ansan with the district of Pasargada, the early capital of Persia. But the cuneiform inscriptions leave little doubt as to the approximate position of the locality. Ansan was a country as well as a city, and, as in the case of Assyria, the country must have taken its name from the city which was its primitive capital. We first hear of it in the Sumerian inscriptions of Telloh. Gudea tells us that he had conquered "Ansan in the country of Elam" (*Records of the Past*, New Series, ii. p. 82). Ansan was accordingly situated in Elam, and it was probably at no great distance from the Babylonian frontier. Dr. Winckler¹ has pointed out that another Babylonian prince, Mutabil, the viceroy of Dur-ilu, also claims to have "broken the head of the army of Ansan." As Dur-ilu lay on the Elamite frontier, we are again referred to Elam for the site of Ansan. The question is placed beyond dispute, however, by a lexical tablet, in which explanations are given of obscure words and phrases in certain astrological texts (*W. A. I.*, ii. 47, 18). Here we are told that Ansan was the equivalent of the Semitic *Elamti* or Elam. Elam, "the highlands," was the name given by the Assyro-Babylonian Samites to the mountainous region on the east of Babylonia, which constituted the ancient kingdom of Elam, with its capital Susa. Consequently the city of Ansan must not only have been situated in Elam, but the country

¹ *Untersuchungen*, p. 116.

of Ansan must have approximately corresponded to the country which constituted the kingdom of Elam.

This conclusion is verified by the inscriptions of the native kings of Susa. In these each calls himself *gik 'sunkik D. P. Anzan anin Susinak*, "the lord of the kingdom of Anzan, the Susian king." Dr. Winckler maintains indeed that in this title the word Anzan is an appellative, meaning "district," rather than a proper name; but the supposition is founded on the erroneous belief that the word is not preceded by the determinative of locality. As a matter of fact, wherever *Susinak* or *Susunqa*, "the Susian," is preceded by the determinative, Anzan is preceded by it too; it is only where it is not attached to *Susunqa* that it is also not written before Anzan. Anzan and *Susunqa*, therefore, stand upon precisely the same footing, and since every one allows that Susun or Susa was a proper name, Anzan must have been a proper name as well. The title is found, not only in the inscriptions left by the Elamite kings in the ruins of Susa, but also on their bricks which have been found at Bushire, on the Persian Gulf; it would, therefore, seem that the country designated by the name extended from Susa in the north as far as the shores of the sea.

A passage in the annals of Sennacherib bears similar testimony. Here we read (Taylor's *Cylinder*, v. 25-39): "As for him, the Elamite, whose cities I had captured and reduced to ruins in the course

of my former expedition against Elam, his heart was not intelligent. He accepted the bribe (of the Babylonians), and collected his army (and) his camp; he prepared chariots (and) wagons; he harnessed horses and mules to his yokes. The countries of Par'suas, Anzan, Pasiru, and Ellipi; the tribes of Yazan, Lagabra, and Khargunu; the cities of Dummuqu, 'Sulâ, and Samsamna; the son of Merodachbaladan; the countries of Bit-Adin, Bit-Amukkan, Sillan, and Sâla; the cities of Larrak and Lakhiru; the tribes of Pekod, Gambul, Khalat, Ruhua, Ubul, Malakh, Rapiqu, Khindaru, and Damunu, a great confederacy, he summoned around him." In the parallel passage of the Memorial Tablet (44-46) the list is given more briefly: "Behind the king of Elam, the countries of Par'suas, Anzan, and Ellipi, all the land of the Kaldi and all the Aramæans, a great confederacy, he summoned around him, as well as the king of Babylon."

As the king of Elam was at the head of the confederacy, the country over which he ruled must be one of those included in the list. It could not have been Pasiru, the situation of which is unknown, since this is not even mentioned in the duplicate account, nor was it either Par'suas, the classical Persis, or Ellipi, which corresponded to the Media of later days. Nothing remains, therefore, but to identify Elam with Anzan, as is done by the writer of the lexical tablet mentioned above. The position occupied by Anzan in the list, between Ellipi and

Par'suas, agrees exactly with that of the kingdom of Elam.

Ansan, written in the Elamite fashion with the Elamite phonetic value 'sa for the character *du*, is furthermore alluded to in the astrological tablets (*W. A. I.*, iii. 60-67, 68). Reference is twice made to "the king of Ansan and 'Subarti." Now the name of 'Subarti (or more exactly 'Suwärti) represented the district of Northern Mesopotamia known as Mitanni to its inhabitants and Aram-Naharaim to the Old Testament. The conquest of this district by the king of Ansan can be explained only by the western conquests of Elam, of which we have a record in the 14th chapter of Genesis. We are thus again brought back to the kingdom of Elam grown out of the amalgamation of two independent principalities, one of which had its seat at Susun or Susa, "the ancient" city, the other at Anzan.¹

Already, as long ago as 1880, Sir Henry Rawlinson indicated the true situation of Anzan, and pointed out that the name survived into the middle ages. "There is a notice of Assân in a very early and learned Arabic writer, Ibn-el-Nadîm, who had unusually good means of information as to genuine Persian traditions. This writer ascribes the invention of Persian writing to Jamshîd, the son of Vivenghân (who, with the Zoroastrians, was the Eponym of the

¹ In an old geographical list Ansan is conjoined with the nomad tribes of the Markhasi and Khamar, the name of Elam following subsequently; see my article, "La Situation géographique d'Anzan," in the *Muséon*, v. 4 (1886).

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