

TWO ACCADIAN HYMNS.

TRANSLATED BY
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THE two following hymns, both of which are unfortunately mutilated, are interesting from their subject matter. The first is addressed to the Sun-god Tammuz, the husband of Istar, slain by the boar's tusk of winter, and sought by the goddess in the underground world. It is this visit which is described in the mythological poem known as the "Descent of Istar into Hades" (*Records of the Past*, Vol. I., p. 143). The myth of Tammuz and Istar passed, through the Phœnicians, to the Greeks, among whom Adonis and Aphrodite represent the personages of the ancient Accadian legend. Tammuz is referred to in Ezek. viii. 14. (See *Records of the Past*, Vol. IX., p. 147). The second hymn treats of the world-mountain, the Atlas

of the Greeks, which supports the heaven with its stars, and is rooted in Hades. Under its other name *Kharsak-kurra*, or "Mountain of the East," it was identified with the present Mount Elwend, and was regarded as the spot where the ark had rested, and where the gods had their seat. A reference is made to it in Isa. xiv. 13. Both hymns illustrate the imagery and metaphor out of which grew the mythology of primæval Babylonia, and offer curious parallels to the Aryan hymns of the Rig-Veda. The cuneiform texts are lithographed in the *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, Vol. IV., 27, 1, 2.



TWO ACCADIAN HYMNS.

I.

- 1 O shepherd,¹ Lord Tammuz, Bridegroom² of ISTAR !
 2 Lord of Hades, Lord of Tul-Sukhba !
 3 *Understanding* one, who among the papyri the water
 drinks not !
 4 His brood in the desert, even the reed, he created not.³
 5 Its bulrush in his canal he lifted not up.
 6 The roots of the bulrush were carried away.
 7 O god of the world, who among the papyri the water
 drinks not !
⁴

II.

- 1 O mighty mountain of BEL, Im-kharsak,⁵ whose head
 rivals heaven, whose root (is) the holy deep !
 2 Among the mountains, like a strong wild bull, it lieth
 down.
 3 Its horn like the brilliance of the sun is bright.

¹ The early Accadian kings frequently call themselves "shepherds." According to Berosus, Alorus the first antediluvian king of Babylonia gave himself the same title. Compare the Homeric ποιμήν λαῶν.

² *Khamir*, literally "red" or "blushing one," in reference to the glow of the setting sun.

³ Or "was not green."

⁴ Lacuna.

⁵ "Wind of the mountain."

4 Like the star of heaven¹ it is a prophet and is filled with sheen.

5 O mighty mother of BELTIS, daughter of Bit-Esir: splendour of Bit-kurra,² appointment of Bit-Gigune, handmaid of Bit-Cigusurra!³

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¹ That is, Dilbat, "the prophet," or Venus, the morning star.

² "The temple of the East."

³ "The temple of the land of forests."

⁴ Lacuna.



ASSYRIAN

INCANTATIONS TO FIRE AND WATER.

TRANSLATED BY
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THE original text of these incantations is found in the *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, Vol. IV., pl. 14, and on tablet K 4902 of the British Museum collection. They are written in Accadian and Assyrian. M. Lenormant has divided the great magical work copied for King Assur-bani-pal into three classes: (1) that containing formulæ of conjuration against evil spirits; (2) that containing formulæ for curing divers maladies; (3) hymns to certain gods, as fire, water, etc. These incantations belong to the last of these divisions. Many such are to be found in the fourth volume of the *Cuneiform Inscriptions*, and many more are among the treasures of the British Museum collection. These bilingual inscriptions are the more valuable, since they enable us to compare one language with another.¹

¹ While these pages were in the press I had ascertained that parts of these inscriptions have been translated by M. Lenormant, and the late Mr. Fox Talbot. My translations will appear in the shape of a paper with grammatical analysis, etc., in the *Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.*, but on comparison many differences will be found. See *Records of the Past*, Vol. III., p. 137; and Lenormant, *La Magie*, p. 168.

Among the Chaldeans magic and sorcery attained to almost the rank of a science; and one has only to see the number of magical texts and incantations that remain (in many cases only fragments), to understand to how great an extent this pseudo-science was practised. The primitive population of Accad was superstitious, and although these incantations were a part of a pure religion, at one time, they at last degenerated to mere magical formulæ. The formulæ are very numerous. A very fine fragment of a tablet is lithographed in *W. A. I.*, II., 17 and 18, containing incantations against demons which take possession of various parts of the earth, the members of man, various diseases, etc.; and each incantation finishes with the mysterious invocation: "O Spirit of heaven remember, O Spirit of earth remember." To the Accadian mind there existed a world of evil spirits. They saw a "spirit" in every object or force of nature, and believed that their priests, or rather sorcerers, could work good or evil by the use of magical charms,¹ but gradually these numerous spirits were merged together among the 600 spirits of earth and 300 of heaven. The tablets containing incantations were classified in the libraries of Assur-bani-pal, and numbered thus: "Tablet No. 5 of Evil Spirits." (*W. A. I.*, IV., 2, col. 6, l. 35).

¹ Prof. Sayce, *Babylonian Literature* p. 42.

END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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