

Enheduanna's Hymns (Cultural and Religious Features)

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ABSTRACT

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The study sheds light historically on Sarjon Akadi's daughter Enheduana (2285-2250 BCE), the female Akadian poet, princess, and high priestess. The study shows the Akadian and Sumerian social and religious relations with the temple, deities, and priestess Enheduana, who composed many effective hymns and poems for goddess Inanna. She faced many troubles when she was banished from the temple after the death of her father. Some examples of her hymns are also included and analyzed.

KEYWORDS: Enheduana, hymns, Inlil, priests and priesthood

1. Introduction

A hymn is a praise of god or a hero. A hymn is of four-line stanza in iambic whose rhyming scheme is (abab) or (abcb). This form was written by many English poets, such as Charles Wesley, John Milton, W. Blake and R. Kipling, besides the Homeric hymns and the American Natives who also attempted this form of literature.

The Akadian society lived in cities such as Kesh, Ashnona, Larsa and Ur, which are located now on the south of Baghdad 3000 years ago. The cities were built near the borders of Tigris and Euphrates. The Akadians shared the Sumerian many cultural aspects like using cuneiform writing with their terms, and their cooperation to form a famous empire, though Sumer is considered to have the first world's civilization dating back to four and a half centuries before Christ.

The Sumerians achieved plow, arithmetic. and astronomical maps. They were, with the Akadians, united in one language particularly after Sargon's conquest around his state under one rule. The Akadians, as a polytheistic Sumer religion, worshiped their gods (Inlil, Lord of air, Inanna, goddess of love and war, and Murdoch).

In ancient Iraq, gods like most Greek ones, lived religiously together among people in their temples, and even fight among their wars, whereas the Greek gods historically come down to share people their own celebrations and ceremonies every year. At that time, the Akadians wrote types of literature: poetry, epics, and hymns (in cuneiform script) and preserve them on tablets whereas the Egyptians wrote in hieroglyphic way and preserve them on papyrus scrolls. (2) The Akadian poetry addresses

gods as well as kings while the temples oversee some charitable matters and employ the cities. Let's know more about Enheduana:

Enheduana (2285 - 2250) is the daughter of Sargon Akadi, king of the four corners.

The syllable En-refers to the high priest or priestess at Ur, hedu-means ornament, and ana-refers to heaven. The meaning becomes "High priestess (ornament of heaven).

Her mother is Sumerian "Tashtulum" occupied many positions, but she faced later on some problems.

Enheduana, the main confident author stands against the rebel of Lugal Anu before killing her brother Rimuch. She was banished from the temple. As a poet, she wrote successfully more than (156) hymns before the archaic Greek poet Sapho (624-570 BC.), and among her works as a poet:

- The Exaltation of Inanna (Min-me-sar-sar)
- Inanna and Ebih (In-nin-me-husa) and
- Hymns to Nana (3)

2. Enheduana and gods:

In Mesopotamia, humans and gods shared one living, Enheduana, among other Akadians, was learning and writing hymns, and poetry that represent well relation with the temple, the writer, gods and people. For example, the Sumerians and Akadian's writing addresses goddess Ishtar,) the moon god-sin (to express supplication and prayer. Though people think that gods do not hold human attributes which are rather distant from them, these gods live among people on their temples, uphold law and solve their hard problems.³

When King Sargon ended his conquest to the region, he granted his daughter, Enheduana, the title 'High priestess' to help him challenge some political problems. Therefore, she succeeds in communicating with different cultures and acts beyond her religious role in keeping the city Ur safe. Enheduana frequently points out that gods have emotion like people. That means they love, get angry and even fight with them. For example, Inanna, (goddess of love), encourages people at that time not to disobey her lest they may be punished because gods act with forwarding and punishing principle.⁴

Indeed, the title of high priestess led her to be: first an outstanding feminine character in the history of literature, and to devote second to the divine Inanna through her hymns and poetry, and third to bring peoples of Akad and Sumer closer in order to control the Akadian Kingdom. At the same time, this position with her effective religious authorship caused her hard troubles. ⁵

3. Temples, priests and priesthood:

Each city is established around a god's temple which consists of many chambers for priests and priestesses. Temples are not only places of religion, but also of commercial affairs. They usually establish many schools for teaching boys of priests, merchants and other high ranks to be priests as well. Various priests perform purifications and treat medically people and pray together. There is also house staff that employ accountants, butchers, messengers and guards to present various services.

