

## INTRODUCTION.

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THE materials for writing the history of Assyria, until the end of the twelfth century B.C., are very scanty, and any text which throws light upon the struggles and conquests of her earlier kings is of great value in determining the relations of the Northern kingdom with Babylonia, and in tracing the gradual rise of the former to a position of pre-eminence in Western Asia. A considerable portion of our knowledge of Assyrian history during this early period is obtained from two late documents, viz., the "Synchronous History," and a table inscribed with a section of the "Babylonian Chronicle"; both of these, when complete, contained brief summaries of the relations which existed between Assyria and Babylonia from the earliest times. Additional information concerning the campaigns and building operations of the early Assyrian kings is furnished by the historical inscriptions of later rulers, especially those of Tiglath-pileser I and Sennacherib. The contemporary records of the early kings themselves are our third principal source of information ;

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these comprise a few brick inscriptions and a number of fragmentary votive texts inscribed upon clay bowls with the object of recording the restoration of certain temples of the gods.<sup>1</sup>

The only early Assyrian inscription of any length that has hitherto been published is the famous memorial slab of Adad-nirari I, which was acquired for the Trustees of the British Museum at Mōsul by the late Mr. George Smith in 1875. The text, eighty lines in length, is inscribed in archaic Assyrian characters upon both sides of a limestone slab, and was engraved to commemorate the restoration of a portion of the temple of the god Ashur in the city of Ashur. The introductory phrases with which the inscription opens are the most important part of the text, for they give the names of the peoples conquered by Adad-nirari himself, and by his father Pudi-ilu, and by his grandfather Bēl-nirari, and by his great-grandfather Ashur-uballit. From the information thus furnished it was found possible to trace in outline the gradual extension of the Assyrian Empire during a great part of the fourteenth century B.C.<sup>2</sup>

In the present volume is published for the first time

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Budge and King, *Annals of the Kings of Assyria*, Vol. I, pp. 1 ff., and Introduction, pp. xi ff.

<sup>2</sup> For the text and translation of the memorial slab of Adad-nirari I, see *Annals of the Kings of Assyria*, pp. 4 ff.; photographs of the obverse, reverse, and edges of the slab are given on pp. xxv, xxix, and xxxiii of that work.

## MEMORIAL TABLET OF TUKULTI-NINIB I. 3

an inscribed memorial slab of Tukulti-Ninib I, king of Assyria about 1275 B.C., which is very similar to that of his grandfather Adad-nirari I. Like the earlier document, Tukulti-Ninib's slab was engraved to commemorate certain building operations, but instead of merely recording the restoration of a portion of a single temple,<sup>1</sup> it commemorates the founding of a new city, the erection therein of temples to eight deities, the cutting of a canal for the supply of water to the city, the building of a royal palace, and the erection of a wall round the city with the object of rendering it secure against the attacks of enemies. It was on the occasion of the completion of the city wall that the tablet was inscribed.<sup>2</sup>

Another point of resemblance between the memorial slabs of Adad-nirari I and Tukulti-Ninib I may be seen in the fact that the most interesting events recorded by them are not those which they were primarily intended to commemorate; the most important facts are to be found in the introductory portions of the text. We have already noted that Adad-nirari prefixed to the record of his building operations a long genealogy, with lists of the peoples conquered by himself and his forefathers; in like manner Tukulti-

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<sup>1</sup> Adad-nirari's slab records the rebuilding of a portion of the temple buildings called the *širlala*; the exact meaning of the word is uncertain. See *Annals of the Kings of Assyria*, p. 7 f., Obv., l. 35—Rev., l. 8.

<sup>2</sup> See below, p. 15.

Ninib, before recounting the founding of his city of Kar-Tukulti-Ninib, supplies valuable information concerning his own military expeditions.

But here the resemblance between the two documents ceases, for whereas the historical information supplied by Adad-nirari is obtained from incidental references in his genealogy,<sup>1</sup> that given by Tukulti-Ninib takes the form of detailed annals, recording the campaigns which he conducted during the course of his reign.<sup>2</sup> In his annals we read, in phrases which remind us of the great cylinder-inscription of Tiglath-pileser I, an account of the gradual conquest of the peoples to the north and east of Assyria, and the record ends with a description of the capture of Babylon and the complete subjugation of Sumer and Akkad.

