

and killing it with a spear and beside it are certain signs in the cuneiform writing which state that King Assurbanipal ^{or} seized a fierce desert lion by the ear and drove his spear through its body. Such an agreement between our interpretation of the writing and the scene that is pictured, gives strong proof of the accuracy of our method of *decipherment*.

Another evidence is found in the many contracts which were kept in the temples in Assyria and later Babylonian times. These contracts which were written in the cuneiform writing and in the Babylonian language, generally had Aramaic titles on the outside covers. Of this the Aramaic is easily read. For instance, one of them would have an Aramaic note saying Zabin's debts. Inside, we find the Assyrian text stating that a certain Imshai has loaned another man named Zabinu a mina of silver. Here, we have a clear agreement of our interpretation of the Babylonian and the Aramaic title on the outside of the contract.

Various other types of evidence have come to light, giving us to *date* absolute certainty that the decipherment and translation of the Babylonian is correct, even though at first sight it seems very strange.

As the language of the Babylonian cuneiform was worked out, much progress was made on reading the inscriptions that were being dug up in Mesopotamia. Some of these proved to be of great importance in connection with the Bible. In Layard's first excavation at Nimroud, he found a black obelisk about 7 ft. high with square corners and pictures and inscriptions on four sides. The pictures show caravans of five nationalities bringing tribute to the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III. Each group of pictures runs clear around the four sides of the shaft. The inscription beneath summarizes about thirty-one years of military campaigns.