

The Theogony and the Enuma Elish: City-State Creation Myths

Stephen Scully

1 Problems of Transmission

Hans Gustav Güterbock's publication of the Hittite "Kingdom in Heaven" sixty years ago revealed irrefutably that Hesiod's *Theogony* was but one version, and a late one at that, of an ancient Mediterranean tradition of succession myths.¹ A few years before, in a lecture at Cambridge, Francis Cornford had argued that Hesiod's creation poem "reflects the features" of the Akkadian *Enuma elish*, a creation poem and hymn to Marduk recited at the Babylonian New Year ritual. Twenty years after Güterbock, Peter Walcot's *Hesiod and the Near East* expanded these comparisons by examining Hesiod's poetry in light of Hittite, Babylonian, and Phoenician texts,² as did Martin West's ground-breaking commentary on the *Theogony* in the same year when he exclaimed provocatively: "Greek literature is a Near Eastern literature," a view which in recent years Walter Burkert endorses, even if in more measured tones. The "high cultures" from Anatolia, Mesopotamia, the Syro-Palestinian coast, and Egypt "spread their achievements to neighboring regions," he writes: "The background and context of the so-called Greek miracle, if there ever was one, is to be found there."³ As these quotations suggest, there is a widely held consensus among classicists that Greek culture has drawn greatly from either Semitic cultures or in the case of the Hittites from an Indo-European culture deeply influenced by Akkadian cultures, and not just in literature but also in writing, religion, philosophical speculations about nature, mathematics, herbal medicine and, on the material side, in painting, sculpture, and perhaps indirectly in temple architecture. Yet, in the case of literature, the method and nature of this transmission is still far from clear.

1 Güterbock 1948.

2 Walcot 1966.

3 For the quotations, see West 1966: 31 and Burkert 2004: 4, respectively. Cf. Güterbock 1946, 1948: 123–34, and 1952; Cornford 1950: 95–116; Walcot 1966. For Near Eastern and Indo-European traces in Hesiod's *Works and Days*, especially in the account of the five ages of man, see Woodard 2007: 108–50. For Syro-Phoenician influence, see López-Ruiz 2010, esp. 23–47 and 171–202.

As this paper is interested in parallels between the *Theogony* and the Babylonian *Enuma elish*, written circa 1100 BCE or later, at the end of the Late Bronze Age and after the fall of the Mycenaeans, I need not discuss how the Mycenaean Greeks had extensive contacts with their more sophisticated neighbors to the east and southeast, primarily through trade, much of it originating from Syro-Palestinian ports. Merchants from these ports carried mixed cargoes from many eastern Mediterranean origins (Egyptian, Levantine, Cypriote, and Greek) and mixed crews, including, it appears, Mycenaean elites.⁴ Land and river routes also linked these ports to Mesopotamian points east.

A study of Egyptian, Syrian, and Anatolian representations of the sphinx offers one example of the importance of these ports when considering the complexity and cross-currents at work in Greek cultural adaptation. Originating in Egypt as a leonine recumbent male figure, wingless and bearded, the sphinx symbolized the pharaoh in the Old Kingdom; by the Middle Kingdom, an avian female version, protecting the king, households, women and childbirth, begins to appear. As both forms travel north, they acquire their own distinctive characteristics in Syrian and central Anatolian art, and it is these latter figures, particularly from Anatolia, that have their impact upon Minoan and Mycenaean art, as exemplified by two Mycenaean, winged standing sphinxes (perhaps male), facing each other, on an ivory pyxis from Thebes, and a fresco of two winged, female sphinxes facing each other, atop a doorway, now housed in the Pylos Museum.⁵ These images, it would appear, enter Greece from the Near East rather than from Egypt.

