

Accadian Poem on the Seven Evil Spirits

Translated By Rev. A. H. Sayce, M.A.

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 Tarbot 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 Muller, "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 chee les Chaldéens*," pp. 26, 27.

ACCADIAN POEM ON THE SEVEN EVIL SPIRITS

OBVERSE

- 1 (In) the earth their borders were taken, and that god¹ 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.
- 4 Among the stars of heaven their watch they kept not, in watching (was) their office.
- 5 The mighty hero to heaven they exalted, and his father he knew not.⁴
- 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.

¹ That is, the god of fire.

14 On the high-places of the earth are they proclaimed.
15 As for them in heaven and earth immense (is) their habitation.
16 Among the gods their couch they have 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.
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.
23 Unto Merodach draw near, and this word may he say unto thee.
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 Ann.
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 Hea² 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.³
32 Hea his son Merodach answered:
33 My son, those seven dwell in earth;
34 those seven from the earth have issued.

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 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 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 in a holy book, in bed, on the sick man's head let them place.'
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,
52 May Nin-ci-gal⁴ the wife of (Hea) establish before her the *bile* (of the man).

² The god of the waters.

³ Near the junction of the Euphrates and Tiris.

53 Burn up the sickness . . .
54 May Nin-akha-kuddu 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 intrust him.

Conclusion.

60 (In) Eridu a dark pine grew, in a holy place it was planted.
61 Its (crown) was white crystal which toward the deep spread.
62 The . . . of Hea (was) its pasturage in Eridu, a canal full (of waters).
63 Its seat (was) the (central) place of this earth.
64 Its shrine (was) the couch of mother Zicum.
65 The 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.
67 Within it (also was) Tammuz.

(Of the two next and last lines only the last word, "the universe," remains.)

CHARM FOR AVERTING THE SEVEN EVIL SPIRITS

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 *formulae*, and is lithographed in the "Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia," Vol. IV, p1. 2, col. V. lines 30-60.

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.
5 Male they (are) not, female they (are) not.
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.

⁴ The Lady of the House of Death.

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.