

## A SKETCH OF THE EXCAVATIONS IN BABYLONIA AND ASSYRIA.

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*Nothing done up to beginning of this century—First Excavator was Rich—First period: He was followed by Layard—French Excavations in the same period—Rawlinson's decipherment of Behistun inscriptions.—Second period: Geo. Smith, E. de Sarzec, Rassam, University of Pennsylvania.*

AT the beginning of the present century, little was known of the ancient cities of Babylonia and Assyria aside from the meager and imperfect accounts given by the Jewish and Greek historians. Between 1790 and 1795, the Abbé Beauchamp<sup>r</sup> sent to Paris some specimen bricks covered with Babylonian characters. The excitement occasioned by these short inscriptions, and especially by the report that the ruins of Babylon had been discovered in the vicinity of Hilleh, caused the East India Company to issue orders to their agent in Bassorah to obtain as quickly as possible a collection of these Babylonian inscriptions and to send them over Bombay to England. Between 1801 and 1810 several different collections were shipped, among which was the famous Nebuchadnezzar stone in ten columns, called the East India Inscription, and now in the India office in London.

As yet no systematic work had been done in excavating these old Assyrian and Babylonian ruins. Claudius James Rich, an Englishman, the East India Company's representative in Baghdad, was the first to begin such excavations. Rich commenced his work in 1811 and in 1812 published his "Memoir on the Ruins of Babylon," and in 1818 his "Second Memoir on

<sup>r</sup>We pass over the travels and writings of Benjamin of Tudela (about 1160); Rabbi Pethachiah of Ratisbon a short time after the death of Benjamin; Conti (1444); Ortelius of Antwerp, who published his Geographical Treasury in 1596, in which was incorporated all that was known at that time of Oriental geography; Hakluyt's collections of travels and voyages (1599) containing an account, translated from Italian, of the travels of Cesare de Federici, who was the first to give us a description of

Babylon, etc." Rich continued his work until 1820, sending at intervals to England such remains of inscriptions, bricks, sculptures, etc., as were excavated. In 1820, he made a journey for his health into the Kurdish mountains, and, on his return, he spent a few days in Mosul on the Tigris. From Mosul, he saw on the other side of the river, mounds similar to those at Hilleh. Rich came to the conclusion that these mounds represented the site of the Assyrian Empire. On his return down the Tigris to Baghdad, he landed at the mouth of the Upper Zab, and examined the mound there, called by the Arabs Nimrud. He collected a number of inscribed bricks which are now in the British Museum.

After a lapse of twenty years, in the Spring of 1840, Austin Henry Layard visited the ruins of Nineveh as identified by Rich. In 1842 Layard returned to Mosul without having made any excavations. Here he met the French consul, P. C. Botta. Layard, being without the means necessary to carry on the excavations, strongly urged Botta to direct his attention to the work. In 1843 Botta was able to begin and he continued until

Akerkuf, identified in recent years as the Dur-Kurigalzu of the inscriptions; Rauwolf of Augsburg, who describes Akerkuf as the Tower of Babel (1573); about the beginning of the seventeenth century, John Cartwright, the first European to attempt a survey of the ruins of Nineveh; Don Garcia de Silvey Figueroa, ambassador of Philip III of Spain to the court of Persia; Pietro della Valle (1621), who still regarded Baghdad as the site of Babylon, and who identified the great mound near Hilleh (=Babil) as the sight of the Tower of the Confusion of Tongues; Pedro Teixeira, a Portuguese; Sir Thomas Herbert (1626); Tavernier, who visited Mosul in 1644; Pater Vincenzo Maria di Santa Caterina da Siena (1657) who was the first, since Benjamin of Tudela, to identify the site of Babylon with Hilleh as over against Baghdad; Flower (1667); Chardin who in 1674 copied the so-called Window inscription, the shortest of the trilingual Achæmenian inscriptions; Engelbert Kämpfer (about 1694) who copied the so-called *H<sup>2</sup>* Persepolis inscription; Cornelis de Bruin (1701); Otter, in 1734, who was the first to notice the Behistun inscriptions and reliefs, afterwards copied by Rawlinson and used in the decipherment of the inscriptions; Edward Ives (1758); Pater Emmanuel de Saint Albert, whose report on the Ruins of Babylon to the Duke of Orleans formed the basis of D'Anville's Memoir on the position of Babylon read before the French Academy of inscriptions in 1755; Carsten Niebuhr, who in 1765 copied several Achæmenian inscriptions, and from whose plates Grotefend afterward deciphered the names of Darius and Xerxes, thus opening the way for all future work in this line; Count Caylus, who in 1762 published the celebrated Vase of Xerxes, with the quadrilingual inscription—in Egyptian (Hieroglyphs), Old Persian, Susian and Babylonian—"Xerxes the great king."

