

**RECORDS OF THE REIGN
OF TUKULTI-NINIB L, KING
OF ASSYRIA, ABOUT B.C.
1275**

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Records of the reign of Tukulti-Ninib I, King of Assyria, about B.C. 1275 by L. W. King

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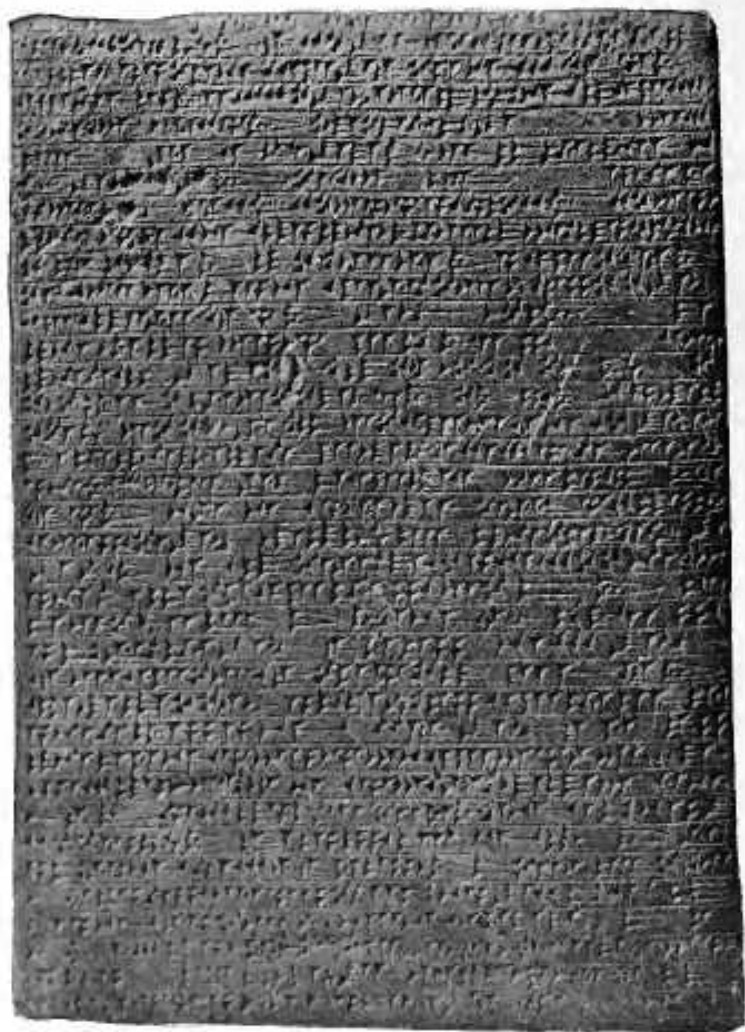
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[*Frontispiece.*]



Limestone tablet inscribed with the Annals of Tukulti-Ninib I,
King of Assyria. [Brit. Mus. No. 98494, Obverse.]

Studies in Eastern History.

RECORDS
OF THE
REIGN OF TUKULTI-NINIB I,
KING OF ASSYRIA, ABOUT B.C. 1275.

EDITED AND TRANSLATED FROM A MEMORIAL TABLET
IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM

BY
L. W. KING, M.A., F.S.A.,

ASSISTANT IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EGYPTIAN AND ASSYRIAN ANTIQUITIES
IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

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PREFACE.

SOME two years ago, in the first volume of *The Annals of the Kings of Assyria*, issued by the Trustees of the British Museum, a collection was published of all the historical inscriptions of the early Assyrian kings, from about B.C. 2000 to B.C. 860, which are preserved in the British Museum. In that work the period between the reign of Adad-nirari I, about B.C. 1325, and that of Tiglath-pileser I, about B.C. 1100, is represented only by a brick-inscription and some votive texts inscribed upon fragments of clay bowls. In fact, the only historical inscription of any length belonging to the early Assyrian period which had up to that time been recovered was the memorial tablet of Adad-nirari I, brought from Mōsul by the late Mr. George Smith in 1875. In the present volume the text is published of a very similar memorial tablet of Tukulti-Ninib I, the grandson of Adad-nirari I, which is of great historical value, inasmuch as it supplements our knowledge of the history of Assyria and her relations with Babylonia during the early part of the thirteenth century B.C.