Large archives at the Ugaritic port Ras Shamra from 1450–1200 show that cities along the Levantine coast were also fertile breeding grounds for rich literary and cross-cultural exchange. The Ras Shamra archive contained writings in at least seven languages and in multiple scripts: Ugaritic, Akkadian, Sumerian, Hurrian, Cypro-Minoan, hieroglyphic Egyptian, and cuneiform and hieroglyphic Hittite, but nothing in Linear B (if, indeed, the Mycenaeans used this script to record literary works). It is natural to assume that through such ports and merchants Akkadian texts, as well as Hittite/Hurrian ones like

4 Cf. Pulak 2008: 289–305; also see Bass 1998: 183–89 and López-Ruiz 2010: 84–87 and 125–29.

5 For the Minoan sphinx coming from central Anatolia, see Aruz 2008b: 106–7; cf. 64, 128–29, and Canby 1975: 225–48, esp. 234–5 and 246–8. For the Bronze Age Egyptian, Near Eastern, and Aegean history of this form, see Aruz 2008a: 82–4 and 2008b: 136–37 and catalogue entries 46a and 80–84. For the Mycenaean pyxis, see Aravantinos and Fappas 2008: 144, catalogue entry 83. I wish to thank Alice Slotsky for the Akkadian names of the male and female sphinx, *apsasum* and *apsasitu*, respectively.

the “Kingship in Heaven” and “Ullikummi” dating from 1400 to 1200, reached the Mycenaean Greeks. But these matters predate our concerns.

Those trade routes declined at the end of the Bronze Age and gradually revived circa 1000 BCE when Phoenician vessels, operating out of ports like Byblos, Tyre, and Sidon on the Levantine coast, again traded widely through the eastern Mediterranean. With Greek migrations and resettlement on Cyprus and the Asia Minor coast after the Mycenaean collapse, and with the dramatic growth in trade and the first stages of colonization in the eighth century, the importance of the east for Greece increased to such an extent that archaeologists label the style of Greek art from 750–650 BCE the Orientalizing Period. In the Geometric and Orientalizing Periods the archaic representation of the Greek sphinx—winged and female like the Mycenaean type—either survived the fall of the Mycenaean world or re-entered Greece a second time.⁶ Like the Minoan and Mycenaean sphinxes, griffins, winged horses, and sirens, these images also appear to come into Greece from the Near East. The decorative nature of their patterning on archaic vases suggests that these borrowed motifs are more ornamental and benign in design than a manifestation of religious power, leading art historians to conclude that Greek artisans at this time were more indebted to eastern forms than content.

But the question of textual transmission poses special concerns. For the Hittites and West Semitic peoples, we know of bilingual poets rendering Sumerian and Akkadian cuneiform into indigenous scripts; there are also a few examples of writers who knew Akkadian and Ugaritic, but there is no linguistic trail of Greek poets who knew these languages.⁷ The transmission of written texts into oral form, no doubt with the Phoenicians serving both as intermediaries and re-fashioners of these stories and traditions, compounds the question of influence. Robert Mondi imagines that the “impact” of Near Eastern literature on Greek storytellers “took the form of a gradual and on-going absorption...of themes and motifs into the poets’ repertoire of compositional elements [before] they became ultimately an ingrained and inseparable part of the poetic tradition.”⁸ This may be the case, but our understanding of the nature

6 Hesiod offers the first reference to the Sphinx in Greek literature: “destructive Phix, destroyer of the Kadmeians” (*Th.* 326). As the scholiast says, Phix is the Boeotian spelling for the monster, derived from her perch on Mt. Phikion near Thebes. Hesiod says nothing about her hybrid form, though she is the daughter of a hybrid monster, either the half-nymph, half snake Echidna or the Chimaera with three heads, one of a lion, another of a goat, and the third of a snake. For the Greek re-evaluation of the Sphinx as a destructive figure, see Scully 1997: 250 and n. 13.

7 Burkert makes the case that itinerant specialists (*démioergoi*) disseminated Near Eastern ideas and practices in this period; cf. Burkert 1992: 9–33.