1845, during which time he laid bare the city walls of Khorsabad and discovered many valuable inscriptions. "To him is due the honor of having found the first Assyrian monument" says Layard in his interesting review of Botta's excavations published in "Nineveh and its Remains." Botta's communications were given to the *Académie* through Mohl. Later an artist was assigned to him and means for further excavations. By order of the French government Botta published in 1849-51 his "Monuments of Nineveh," in which are to be found 200 pages of inscriptions.

In the Spring of 1845, Sir Stratford Canning, at that time English Ambassador at Constantinople, offered Layard sufficient money to undertake excavations. Towards the end of the year, Layard began work on the ruins of Nimrud. From the very beginning he was successful. The sum allotted by Canning gave out in June 1847, and Layard was again compelled to return to England. During the two years, however, he had laid bare three large Assyrian palaces, viz., the Northwest palace of Asurnasirpal (884-858 B.C.); the Central palace, probably built by the successor of Asurnasirpal, Shalmaneser II (858-823 B.C.) in which was found the celebrated Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser (now in the British Museum); and the Southwest palace of Esarhaddon (680-669 B.C.). The richest returns came from the Northwest palace, and the inscriptions found were in a much better state of preservation than those excavated by Botta in Sargon's palace at Khorsabad.

Sir Stratford Canning generously presented the entire results of Layard's expedition to the British Museum, to which place they were shipped by the explorer himself. Layard shortly afterwards published an account of his work in "Nineveh and its Remains." This book created a great sensation in England, and as a result, the English government became interested in the excavations. In 1849, Layard was given leave of absence from his diplomatic post in Constantinople and sent back to Assyria, and Hormuzd Rassam, English Consul at Mosul—but a native Arab—was ordered to join him. During the first expedition, Layard had confined his operations to Nimrud, but in this, his second, he

began work at Koujunjik. Botta had already conducted excavations at this mound, but with comparatively little success. In his first expedition, Layard had found the Southwest palace of Sennacherib (705-681 B. C.) as restored by his grandson Asurbanipal, but he had not been able to carry his work to completion. In his second trip (1849-51), this building was fully brought to light. This palace was the largest yet found, containing seventy-three rooms. Excavations were also made in Nebbi-Yunus, and in Chaleh Shergat (the old Assur). In Nebbi-Yunus, palaces of Ramman-nirari (811-782), Sennacherib and Esarhaddon were found, while in Chaleh Shergat, Layard, or rather Rassam, discovered the foundations of a palace of Tiglathpileser I, and here was found the large cylinder of 800 lines belonging to Tiglathpileser I (about 1120 B. C.). During this expedition, Layard also visited several sites in Babylonia, but he was able to accomplish little or nothing. In 1853 he published "A Second Series of the Monuments of Nineveh," including bas-reliefs from the palace of Sennacherib and bronzes from the ruins of Nimroud, from drawings made on the spot, during a second expedition to Assyria (71 plates). In 1851, he published his "Inscriptions in Cuneiform Characters."

Immediately following and closely connected with Layard's second expedition was that of Hormuzd Rassam (1852-4), during which the North palace of Asurbanipal was discovered and laid bare. In this was found the celebrated "Library of Asurbanipal," containing thousands of clay tablets inscribed on both sides.

About the same time with Rassam (1852-4 or rather 1851-5) Victor Place, the French consul at Mosul, took up the work of excavating at Khorsabad which had been begun by Botta. While this work was going on in Assyria, Loftus in 1849, Fresnel and Oppert in 1852, and Taylor in 1852 began excavations in Babylonia. In 1853-4, Loftus and Taylor visited and afterwards described the ruins of Warka, Senkereh, Ur, etc. The French expedition was badly managed, but it must be acknowledged that almost all that we know of the topography of Babylonia dates from this expedition. The boat

containing the results of their excavations was wrecked in the Tigris on May 23, 1855, and hence the inscriptions never reached Paris. Accounts of both of these expeditions have been given by Oppert and Loftus respectively. With these expeditions what may be called the first period of Assyro-Babylonian excavations comes to an end.

