

ACCADIAN HYMN TO ISTAR.

 TRANSLATED BY

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THE following is one of the many early Chaldean hymns that were incorporated into a collection which M. Lenormant has aptly compared with the Rig-Veda of India. The concluding lines show that it originally belonged to the city of Erech (now *Warka*). The date of its composition must be exceedingly remote, and this increases the interest of the astronomical allusions contained in it. The original Accadian text is given, with an interlinear Assyrian translation, as is usually the case with

hymns of this kind. The terra cotta tablet on which it is found is numbered S 954, being one of those that have been recently brought back from Assyria by Mr. George Smith, who has translated the Reverse in his *Assyrian Discoveries*, pp. 392, 393. I owe a copy of the text to the kindness of Mr. Boscawen. It is of considerable importance for the study of Assyrian grammar.



ACCADIAN HYMN TO ISTAR.

OBVERSE.

- 1 Light of heaven, who like the fire dawnest on the world, (art) thou.
- 2 Goddess in the earth, in thy fixed abode,
- 3 who dawnest¹ like the earth, (art) thou.
- 4 (As for) thee, prosperity approaches thee.
- 5 To the house of men in thy descending (thou goest).
- 6 A hyæna, which as they go in warlike strength are made to march, (art) thou.
- 7 A lion, which into the midst is wont to march, (art) thou.
- 8 Day (is thy) servant, heaven (thy) canopy.
- 9 The servant of ISTAR;² heaven (is thy) canopy.
- 10 Princess of the four cities, head of the sea,³ heaven (is thy) canopy.
- 11 The exalted of the Sun-god, heaven (is thy) canopy.
- 12 For the revolver of the seasons sanctuaries I build, a temple I build.
- 13 For my father the Moon-god, the revolver of the seasons, sanctuaries I build, a temple I build.
- 14 For my brother the Sun-god, the revolver of the seasons, sanctuaries I build, a temple I build.
- 15 (As for) me, for Nannaru⁴ I built the precinct, for the revolver of seasons sanctuaries I build, a temple I build.

¹ The Assyrian rendering has: "art caused to journey."

² The Assyrian mis-translates: "A servant (is) Istar."

³ The translation given in the text is extremely doubtful.

⁴ Literally, "the brilliant one" a title of the Moon-god, which gave rise to the classical legend of Nannarus,

- 16 In heaven *he laid the hand*; for the revolver of seasons sanctuaries I build, a temple I build.
- 17 In the beginning (thou art) my begetter; in the beginning (thou art) my begetter.
- 18 In the beginning the goddess *spoke thus to men*:
- 19 The Lady of heaven,¹ the divinity of the zenith,
(am) I.
- 20 The Lady of heaven, the divinity of the dawn,
(am) I.
- 21 The Queen of heaven, the opener of the locks of the high heaven, my begetter.
- 22 Heaven she benefits, earth she enlightens;² my begetter.
- 23 The benefitter of heaven, the enlightener³ of earth; my begetter.

REVERSE.

- 1 Thou who on the axis of heaven dawnest, in the dwellings of the earth her name revolves; my begetter.
- 2 (As) Queen of heaven above and below may she be invoked; my begetter.
- 3 The mountains fiercely she hurls-into-the-deep;⁴ my begetter.
- 4 As to the mountains, their goodly stronghold (art) thou, their mighty lock (art) thou;⁵ my begetter.

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- 5 May thy heart rest; may thy liver be magnified.
- 6 O Lord ANU, the mighty, may thy heart rest.

¹ The Assyrian renders this by "Istar."

² Or perhaps "smites."

³ Or perhaps "smiter."

⁴ The Assyrian mistranslates: "I hurl into the deep."

⁵ The Assyrian mistranslates: "I" for "thou."

- 7 O Lord, the mighty Prince¹ BEL, may thy liver be magnified.
- 8 O ISTAR, the Lady of heaven, may thy heart rest.
- 9 O Lady, Queen of heaven, may thy liver (be magnified).
- 10 O Lady, Queen of the House of heaven, may thy heart (rest).
- 11 O Lady, Queen of the land of Erech, may thy liver (be magnified).
- 12 O Lady, Queen of the land of the four rivers of Erech,² may thy heart (rest).
- 13 O Lady, Queen of the Mountain of the World,³ may thy liver (be magnified).
- 14 O Lady, Queen of the Temple of the Resting-place of the world, may thy heart (rest).
- 15 O Lady, Queen of Babylon, may thy liver (be magnified).
- 16 O Lady, Queen of the Memorial of NAN'A, may thy heart (rest).
- 17 O Queen of the Temple, Queen of the gods, may thy liver (be magnified).

18 Prayer of the heart to ISTAR.

- 19 Like its original⁴ written and translated.
- 20 Palace of ASSUR-BANI-PAL, King of Assyria ;

¹ *Sadi* in Assyrian, literally "mountain" or "rock" and apparently connected with the Hebrew *Shaddai* as in the phrase *El Shaddai*, "God Almighty."

² Possibly the four rivers of Paradise.

³ Also called the "Mountain of the East," Mount Elwand on which the ark rested.

⁴ That is the text from which the Assyrian copy was made for the library of Assurbanipal.

- 21 Son of ESAR-HADDON, King of multitudes, King of Assyria, High-Priest of Babylon,
22 King of Sumer and Accad, King of the Kings of Cush and Egypt,
23 King of the four zones ; Son of SENNACHERIB,
24 King of multitudes, King of Assyria ;
25 who to ASSUR and BELTIS, NEBO and TASMIT trusts.
26 Thy kingdom, O light of the gods.



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