8 Mondi 1990: 150.

of this transference of stories, storylines, and ideas from east to west (and vice versa) remains remarkably obscure.⁹ One cannot rule out the possibility that stories were transmitted visually, perhaps even through woven images, as in the example of Helen “weaving [onto a robe] the many struggles” of those fighting on her account (*Il.* 3.126). If Greek literature is Near Eastern literature, it is so obliquely. One must speak of shared motifs, reflections, background context, and reception rather than direct sources and influence. In many cases, the parallels seem spotty and often poorly integrated into the host text.

That said, there are Akkadian motifs in Homer and Hesiod that inevitably excite classicists. One which I personally find intriguing between *Gilgamesh* and the *Iliad*—the parallel between Gilgamesh pacing back and forth after Enkidu’s death like a lioness mourning her lost cubs (8.ii.17–9) and Achilles mourning Patroklos’ death like a lion who, having traversed many valleys, looks for his stolen cubs (*Il.* 18.318–22), Mark Edwards rejects as a “parallel creation.”¹⁰ But the relatively close thematic correspondences (in my view) like this one are few and far between in Homer. Often, Homeric echoes of Near Eastern motifs seem to have little or no significance to Homer’s main story. At other times, however, Homeric transformation of an adopted story is striking.

Examples of both types of diffusion are evident in the Iliadic account of Hera’s sexual tryst with Zeus in order to distract her husband’s attention from the war, the *Dios Apate* at *Il.* 14.153–155. In this episode, itself part of a larger scene extending to 15.262, there is an unusual concentration of Near Eastern echoes. Some of the details seem gratuitous, adding little to the Iliadic story of seduction. For example, in one of the few cosmogonic observations found in Homer, Hera identifies Oceanos as the “origin of the gods,” and his mate, Tethys, their “mother” (*Il.* 14.201; cf. 246). Although extraneous to the Homeric scene, it resonates closely with an important story about the primeval couple, Apsu and Tiamat (fresh and salt water) in the *Enuma elish*. Echoes such as this, if indeed it is an echo, might be considered ornamental or exotic, not so different in kind from the rendering of eastern griffins and sphinxes on

9 We know of no Greek translation of the *Enuma elish*. The first extant Greek reference to the *Enuma elish* comes from Aristotle’s student Eudemos of Rhodes, as paraphrased by the last of the Neoplatonic philosophers, Damascius, in the sixth century CE. See Eudemos fr. 150 (Wehrli). About the same time, Berossos, a priest of Marduk in Babylon, retells the hymn in Greek in his *Babyloniaka*, ca. 289 BCE; see *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* III C 680 F1. For the story of the *Enuma elish*’s reception in the west up to Psellus in the Byzantine court (11th century), see Talon 2001: 270–77, although he begins with Berossos, not Eudemos. That Eudemos’ version is closer to the hymn, see Bottéro and Kramer 1989: 676–79. For comments about Mesopotamian stories reaching Israel and Judah in oral form, see Lambert 1965: 287–300.

10 Edwards 1991 at 18.318–22. But see West 1988: 171.

geometric and archaic Greek vases. But in this same section of the *Iliad*, Poseidon's claim that Zeus acquired Olympus by lot when the three brothers divvied up the heavens, sea, and underworld (cf. *Il.* 15.190–93), rarely attested elsewhere in extant Greek literature, fits well with Poseidon's general complaint against Zeus. This passage also appears to be of Near Eastern origin, closely paralleling an account of the division of the universe described in the Akkadian *Atrahasis*. Burkert characterizes the parallel as “not really a translation but a resetting, yet in a way that shows the foreign framework.”¹¹ More broadly, the Iliadic seduction scene seems to transform archetypal themes found in Akkadian sacred marriage hymns and ritual practices most gracefully into a sophisticated, secular story that has nothing to do with the ritual union of earth and sky deities.

