

## AN ACCADIAN LITURGY.

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TRANSLATED BY

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THE fragments given below form part of one of the most interesting of the religious hymns in the Liturgy of the early Babylonians. The mutilated condition of the tablet is greatly to be regretted since the general character of the hymn and its allusions to most of the primary articles of the old Accadian mythological faith mark it out as having been a special favourite for devotional purposes. M. François Lenormant believes that it was put into the mouth of the god Hea, and draws attention to the fact that the sword or disk which it celebrates, with its 50 external points and its 7 concentric rays, is analogous not only to the *chakra* of the Indian

heroes but also to the flaming sword that guarded the entrance to Paradise. Besides this reference, the hymn alludes also to the creation of heaven and earth, to the flood and that "mountain of the world" on which the ark rested, and to the seven-headed serpent which reappears, as it would seem in a borrowed form, in Hindu legend.

An interlinear Assyrian rendering is attached to the Accadian original, which is divided into lines and stanzas. These were chanted by the priests during the performance of some religious ceremony. The remote antiquity of the hymn, which goes back beyond the second millenium B.C., enhances its value.

The text is lithographed in the *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, Vol. II, pl. 19, and a translation of it has been given by M. Oppert in the *Journal Asiatique* II. 46, 1, and by M. François Lenormant in his *Premières Civilisations* II. pp. 194-196 and *La Magie chez les Chaldéens* pp. 151, 152.

## AN ACCADIAN LITURGY.

(The beginning is lost. After a reference to "the gods" and to the flight of their enemies "like birds," the hymn proceeds as follows :)

- 1 Their strongholds they make for.
- 2 Against the overwhelming fear that I inspire, terrible as (that of) ANU, who (can) lift the head?
- 3 I am Lord. The beetling<sup>1</sup> mountains of the earth shake (their) head to the foundations.
- 4 (With) the mountain of crystal,<sup>2</sup> of lapis lazuli,<sup>3</sup> and of marble<sup>4</sup> my hand I fill.
- 5 The spirits of earth, like a bird of prey on the sparrows, I cause to swoop.
- 6 In the mountain to my hand my mighty heroism I (commit).
- 7 In my right hand I bear my disk of fire.<sup>5</sup>
- 8 In my left I bear my sphere of carnage.<sup>6</sup>
- 9 The sun of 50 faces, the lofty weapon<sup>7</sup> of my divinity, I bear.
- 10 The hero that striketh the mountains, the propitious sun of the morning,<sup>8</sup> that is mine, I bear.
- 11 My mighty weapon, which like an orb smites in a circle the corpses of the fighters,<sup>9</sup> I bear.

<sup>1</sup> Lit., "enclosed."

<sup>2</sup> Lit., "stone of the great light."

<sup>3</sup> Lit., "blue stone."

<sup>4</sup> Lit., "white stone."

<sup>5</sup> Apparently this was a name given to the Moon-god of Elam.

<sup>6</sup> This is also a name of the Moon in Elam.

<sup>7</sup> In the Assyrian translation "the staff."

<sup>8</sup> Lit., "not high (in heaven)."

<sup>9</sup> The Assyrian renders this "that which is near."

- 12 The striker of mountains, my murderous weapon of  
ANU, I bear.
- 13 The striker of mountains, the fish with 7 tails that is  
mine, I bear.
- 14 The terror of battle, the destroyer of rebel lands that  
is mine, I bear.

## (OBERSE.)

- 15 The defender of conquests, the great sword, the  
falchion of my divinity, I bear.
- 16 That from whose hand the mountain escapes not, the  
hand of the hero of battle which is mine, I bear.
- 17 The *delight* of heroes, my spear of battle, (I bear.)
- 18 My crown which strikes against men, the bow of the  
lightning, (I bear.)
- 19 The crusher of the temples of rebel lands, my club and  
buckler of battle, (I bear.)
- 20 The lightning of battle, my weapon of 50 heads, (I  
bear.)
- 21 The *thunderbolt* of 7 heads like the huge serpent of  
7 heads, (I bear.)
- 22 Like the serpent that beats the sea, (which attacks) the  
foe in the face,
- 23 the devastator of forceful battle, Lord over heaven  
and earth, the weapon of (seven) heads, (I bear.)
- 24 That which maketh the light come forth like day, the  
god of the east, my burning power, (I bear.)
- 25 The creator<sup>1</sup> of heaven and earth, the fire-god, who  
has not his rival, (I bear.)
- 26 The weapon, which (fills) the world (with) over-  
whelming fear,
- 27 in my right hand mightily made to go; (the weapon  
that) of gold (and) marble

<sup>1</sup> Or more strictly "the establisher."

- 28 for admiration is wrought, my god who ministers to  
life, (I bear.)  
29 The weapon, which like . . . . . combats the rebel  
land, the weapon of 50 heads, (I bear.)

(Here the panegyric of the lightning is broken off by a fracture of the tablet, which probably did not contain many lines more. It is possible that the following fragment, which has never been translated before, formed part of the same ritual. The numerous lacunæ will show how shockingly it is mutilated.)

- 1 Below in the abyss the forceful multitudes may they  
sacrifice.  
2 The overwhelming fear of ANU in the midst of heaven  
*encircles* his path.  
3 The spirits of earth, the mighty gods, withstand him  
not.  
4 The King, like a lightning-flash, opened (the way).  
5 ADAR, the striker of the fortresses of the rebel land,  
opened (the way).  
6 Like the streams in the *circle* of heaven I besprinkled  
the seed of men.  
7 His marching in the fealty of BEL to the temple *I*  
*directed*.  
8 (He is) the hero of the gods, the *protector* of mankind,  
far (and) near.  
9 To the men of Nipur (he gives strength?).  
10 NEBO, the messenger of BEL . . . . .  
11 To my Lord ADAR . . . . .  
12 O my Lord, life of NEBO, (breathe thy inspiration,  
incline) thine ear.  
13 O ADAR, hero, *crown of light*, (breathe) thy inspiration,  
(incline) thine ear.

- 14 The overwhelming fear of thee may the sea (know) ;  
and may (thy) sword lay low the fortresses.

(OBSERVE.)

- 15 Thy setting (is) the herald of his rest from marching.  
16 In thy marching MERODACH<sup>1</sup> (is) at his rest.  
(The next two lines are obliterated.)  
19 Thy father on his throne thou dost not *smite*.  
20 BEL on his throne thou dost not *smite*.  
21 The spirits of earth on their throne may he consume.  
22 May thy father into the hands of thy valour cause  
(them) to go forth.<sup>2</sup>  
23 May BEL into the hands of thy valour cause (them) to  
go forth.  
24 (The King, the proclaimed?) of ANU, the firstborn of  
the gods.  
25 He that stands before BEL, the heart of the life of the  
House of the Beloved.<sup>3</sup>  
26 The hero of the mountain (for those that) die-in-  
multitudes.  
27 . . . . . the one god, he will not urge.  
28 (The hero for those who on the mountain) die-in-  
multitudes.  
29 (. . . . . the one god, he will not) urge.  
(Here the tablet is finally broken off.)

<sup>1</sup> The Assyrian version has here "the god of the Euphrates."

<sup>2</sup> The Assyrian text seems to read here "(with) a snare may he  
snare for thee."

<sup>3</sup> The Assyrian has simply "of the high places."

# END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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