Before going to the Second Period, mention must be made of the work of Rawlinson on the famous Behistun inscription. This inscription consists of about 400 lines and it was carved, by order of Darius Hystaspes, on a steep mountain—about 1700 feet high—called Behistun (near Kermanschah). The English officer not only copied this inscription for the first time (between the years 1835 and 1837), but he also made the first translation, having worked at intervals on this inscription from 1835–46, when he brought his manuscript, containing the copy of the Babylonian text, to London. After the close of the first period, no excavations were made for almost twenty years. During this time Layard published his “Inscriptions in the Cuneiform Character from Assyrian Monuments,” and the first three volumes of the “Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia” had appeared, edited by Rawlinson with the help of Norris and George Smith.

In 1872, George Smith had the good fortune to discover some tablets containing the Chaldean account of the Deluge. The results of his find were laid bare before the Society of Biblical Archæology on December 3, 1872. “In consequence of the wide interest taken at the time in these discoveries, the proprietors of the *Daily Telegraph* newspaper came forward and offered to advance a sum of one thousand guineas for fresh researches at Nineveh in order to recover more of these interesting inscriptions, the terms of agreement being that I should conduct the expedition, and should supply the *Telegraph* from time to time with accounts of my journeys and discoveries in the East in return.” In January 1873, with George Smith, the Second Period of Excavations began. Between 1873 and 1876 Smith made three expeditions, from the last of which he never returned, dying on his homeward journey at Aleppo, August 19, 1876, of

a fever contracted at Baghdad. Smith's chief work was to make a more thorough examination of the palaces in Koujunjik, and especially the Northwest palace discovered by Rassam. Rassam continued the work begun by Smith, and between 1877 and 1881 made three expeditions. The chief results of the first was the uncovering of another palace of Asurnasirpal at Nimrud and the finding of the Bronze Gates of Shalmaneser II. In the same year he visited the palaces of Sennacherib and Asurbanipal at Koujunjik, and brought back with him about 1400 tablets and the large ten-column cylinder of Asurbanipal, known as the Rm. In his second expedition, he directed his attention to Babylon. Besides the so-called Egibi tablets, contracts, etc., he brought back with him this time inscriptions of Nebuchadrezzar, Nabonidus and Cyrus. During the last trip the most important discovery was the Temple of the Sun at Abu-Habba (Sippara).

From 1877, while Rassam was also at work, the French consul at Bassorah, Ernest de Sarzec, had been excavating at Telloh (Shirpurla, Lagash). The finds are for the most part non-Semitic. They are now in the Louvre. De Sarzec has been excavating at Telloh, at intervals during the last nineteen years.

The first American Expedition to Babylonia was the Catherine Wolfe under the direction of Dr. William Hayes Ward of the *Independent* (1884). The purpose of this party was to explore and to describe sites rather than to excavate.

In 1884-5, M. Dieulafoy made excavations under the direction of the French Government at Susa. The results obtained are at present in the Louvre.

In 1888 and 1889, Messrs. Human, Luschan and Winter conducted excavations at a Hittite mound known as Zinjirli, in the Antioch plain at the base of the Amanus Mountains, about 50 miles west of Aintab.

The British Museum has been purchasing tablets in the East and excavating during the last ten years under the direction of Dr. E. A. W. Budge, Keeper of the Department of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities.

The last expedition to Babylon was that of the Babylonian Exploration Fund, under the auspices of the University of Pennsylvania (1888, still in progress.)<sup>1</sup>

The most important finds made by the native Arabs are those of Tel-el-Amarna in 1887. These have been noticed at some length in this JOURNAL, *cf.* Vol. I., p. 50.

<sup>1</sup>*Cf.* The articles on the Expedition in *The Old and New Testament Student*, Vol. XIV, pp. 160, 213; *THE BIBLICAL WORLD*, Vol. I, pp. 57, 135.