2 *Theogony and Enuma Elish*

In isolated examples Homer may include elements from the *Enuma elish* not found in the *Theogony*, but, in structure and outline, the parallels between the *Theogony* and the *Enuma elish* seem far from ornamental.¹²

The same cannot be said about the much-touted parallels between the *Theogony* and the Hittite/Hurrian succession myths, the “Kingship in Heaven” and “Song of Ullikummi.” While referring to “primeval deities,” the “Kingship in

11 Burkert 2004: 37; cf. West 1997: 109–11. In his *Hymn to Zeus* (v. 60–7), Callimachus refers to this Iliadic account only to dismiss it. The Greeks more typically accepted Hesiod's story of Zeus' rise to power by merit and the consent of the Olympians as told in the *Theogony* (v. 66–7, 72–4, 881–85). As Porter 1993: 65 says, Homer's version “should have scandalized Hesiod.” Again diverging from Hesiod, Homer describes Aphrodite as born from Zeus and Dione (a female form of Zeus' name), a version which resembles the Akkadian story of the birth of Ishtar (Aphrodite's Akkadian equivalent) from Anu (Heaven) and Antu (the female form of Anu), in contrast to Hesiod's memorable (innovating?) story of Aphrodite being born in the sea from the severed genitals of Ouranos (Sky). The *Gilgamesh* and *Atrahasis* parallels, as well as the Homeric version of Aphrodite's birth, could have first entered the Greek poetic tradition in the Mycenaean age, but it is equally possible that they reached Greece in the first millennium when the *Enuma elish* also widely circulated within Mesopotamia.

12 It does not seem accidental that the creation myths most like the *Theogony* come from city-state cultures, and not from Egypt. The exception to this rule is the heavily Egyptianized, post-Hesiodic Greek Orphic theogonies; cf. Burkert 2004: 89–98. If developed from Egyptian antecedents, these myths may well have reached Greece through Phoenician adaptations; cf. West 1994: 290 and López-Ruiz 2010: 169–70. For a possible Egyptian parallel of Hesiod's castration story, see Meltzer 1974: 154–57.

Heaven" myth is neither a cosmogony nor a theogony. As a story of castration and violent succession (over at least four generations, perhaps more), it has much in common with the *Theogony*, but in broad theme the parallels between the Hittite/Hurrian and Hesiodic myths are not very strong. Both Hittite/Hurrian succession myths are noticeably void of female deities, unless one considers Kumarbi feminized when he becomes pregnant after swallowing Anu's genitals and seed. The Hittite Anu (from the Akkadian Anu) may be compared to Ouranos, and Kumarbi to the Phoenician El whom Philo of Byblos likens to Kronos, but the details in the Hittite/Hurrian and Greek stories diverge considerably. Kumarbi castrates Anu by accident whereas Kronos' dismemberment of Ouranos is planned, though not by Kronos himself. Kronos deliberately swallows his children, once they are born, and he desires to keep them within whereas Kumarbi is horrified by his ingestion and tries to spit out Anu's seed, an impulse that has little in common with Kronos' spitting out the *omphalos* stone and his own children. Nor is Kumarbi's pregnancy particularly close to Zeus's when he swallows Metis. From its fragmentary condition, it is impossible to tell how the Hittite/Hurrian story evolves, whether it ends with the Storm-God or Ea (mentioned in a later column) in ascendancy, or whether the final order is different in kind from what has come before.

Parallels between the *Theogony* and the *Enuma elish*, however, are much more intriguing.¹³ The *Enuma elish*, named from the opening words "when on high," is often called the "Epic of Creation," but it might more aptly be called a Hymn to Marduk, a poem which begins as a theogony and cosmogony but culminates in Marduk's victory over Tiamat and in his creation of an everlastingly

13 The *Theogony* also has much in common stylistically with the Akkadian texts. Literary Akkadian, like Greek hexameter epic, is an artificial dialect, distinct from vernacular speech, grammatically and lexically. The origin of the Old Babylonian literary idioms is unknown; the much later *Enuma elish* is written in a very learned style which Huehergard 1997: xxiv identifies in the main as traditional Standard Babylonian. The language of Greek hexameter is also a hymnic-epic dialect that mixes spoken Ionic and Aeolic and a smattering of other dialects in the creation of an idiom with its own spellings and vocabulary. Like Greek epic, Standard Babylonian poems were often long narratives about gods and men which mixed third person reporting with extensive passages in direct speech. Although literary Akkadian texts were written and Greek epic the product of an oral tradition, at least for most of its history, both traditions were rich with formulaic tropes: fixed epithets for gods and cities, repeated type scenes for such things as banqueting and commands, and similes (although there are no examples of extended similes in Akkadian). However, unlike Greek epic, formulaic phrasing in Akkadian literature is a *late feature associated with writing*; cf. Vanstiphout 1992: 247–64.

