

## Ashur-nasir-pal's Great Feast

Listen while I tell the story  
Of the greatest of all feasting,  
Of the most pantagruelian  
Feast that ever man has given.  
Listen as I tell the story  
Told upon an ancient stele,  
On a stele carefully written  
In the old Akkadian language,  
In the ancient cuneate writing.

Ashur-nasir-pal the second,  
Lord of all the Assyrian empire,  
Built himself a mighty palace,  
Built it in the town of Kalhu,  
Built it grand and full of splendor,  
Built it so that all might marvel,  
Stand in awe and gaze in wonder  
At the monarch's might and power,  
And recall the many peoples  
Ashur-nasir-pal had conquered.

So when all the work was finished,  
When the palace stood completed,  
Ashur-nasir-pal invited  
All his topmost men of honor,  
All his bureaucrats and servants,  
All th' inhabitants of Kalhu,  
All who'd worked and built the palace;  
Ashur-nasir-pal invited  
Allies from the neighboring countries,  
From the many neighboring countries.  
Nigh on seventy thousand people  
Were invited by the monarch.  
Nor indeed were gods forgotten;  
Each and every god and goddess  
Worshipped in his mighty empire  
He invited to his banquet.

Then he ordered food a-plenty:  
Oxen barley-fed a thousand;  
Young and tender calves a thousand;  
Sheep from his own stalls a thousand;  
From the sacred flocks of Ishtar  
Fourteen thousand sheep he ordered;  
From her sacred herds two hundred  
Of her oxen did he order.  
Specially fattened sheep a thousand,  
Tender lambs another thousand,

Half a thousand deer he ordered,  
And gazelles to that same number;  
Half a thousand geese he ordered,  
Half a thousand other poultry;  
Doves and pigeons too were ordered:  
Doves ten thousand, and ten thousand  
Pigeons slaughtered for the feasting.  
Listed also were three thousand  
Other large birds on the stele;  
But their names now have no meaning,  
Named by words so long forgotten.  
Listed likewise were ten thousand  
Other small birds on the stele,  
But their names now have no meaning,  
Named by words so long forgotten  
In the old Akkadian language.

Meat there was indeed a-plenty  
Nor were fishes spared the killing;  
For ten thousand did he order.  
Ordered he ten thousand locusts  
For a further source of protein.

Bread was ordered, full ten thousand  
Loaves to complement the protein,  
Complement the fat and protein  
At his lavish, sumptuous feasting.  
Drinks he ordered for the banquet:  
Beer in quantity ten thousand  
Measures, and of wine ten thousand  
Skins were ordered for the feasting,  
For the merriment and feasting  
Of the men and of the women  
Ashur-nasir-pal invited  
To his great and splendid palace  
Which adorned the town of Kalhu.

Garnishes he ordered also,  
Condiments to add more savor  
To the lavish, bounteous banquet:  
Sesame ten thousand cuttings,  
Carob pods three hundred measures,  
Spiced herbs three hundred measures,  
Common salt one hundred measures,  
Roasted barley a hundred measures,  
Fine mixed ale one hundred measures,  
Pomegranates a hundred measures,  
Vines of grapes one hundred thereof,  
Mixed jujubes one hundred measures,  
And pistachios nuts a hundred

Measures, likewise common garlic  
And wild onions both were ordered,  
Each a hundred measures ordered.  
Lentils too one hundred measures,  
Turnip roots one hundred measures,  
Fragrant roses a hundred measures,  
Milk also one hundred measures;  
Many other hundred measures  
Ordered he of spices, cereals,  
Nuts and plants whose names forgotten  
Now mean little to the readers  
Of the old Assyrian stele.

Ordered he ten barrels of cumin,  
Dates ten barrels, figs ten barrels,  
Cress ten barrels, vetch ten barrels,  
Aniseed also ten barrels,  
Aubergines also ten barrels,  
Bitter almonds ten more barrels,  
Finest oil also ten barrels,  
And anemones ten barrels;  
Sev'ral other tens of barrels  
Ordered he of names whose meaning  
Now remain unknown to readers  
Of this old Assyrian stele.  
Finest spices twenty barrels  
Special nuts another twenty;  
So did order for the banquet  
Ashur-nasir-pal the second,  
Lord of all the Assyrian empire.

Ten whole days the people feasted,  
Ten whole days they drank and feasted,  
Bathed themselves and got anointed  
With the most exquisite perfumes.  
Ten whole days the guests made merry,  
At the greatest of all feasting,  
At the most pantagruelian  
Feast that ever man has given.  
So with thanks and joy departed  
All the guests who praised and lauded  
Ashur-nasir-pal the second,  
Lord of all the Assyrian empire.  
All departed to their homesteads,  
Happy to have been invited  
To the greatest of all feasting  
In the great and splendid palace  
In the ancient town of Kalhu.

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