In addition, there are two administrators; the first one runs the sacred religious duties of all the priests and priestesses, and the second one Sanga is to supervise the temples' business in employing hundreds of weavers and other important workings. They have to care for the gods by clothing them and other priests sing and write poetry. Such priests basically represent mediators between gods and people who look to priesthood to get favor of gods especially the patron god or goddess of that city.

4. Enheduan's Hymns

Enheduan's hymns reveal her feeling of the world and her moral life as in her poem "Lament Spirit of War" which is to be the first recorded poem in response to war. She had an obvious influence on other four works across Mesopotamia reign.

In this field, people had religiously to pray to the king at that time, whereas most of Enheduanna's hymns address mostly to her father, King Sargon, as well as Sumer and Akadian temples. Her hymns also hold the spirit of the Kingdom's priesthood and divinity of Inanna, her personal goddess and protector. Being a prominent poet, Enheduanna endured a lot of troubles that motivated her to write successful poetry. One of them is the death of her father, and the killing of her brother, King Rimuch (2206) who was killed after nine years of his reign. These incidents, according to some anthropologist (Franky 1995: 833), are rather connected with what is known Akad Curse... but the hardest incident she had received was her banishment from the temple. This painful experience is obviously expressed in her writing. Therefore, she recites divine attributes of Inanna and asks Nana's favour particularly in her poem "Exaltation to Inanna"

5. Exaltation of Inanna

Exaltation of Inanna (Nin-me-Sara) is one of the important poems which conveys a partial biography of Enheduana's life. The poem describes how she was exiled by a Sumer rebel Lugal-An and was driven out of the temple.

The poem consists of 153 lines and the poet addresses goddess Inanna in the first 65 lines with a list of epithets:

*You are magnificent, your name is praised,
you alone are magnificent my lady.*

zz I am your heart, be soothed towards me.(example lines 115-131)

In her poem, she conveys her respect to her father and expresses also her admiration for the beautiful universe. Being high priestess, her poem shows through her praying the unfair exile experience from the temple that represents the Patron of the city, and more powerful than God...

The poem is notably seen how she exalts both goddess Inanna and how she praises herself (1-90) to confirm her royal affiliation and power:

- *Her splendor and glow covered the mountain and shut up the road.*
- *The great god 'An' can not make his decision without Inanna, or when Inanna gets angry at war, she says:*
- *Inanna stains their weapons with blood. (example lines 115-131)*

Many descriptive terms including varied geographic names glorify Inanna when she asks her for intercession to return her prestigious position as high priestess. She uses sometimes the second person pronoun particularly from line 115 and 122..

"Its all in your hands, Inanna. " or use the possessive pronouns:

*My lady, your greatness is attested... until she says!
will my heart ever return to its clear former glory....?*

In addition, certain terms are frequently repeated such as (quest, escape, abandonments, reforming, your hands..) in poetic suggestive expressions. This refers to both her deep sadness and her longing to go back to the temple: (12)

- *O, mistress Inanna.*
- *My favourite thing: thing is to praise you"*
- *I am the mistress, I went to earth. and heaven".*

Indeed, Enheduan's elegant style actually reminds us of many contemporary poetic images, symbols or other metaphoric expressions used in modern poetry.

After many years, her second brother Manishtushu (2255-2291), king of Akad empire is killed and his son Naram-sin is crowned a king of Akad to restore her religious rights including the title of a high priestess.

We conclude that Enheduana's literary contribution of hymns and songs to Inanna represent an effective standard of religious prayers, Psalm and poetry that had a distinctive influence on other cultures over

many centuries particularly the Hebrew hymns. A lot of prayers and glorifications are well expressed in her figurative meaningful style which is full of natural images and symbolic expression.

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