

ACCADIAN POEM  
ON  
THE SEVEN EVIL SPIRITS.

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TRANSLATED BY  
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THE following poem is one of the numerous bilingual texts, written in the original Accadian with an interlinear Assyrian translation, which have been brought from the library of Assur-bani-pal at Kouyunjik. The seven evil spirits who are mentioned in it are elsewhere described as the seven storm-clouds or winds whose leader seems to have been the dragon Tiamat ("the deep") defeated by Bel-Merodach in the war of the gods. It was these seven storm-spirits who were supposed to attack the moon when it was eclipsed, as described in an Accadian poem translated by Mr. Fox Talbot in a previous volume of *Records of the Past*. Here they are regarded as the allies of the incubus or nightmare. We may compare them

with the Maruts or storm-gods of the Rig-Veda (see Max Müller *Rig-Veda-Sanhita: the Sacred Hymns of the Brahmans translated and explained*, Vol. I.). The author of the present poem seems to have been a native of the Babylonian city of Eridu, and his horizon was bounded by the mountains of Susiania, over whose summits the storms raged from time to time. A fragment of another poem relating to Eridu is appended, which seems to celebrate a temple similar to that recorded by Maimonides in which the Babylonian gods gathered round the image of the sun-god to lament the death of Tammuz.

A copy of the cuneiform text will be found in the *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, Vol. IV. pl. 15. M. Fr. Lenormant has translated a portion of it in *La Magie chez les Chaldéens*, pp. 26, 27.



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OBVERSE.

- 1 (In) the earth their borders were taken, and that god<sup>1</sup>  
came not forth.
- 2 From the earth he came not forth, (and) their power was  
baneful.
- 3 The heaven like a vault they extended and that which  
had no exit they opened.<sup>2</sup>
- 4 Among the stars of heaven their watch they kept not,  
in watching (was) their office.
- 5 The mighty hero<sup>3</sup> to heaven they exalted, and his father  
he knew not.<sup>4</sup>
- 6 The Fire-god on high, the supreme, the first-born, the  
mighty, the divider of the supreme crown of ANU !
- 7 The Fire-god the light that exalts him with himself he  
exalts.
- 8 Baleful (are) those seven, destroyers.
- 9 For his ministers in his dwelling he chooses (them).
- 10 O Fire-god, those seven how were they born, how grew  
they up ?
- 11 Those seven in the mountain of the sunset were born.
- 12 Those seven in the mountain of the sunrise grew up.
- 13 In the hollows of the earth have they their dwelling.
- 14 On the high-places of the earth are they proclaimed.
- 15 As for them in heaven and earth immense (is) their habi-  
tation.
- 16 Among the gods their couch they have not.

<sup>1</sup> That is, the god of fire.

<sup>2</sup> The Assyrian has, "Unto heaven that which was not seen they raised"

<sup>3</sup> The Assyrian adds, "the firstborn supreme."

<sup>4</sup> In the Accadian text, "they knew not."

- 17 Their name in heaven (and) earth exists not.  
 18 Seven they are: in the mountain of the sunset do they rise.  
 19 Seven they are: in the mountain of the sunrise did they  
 set.  
 20 Into the hollows of the earth do they penetrate.<sup>1</sup>  
 21 On the high places of the earth did they ascend.  
 22 As for them, goods they have not, in heaven and earth  
 they are not known.<sup>2</sup>  
 23 Unto MERODACH<sup>3</sup> draw near, and this word may he say  
 unto thee.<sup>4</sup>  
 24 Of those baleful seven, as many as he sets before thee,  
 their might may he give thee,  
 25 according to the command of his blessed mouth, (he  
 who is) the supreme judge of ANU.  
 26 The Fire-god unto MERODACH draws near, and this word  
 he saith unto thee.  
 27 In the pavilion, the resting place of might, this word he  
 hears, and  
 28 to his father HEA<sup>5</sup> to his house he descends, and speaks:  
 29 O my father, the Fire-god unto the rising of the sun has  
 penetrated, and these secret words has uttered.  
 30 Learning the story of those seven, their places grant thou  
 to another.  
 31 Enlarge the ears, O son of Eridu.<sup>6</sup>  
 32 HEA his son MERODACH answered:  
 33 My son, those seven dwell in earth;  
 34 those seven from the earth have issued.

<sup>1</sup> In the Accadian, "cause the foot to dwell."

<sup>2</sup> In the Assyrian, "learned."

<sup>3</sup> In the Accadian text, Merodach, the mediator and protector of mankind, is called, "Protector of the covenant."

<sup>4</sup> That is, the Fire-god.

<sup>5</sup> Hea, the god of the waters, was the father of Merodach, the Sun-god.

<sup>6</sup> Eridu, the Rata of Ptolemy, was near the junction of the Euphrates and Tigris, on the Arabian side of the river. It was one of the oldest cities of Chaldea.