We already know from a tablet of the "Babylonian Chronicle" that Tukulti-Ninib I conquered Babylonia and ruled the country for seven years until his death, and an inscription of Sennacherib records that this event took place six hundred years before Sennacherib himself captured the city. But Sennacherib does not mention the Babylonian king whom Tukulti-Ninib conquered, and the name of this king has not hitherto been read upon the tablet of the "Babylonian Chronicle" to

<sup>1</sup> In Obv., ll. 1-34; cf. *Annals of the Kings of Assyria*, p. 4 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Tukulti-Ninib's titles and genealogy occupy the first eight lines of his inscription; then follow the annals of his campaigns, from Obv., l. 9, to Rev., l. 1.

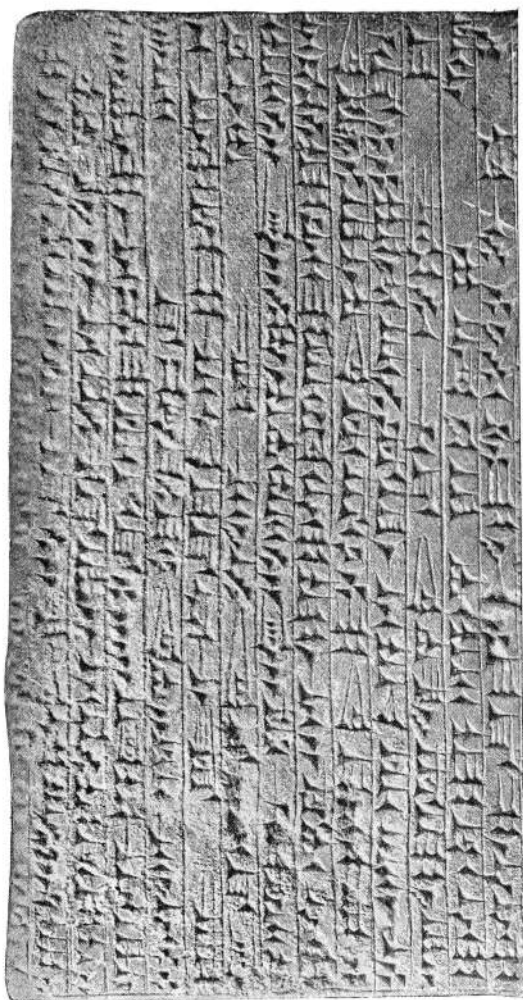
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978-1-108-08241-9 — Records of the Reign of Tukulti-Ninib I, King of Assyria, about BC 1275

Edited and translated by Leonard William King

Excerpt

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The Annals of Tukulti-Ninib I, Obverse, ll. 1-14.

## TUKULTI-NINIB I AND BIBEIASHU.

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which reference has been made.<sup>1</sup> It has been suggested that Bibe,<sup>2</sup> or Bibeishu, a king of the Third Dynasty, was the opponent of Tukulti-Ninib I, and the annals of Tukulti-Ninib I prove that this was so. They record that Bibeashu, king of Babylon, was defeated and deported by Tukulti-Ninib I, and they thus supply another synchronism in Assyrian and Babylonian history, which is of great value for settling more definitely the dates of the Babylonian kings of the Third Dynasty.

Until recently it was believed that Bibe, or Bibeishu, lived some sixty or seventy years after Tukulti-Ninib I. Prof. Hommel in his history placed Tukulti-Ninib I at about 1300 B.C., and assigned to Bibe's reign the date 1233–1225 B.C.<sup>3</sup> Prof. Delitzsch and Herr Mürdter assigned the date 1302 (or 1289) B.C. to Tukulti-

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<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact this tablet of the "Babylonian Chronicle" (82-7-4, 38) does record the name of Bibeashu as that of the king defeated by Tukulti-Ninib I. But Mr. Pinches, who first published a translation of the tablet, and Dr. Winckler, who has edited the text, have both misread the passage. As my copy and translation of the text differs in several other points from theirs, I have included in the present work a copy and translation of those lines of the Chronicle which refer to the reign of Tukulti-Ninib I (see below, Supplementary Texts).