The limestone tablet from which the text is taken was made by the orders of Tukulti-Ninib I, who had it

buried as a foundation memorial in, or under, the wall of the city of Kar-Tukulti-Ninib, which was situated near the Tigris between Kuyunjik and Ƙal'a Sherġât. The text contains an account of the founding of the city by the king and the building of the city-wall, preceded by a list of the military expeditions which he had conducted up to the time the tablet was engraved. From these records we learn for the first time of extensive conquests to the north and east of Assyria made in a series of expeditions by Tukulti-Ninib I, who closes the narrative of his campaigns by an account of his invasion of Babylonia and the complete subjugation of Sumer and Akkad.

That Tukulti-Ninib I conquered Babylon and ruled it for seven years during the period of the Third, or Kassite, Dynasty was already known from a tablet of the "Babylonian Chronicle," and it has been suggested that the Babylonian king he conquered was Bibe, or Bibeishu, whose name occurs in the Babylonian List of Kings, and on a fragment of the "Synchronous History" of Babylonia and Assyria, and upon some votive objects found at Nippur. From his memorial tablet we learn that the opponent of Tukulti-Ninib was Bibeishu, who was not only defeated but was deported to Assyria. The new text thus confirms the suggested synchronism between Babylonian and Assyrian history, and is of great importance in its bearings upon the problems of Babylonian chronology.

In addition to the publication of the new memorial tablet, the texts and translations are given of a number of supplementary inscriptions which treat of the history and date of Tukulti-Ninib I. Of these mention may be made of the portion of the "Babylonian Chronicle" dealing with Tukulti-Ninib's reign, and the famous copy of Tukulti-Ninib's seal-inscription written upon a tablet of the time of Sennacherib, by means of which the date of Tukulti-Ninib is fixed. In the account of the conquest of Babylon by Tukulti-Ninib on the former of these two documents, I have succeeded in deciphering the name of Bibeiasu, which has escaped the notice of those who have hitherto edited and translated the text. On the latter I believe I have made out the meaning of the line of archaic characters, twice repeated on the tablet, which has puzzled translators of the text during the last thirty years. According to my interpretation the line in question gives the name and title of Shagarakti-Shuriash, the father of Bibeiasu, who is thus proved to have owned the seal before Tukulti-Ninib captured it in Babylon. Sennacherib's scribe was unfamiliar with the Old-Babylonian character in which the name was written upon the seal, and he did not recognize many of the signs, but he has made a fairly accurate copy of their general form. On p. 69 I have given a conjectural restoration of the original text, and below it I have added the forms of the signs as they are found upon Sennacherib's tablet. I think a glance at

this will suffice to show that the suggested interpretation is correct.

In the Introduction to this volume an analysis and description are given of Tukulti-Ninib's memorial tablet, and the information which it supplies on the early history of Assyria is fully treated. An attempt has also been made to discuss the class of foundation memorials to which it belongs, and a comparison has been drawn between the origin and object of these documents and those of the foundation deposits found during recent years under the walls and pavements of Egyptian buildings dating from the Fifth Dynasty down to the Ptolemaic period. It may here be added that the recent find of foundation-pits by Mr. Howard Carter at the entrance to the tomb of Hâtshepset at Dêr el-Bahârî supports the theory as to the origin of the Egyptian foundation deposits which is suggested below. The object of the Babylonian and Assyrian foundation memorials was of a less magical and more practical character than that of the Egyptian foundation deposits. With the Babylonian practice we may fairly compare our custom of burying coins and current newspapers in the foundations of public buildings at the present day, though it is unlikely that the newspapers will serve our purpose as effectively as the stone and almost imperishable clay have preserved the records of the early kings of Western Asia.

As the text of the memorial tablet of Tukulti-Ninib I

is of great interest for the study of Assyrian epigraphy, the tablet is published in facsimile in a series of outline blocks. The text which accompanies the translation and transliteration is printed in the larger cuneiform type of Messrs. Harrison and Sons, which was specially designed from the lapidary forms of the later Assyrian characters.

The present book is the first in a series of small volumes which I have prepared on various epochs in the history of Western Asia. In addition to a number of historical studies the volumes will contain unpublished documents which throw new light upon the periods of which they treat.

My thanks are due to Dr. E. A. Wallis Budge for his help during the preparation of the work.

L. W. KING.

LONDON,

October 3rd, 1904.