## REVERSE.

- 35 Those seven in the earth were born,  
 36 those seven in the earth grew up.  
 37 The forces of the deep for war<sup>1</sup> have drawn near.  
 38 Go, my son MERODACH!  
 39 (for) the laurel, the baleful tree that breaks in pieces the  
 incubi,  
 40 the name whereof HEA remembers in his heart.  
 41 In the mighty enclosure, the girdle of Eridu which is to  
 be praised,  
 42 to roof and foundation may the fire ascend and to (work)  
 evil may those seven never draw near.  
 43 Like a broad scimitar in a broad place bid (thine) hand  
 rest; and  
 44 in circling fire by night and by day<sup>2</sup> on the (sick) man's  
 head may it abide.  
 45 At night mingle the potion and at dawn in his hand let  
 him raise (it).  
 46 In the night a precept<sup>3</sup> in a holy book,<sup>4</sup> in bed, on the  
 sick man's head let them place.<sup>5</sup>  
 47 The hero (MERODACH) unto his warriors sends:  
 48 Let the Fire-god seize on the incubus.  
 49 Those baleful seven may he remove and their bodies  
 may he bind.  
 50 During the day the sickness (caused by) the incubus (let  
 him) overcome.  
 51 May the Fire-god bring back the mighty powers to their  
 foundations.

<sup>1</sup> Literally, "warlike-expedition."

<sup>2</sup> In the Accadian, "day (and) night."

<sup>3</sup> *Masal (mashal)*, as in Hebrew, "a proverb."

<sup>4</sup> Literally, "tablet."

<sup>5</sup> It is evident that the poem was to be used as a charm in case of sickness. Compare the phylacteries of the Jews.

- 52 May NIN-CI-GAL<sup>1</sup> the wife of (HEA) establish before her the *bile* (of the man).  
 53 Burn up the sickness<sup>2</sup> . . . . .  
 54 May NIN-AKHA-KUDDU<sup>3</sup> seize upon his body and abide upon his head,  
 55 according to the word of NIN-AKHA-KUDDU,  
 56 (in) the enclosure of Eridu.  
 57 (In) the mighty girdle of the deep and of Eridu may she remember his return (to health).  
 58 In (her) great watch may she keep (away) the incubus supreme among the gods (that is) upon his head, and in the night may she watch him.  
 59 (By) night and day to the prospering hands of the Sun-god may she entrust him.—CONCLUSION.

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- 60 (In) Eridu a dark pine grew, in a holy place it was planted.  
 61 Its (crown) was white crystal which towards the deep spread.  
 62 The . . . . .<sup>4</sup> of HEA (was) its pasturage in Eridu, a canal full (of waters).  
 63 Its seat (was) the (central) place of this earth.<sup>5</sup>  
 64 Its shrine (was) the couch of mother ZICUM.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Nin-ci-gal, "the Lady of the mighty country," was queen of Hades, and identified with Gula or Bahu (the "chaos," *bohu*, of Gen. i. 2), "the Lady of the House of Death."

<sup>2</sup> In the Accadian, "the sick head (and) sick heart." Then follows a lacuna.

<sup>3</sup> Apparently another name of Nin-ci-gal.

<sup>4</sup> Lacuna.

<sup>5</sup> Compare the Greek idea of Delphi as the central *ὀμφαλός* or "navel" of the earth.

<sup>6</sup> Zicum or Zigara was the primæval goddess, "the mother of Anu and the gods."

- 65 The . . . .<sup>1</sup> of its holy house like a forest spread its shade ; there (was) none who within entered not.
- 66 (It was the seat) of the mighty the mother, begetter of ANU.<sup>2</sup>
- 67 Within it (also was) TAMMUZ.<sup>3</sup>  
 [Of the two next and last lines only the last word "the universe" remains.]

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For the sake of completeness a charm for averting the attack of the seven evil spirits or storm-clouds may be added here, though the larger part of it has already been translated by Mr. Fox Talbot in *Records of the Past*, Vol. III., p. 143. It forms part of the great collection of magical formulæ, and is lithographed in the *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, Vol. IV., pl. 2, col. v., lines 30-60.

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- 1 Seven (are) they, seven (are) they !  
 2 In the channel of the deep seven (are) they !  
 3 (In) the radiance of heaven seven (are) they !  
 4 In the channel of the deep in a palace grew they up.

<sup>1</sup> Lacuna.

<sup>2</sup> That is, of Zicum.

<sup>3</sup> Tammuz, called Dū-zi, "the (only) son," in Accadian, was a form of the Sun-god. His death through the darkness of winter caused Istar to descend into Hades in search of him.

- 5 Male they (are) not, female they (are) not.<sup>1</sup>  
 6 (In) the midst of the deep (are) their paths.  
 7 Wife they have not, son they have not.  
 8 Order (and) kindness know they not.  
 9 Prayer (and) supplication hear they not.  
 10 The *cavern* in the mountain they enter.  
 11 Unto HEA (are) they hostile.  
 12 The throne-bearers of the gods (are) they.  
 13 Disturbing the *lily* in the torrents are they set.  
 14 Baleful (are) they, baleful (are) they.  
 15 Seven (are) they, seven (are) they, seven twice again (are) they.  
 16 May the spirits of heaven remember, may the spirits of earth remember.

<sup>1</sup> The Accadian text, "Female they are not, male they are not." This order is in accordance with the position held by the woman in Accad; in the Accadian Table of Laws, for instance, translated in *Records of the Past*, Vol. III., p. 23, the denial of the father by the son is punished very leniently in comparison with the denial of the mother.





# END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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