<sup>2</sup> The name is written Bibeashu (*mBi-be-a-su*) in the Annals of Tukulti-Ninib I, and Bibeishu (*Bi-be-ia-su*) upon some votive objects found at Nippur; the name is abbreviated to Bibe (*m iluBi-be*) in the Babylonian List of Kings.




<sup>3</sup> Hommel, *Geschichte Babyloniens und Assyriens* (in Oncken's *Allgemeine Geschichte*), pp. 442, 508.

Ninib I and 1228–1219 B.C. to Bibe,<sup>1</sup> while Prof. Tiele did not attempt to construct an exact chronology for the period.<sup>2</sup> During the American diggings at Nippur three votive objects<sup>3</sup> were found, dedicated to the gods Bêl and Nusku by a king of the Third, or Kassite, Dynasty, whose name was Bibeiasu. Dr. Hilprecht pointed out that the name Bibe, which occurs in the Babylonian List of Kings, is an abbreviated form of the name Bibeiasu, and that the two kings were to be identified with one another, and with a Kassite king the end of whose name, [ ]*ashu*, is preserved on a tablet of the “Synchronous History.”<sup>4</sup> Assuming the second identification to be correct, it followed, from the position of this broken passage in the “Synchronous History,” that a battle between Bibeiasu and an Assyrian king took place some time after the agreement made by Adad-nirari I and Nazi-marattash concerning the boundary between

<sup>1</sup> Delitzsch and Mürdter, *Geschichte Babyloniens und Assyriens*, pp. 93, 265 (Übersicht).

<sup>2</sup> Tiele, *Babylonisch-Assyrische Geschichte*, pp. 138 ff., 147.

<sup>3</sup> They are numbered C.B.M. 8680, 8682, and 8729, and were published by Hilprecht in *Old Babylonian Inscriptions chiefly from Nippur* (*Trans. Am. Phil. Soc.*, N.S., xviii, 1), pl. 26, Nos. 70–72.

<sup>4</sup> See Hilprecht, *Old Bab. Inscr.*, p. 11. The tablet of the “Synchronous History” is numbered S. 2106, and a copy of the obverse of the tablet, on which the passage occurs, is published below, Suppl. Ttxts. It will be observed from this copy that not only the end of the name,  *ashu*, has been preserved, but also the beginning  i.e., *Bē*[ ], the first syllable of the name, preceded by the determinative .

## TUKULTI-NINIB I AND BIBEIASHU. 9

Assyria and Babylonia. Now the Chronicle 82-7-4, 38 records the conquest of Babylonia by Tukulti-Ninib I, and as he was the grandson of Adad-nirari I, it has been suggested that the opponent of Tukulti-Ninib I was Bibeiashu.<sup>1</sup> The annals of Tukulti-Ninib I, and the new reading of Bibeiashu's name on the Babylonian Chronicle, both confirm this suggestion, and they thus furnish another certain point of contact between Assyrian and Babylonian chronology.

After a short description and analysis of Tukulti-Ninib's text, and a comparison of the class of foundation memorials to which it belongs with the foundation deposits of ancient Egypt, a sketch will be given of the information it supplies on the early history of Assyria.

The tablet upon which the Annals of Tukulti-Ninib I are inscribed is of limestone, and measures  $15\frac{7}{8}$  in. in height,  $11\frac{1}{4}$  in. to  $11\frac{5}{8}$  in. in breadth, and  $1\frac{3}{8}$  in. to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. in thickness. The text is written upon both sides of the tablet, and many of the lines, especially those upon the obverse, run over on to the right hand edge. The lines of the text are separated from each other by lines cut upon the stone by the engraver,<sup>2</sup> and on the reverse similar lines enclose the

<sup>1</sup> See Winckler, *Altorientalische Forschungen*, I, pp. 123 ff., and Rogers, *History of Babylonia and Assyria*, I, p. 422.


