

T H E W A R
 OF THE
 SEVEN EVIL SPIRITS AGAINST HEAVEN.

TRANSLATED BY
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THIS curious narrative is found in plate 5 of the fourth Volume of the *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, published by the British Museum. As a composition it appears to me decidedly inferior to the "Deluge Tablets" and the "Descent of Ishtar."

The scribe repeats the same ideas too often: he might have introduced more variety, and if he had given us a succession of events instead of a scene of mere turmoil and confusion, his poem would have had more interest for us. Allowance must however be made for the fractured condition of the tablet,

great part of which is lost, and this part may have contained the finest portions of the narrative. This ancient story appears to have suggested to the Greeks the fable of the Giants warring against heaven: the Giganto-machia.

My translation differs in some respects from that given by Mr. Smith in his *Assyrian Discoveries*, p. 398.



WAR OF THE SEVEN EVIL SPIRITS.

COLUMN I.

- 1 Days of storms, Powers of Evil.
- 2 Rebellious spirits, who were born in the lower part of heaven,
- 3 They were workers of calamity,
- 4 [After this, the ends of many lines are broken off, and the names or descriptions of the spirits are in consequence lost].
- 5 The first of the seven was
- 6 The second was
- 7 The third was *like a leopard*
- 8 The fourth was *like a snake*
- 9 The fifth was *like a dog*
- 10 The sixth was an enemy to heaven and its King.
- 11 The seventh was a destructive tempest.
- 12 These seven are the messengers of ANU¹ their King.
- 13 From place to place by turns they pass.
- 14 They are the dark storms in heaven, which into fire unite themselves.
- 15 They are the destructive tempests, which on a fine day sudden darkness cause.
- 16 With storms and meteors they rush.
- 17 Their rage ignites the thunderbolts of IM.²
- 18 From the right hand of the Thunderer they dart forth.

¹ Anu was the ruler of the highest heaven. Meteors and lightnings are similarly considered in Hebrew poetry as the messengers of the Almighty. Psalm civ. 4, "Who maketh his ministers *a flaming fire*," quoted in Heb. i. 7.

² Im, the god of the sky, sometimes called Rimmon (the thunderer). He answers to the Jupiter Tonans of the Latins.

- 19 On the horizon of heaven like lightning they
20
- 21 Against high heaven the dwelling place of ANU the
King, they plotted evil and had none to withstand them.
- 22 When BEL heard this news, he communed secretly with
his own heart.
- 23 Then he took counsel with HEA the great Inventor (or
Sage) of the gods.
- 24 And they stationed the Moon, the Sun, and ISHTAR to
keep guard over the approach to heaven.
- 25 Unto ANU, ruler of heaven, they told it.
- 26 And those three gods, his children,
27 to watch night and day unceasingly he commanded
them.
- 28 When those seven evil spirits rushed upon the base of
Heaven,
29 and close in front of the Moon with fiery weapons
advanced,
30 Then the noble Sun and IM the warrior side by side
stood firm.
- 31 But ISHTAR¹ with ANU the King entered the exalted
dwelling, and hid themselves in the summit of heaven.

¹ The Babylonian Venus.

COLUMN II.

[All the commencement of the second Column is broken off, and I think there is no connected sense till we get to line 25 of the lithographed Plate, which I will here call line 1.]

- 1 Those evil spirits, the messengers of ANU their King
 2
 3 They have plotted evil
 4 From mid heaven like meteors they have rushed upon
 the earth.
 5 BEL who the noble Moon in eclipse
 6 saw from heaven,
 7 called aloud to PAKU his messenger.
 8 O my messenger PAKU, carry my words to the Deep¹
 9 Tell my Son that the Moon in heaven is terribly
 eclipsed !
 10 To HEA in the Deep repeat this !
 11 PAKU understood the words of his Lord.
 12 Unto HEA in the Deep swiftly he went.
 13 To the Lord, the great Inventor, the god NUKIMMUT²
 14 PAKU repeated the words of his Lord.
 15 When HEA in the Deep heard these words.
 16 He bit his lips,³ and tears bedewed his face.
 17 Then he sent for his son MARDUK to help him.
 18 Go to my son MARDUK,
 19 Tell my son that the Moon in heaven is terribly
 eclipsed !
 20 That eclipse has been seen in heaven !

¹ The Abyss or Ocean where the god Hea dwelt.

² Nukimmut, a name of Hea which occurs frequently.

³ A sign of great vexation. Compare the legend of Ishtar, Col. ii. line 21, "the goddess of Hades smote her bosom and *bit her fingers*" (in vexation at what she had heard).

- 21 They are seven, those evil spirits and death they fear
not!
- 22 They are seven, those evil spirits, who rush like a
hurricane,
- 23 and fall like firebrands on the earth!
- 24 In front of the bright Moon with fiery weapons (*they
draw nigh*)
- 25 But the noble Sun and IM the warrior (*are withstanding
them*)

[The rest of the legend is lost.]



END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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