

## A PRAYER AND A VISION.

FROM THE ANNALS OF ASSURBANIPAL, KING OF ASSYRIA.

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 TRANSLATED BY

H. FOX TALBOT, F.R.S.

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THE passage of which the following is a translation forms an episode in the great war of Assurbanipal against the Elamites. The original text is given in the *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, Vol. III. pl. 32, and in the late Mr. George Smith's *Annals of Assurbanipal*, p. 119-126. This translation was first published in the *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, Vol. I., p. 346.

In this poetic narrative Ishtar is not the goddess of love and beauty, but the goddess of war, Bellona of the Latins, Enyo of the Greeks. Under the name of Anaitis or Anahid the goddess was greatly worshipped at Comana in Cappadocia ; and also in Pontus and Armenia. At Comana she had a splendid

temple, served by a college of priests and more than six thousand *hierodouli* or temple-servants. Her statue was of solid gold :<sup>1</sup> her high priest was second only to the king in rank.

Strabo calls this goddess Enyo, and Berosus makes her the same with Aphrodite or Venus. The inscriptions of Artaxerxes discovered at Susa call her Anahid, which was the Persian name of the planet Venus.<sup>2</sup>

The promises which the goddess Ishtar made to the King in this vision of the month Ab were fulfilled. In the following month (Elul) Assurbanipal took the field against Tiumman, and his army speedily achieved a brilliant victory. Tiumman was slain, and his head was sent to Nineveh. There is a bas-relief in the British Museum representing a man driving a rapid car, and holding in his hand the head of a warrior, with this inscription, *Kakkadu Tiumman*, "The head of Tiumman."

<sup>1</sup> Pliny *Hist. Nat.*, Vol. II., p. 619, Harduin.

<sup>2</sup> Silvestre de Sacy.

## A PRAYER AND A VISION.

## I.

In the month Ab, the month of the heliacal rising of Sagittarius, in the festival of the great Queen (ISHTAR) daughter of BEL, I was staying at Arbela, the city most beloved by her, to be present at her high worship. There they brought me news of the invasion of the Elamite, who was coming against the will of the gods.

Thus: TIUMMAN has said solemnly, and ISHTAR has repeated to us the tenor of his words: thus: "I will not pour out another libation until I shall have gone and fought with him."

Concerning this threat which TIUMMAN had spoken, I prayed to the great ISHTAR. I approached to her presence, I bowed down at her feet, I besought her divinity to come and save me. Thus: O goddess of Arbela, I am ASSURBANIPAL King of Assyria, the creature of thy hands, (chosen by thee and) thy father (ASSUR) to restore the temples of Assyria and to complete the holy cities of Akkad. I have sought to honour thee, and I have gone to worship thee.

But he TIUMMAN King of Elam who never worships the gods . . . . .<sup>1</sup>

[Here some words are lost.]

O thou Queen of queens, Goddess of war, Lady of battles, Queen of the gods, who in the presence of ASSUR thy father speakest always in my favour, causing the hearts of ASSUR and MARDUK to love me . . . . .<sup>1</sup> Lo! now, TIUMMAN King of Elam who has sinned against ASSUR thy father, and has scorned the divinity of MARDUK thy brother, while I ASSURBANIPAL have been rejoicing their hearts. He has

<sup>1</sup> Lacunæ.

collected his soldiers, amassed his army, and has drawn his sword to invade Assyria. O thou archer of the gods, come like a . . . .<sup>1</sup> in the midst of the battle, destroy him, and crush him with a fiery bolt from heaven !

ISHTAR heard my prayer. Fear not ! she replied, and caused my heart to rejoice. According to thy prayer thy eyes shall see the judgment. For I will have mercy on thee !

## II.

In the night-time of that night in which I had prayed to her, a certain seer lay down and had a dream. In the midst of the night ISHTAR appeared to him, and he related the vision to me, thus: ISHTAR who dwells in Arbela came unto me begirt right and left with flames, holding her bow in her hand, and riding in her open chariot as if going to the battle. And thou didst stand before her. She addressed thee as a mother would her child. She smiled upon thee, she ISHTAR, the highest of the gods, and gave thee a command. Thus: Take (this bow) she said, to go to battle with ! Wherever thy camp shall stand, I will come to it.

Then thou didst say to her: thus: O Queen of the goddesses, wherever thou goest let me go with thee ! Then she made answer to thee: thus: I will protect thee ! and I will march with thee at the time of the feast of Nebo. Meanwhile eat food, drink wine, make music, and glorify my divinity, until I shall come and this vision shall be fulfilled.

[Henceforward the seer appears to speak in his own person.]

Thy heart's desire shall be accomplished. Thy face shall not grow pale with fear: thy feet shall not be arrested: thou shalt not even scratch thy skin in the battle. In her benevolence she defends thee, and she is wrath with all thy foes. Before her a fire is blown fiercely, to destroy thy enemies.

<sup>1</sup> Lacuna.

# END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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