<sup>2</sup> The spaces left between the lines so cut upon the stone are very regular and only vary between  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. and  $\frac{1}{2}$  in.; the majority of the lines are  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. in height.



inscription on each side. On the obverse the enclosing line is omitted from the right side. The obverse contains thirty-seven lines of the text, and the reverse thirty lines, and at the end of the reverse a space of about four lines has been left blank. The text is cut in bold and clearly formed Assyrian characters. In the main, the engraver has done his work well and carefully, but in one or two places he has made mistakes. It may be noted that in nine passages he has been obliged to make erasures and has written the correct characters over the signs he has rubbed down;<sup>1</sup> and in two passages he has left out a sign and has not detected the omission.<sup>2</sup> Many of the characters are archaic, and the forms of some of them are of great interest.<sup>3</sup> The text is of considerable value for the study of Assyrian epigraphy, inasmuch

<sup>1</sup> See Obv., ll. 7, 18, 29, 35, 36, 37 and Rev., ll. 3, 17, 19; in l. 2 of the obverse the engraver has omitted the determinative before *Karduniash*, and has afterwards written it in without making an erasure.

<sup>2</sup> In l. 22 of the obverse the engraver has omitted the sign *ni* from the verb *u-šik[-ni]-iš*, and in l. 17 of the reverse the sign *bi* from the subs. *taḫ-lu[-bi]-šu*.

<sup>3</sup> See especially the forms of KA (Obv., ll. 2, 18, 35, 36), LI (Obv., ll. 3, 20, 22, 25, 30, 32, 37, etc.), SAR (Obv., ll. 10, 19), KI (Obv., l. 19, Rev., l. 20), AS (Obv., ll. 23, 31, Rev., l. 24), MUḪ (Obv., l. 27), GIM (Obv., l. 37), BAD (Rev., ll. 15, 22), LIP (Rev., l. 20), IN (Rev., l. 29),  (the ideogram for *Istar*) in Obv., l. 29, Rev., l. 7, and SA (the ideogram for *Nabû*) in Rev., l. 12. It will also be seen that two forms of the sign DU are employed (cp. Obv., l. 6, with Obv., l. 20 and Rev., l. 18), and also two forms of the sign TA (cp. Obv., ll. 24, 26, and Rev., l. 4, with Obv., ll. 17 and 22).

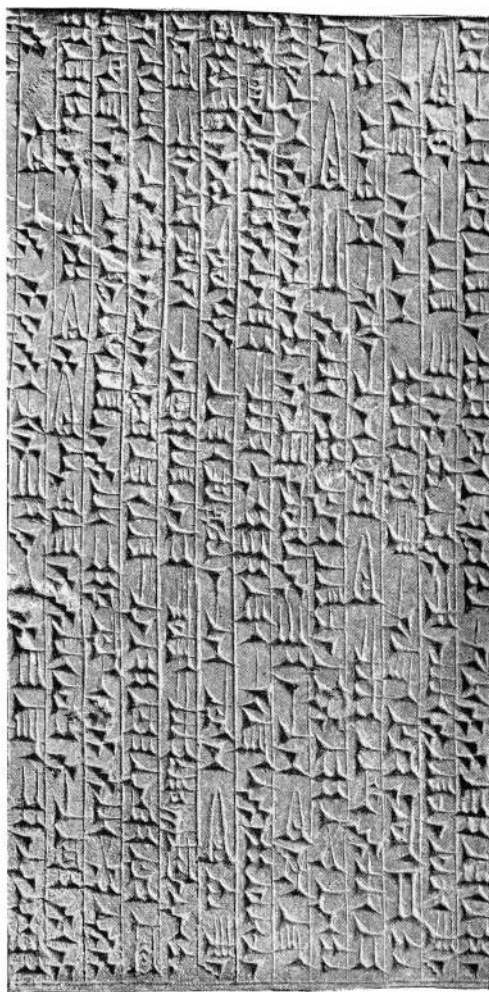
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