stable and harmonious political order.¹⁴ That order is signified by Marduk's new name, Anu-Enlil-Ea, which confirms his syncretism of the previous supreme Sumerian and Babylonian deities and by the recitation of Marduk's fifty names at the end of the poem. It is also physically made manifest by the creation of the first city, Babylon (Gate of the Gods), and his cosmic home, the Esagila (House of the Raised Head) and ziggurat, at the center of the city. Dating from around the end of the first millennium, these achievements were re-enacted annually when the poem was recited at Babylon's New Year ceremony, making the *Enuma elish* not only a hymn to Marduk but also a hymn to Babylon. The hymn stresses that Marduk's power comes by the consent of the Anunna-gods (3.113–38) and that his rule consists of a distribution of orders, designs, and stations among the nine hundred gods (5.39–46 and 6.39–82), in what is presented as a harmonious political order.

The *Theogony*, first titled by the Alexandrians it seems, also narrates the movement from a theogony and cosmogony to the creation of a stable, harmonious political order. Like the *Enuma elish*, it is a hymn to the creator of that new order¹⁵ and a hymn to the thing created, Olympus. To a much greater extent than the *Enuma elish*, the structure of the *Theogony* underlines the unchanging nature of Zeus's rule, beginning and ending as it does with Zeus and Olympus. The story of *genesis*, violent succession, evolution and instability is thus framed by a story of permanence, good governance, and fair distribution of power.

The cosmogonic story of the *Enuma elish* and the *Theogony* (starting at 116) have much in common.¹⁶ Both are "city myths" of comparable length (*Enuma elish* 1092 lines; *Theogony* roughly 955 hexameters) which narrate the movement from dominant female to dominant male, from earth (or water) to the sky, from familial disharmony and violence to civic order and social harmony. In both, the primordial mother turns against the ascending male before his ultimate victory, although the nature of this gender antagonism is much more pronounced in the *Enuma elish*. In the end, both rulers circumvent regular biological reproduction in the creation of harmonious civic accord. For the

14 Cf. Michalowski 1990: 383–4, and Jacobsen 1976: 167–91.

15 One might infer from the absence of a substantial hymn to Zeus in the Homeric Hymns that the Greeks themselves interpreted the *Theogony* as a Hymn to Zeus; Hunter and Fuhrer 2002: 167, express a similar view.

16 West 1999:25–6 makes a similar point. Of the numerous studies comparing the *Theogony* and the *Enuma elish*, I cite those which I have found most useful: Brown 1953: 35–48; Walcot 1966: 27–54; Mondì 1984: 325–44.

parallel between the *Theogony* and the *Enuma elish* to be meaningful, one would have to see Olympus as analogous to Babylon in significant ways.

3 *Theogony*

It is common in many studies of the Greek gods to see Olympus as an extended family, Zeus more as “father of gods and men” than as “ruler and sovereign of the gods.” So, for example, Walter Burkert sees Olympus as a “family” setting, replete with “mutual scolding of parents and blows for the children.”¹⁷ Such a view of Olympus requires a special reading of Greek terminology. Homer, Hesiod, and the Homeric Hymns persistently describe the Olympian gods gathering in “assembly” (*agorê*, *eirai*, *homêguris*, *homêgerees*, *thôkoi*, *athrooi*), language derived from the Akkadian, Hittite, and Ugaritic poetic traditions where the gods did indeed gather in political gatherings. For Burkert’s view of Olympus as a family structure, one would have to interpret this language loosely and inappropriately to Greek political development. Zeus’s harsh treatment of his wife and the other Olympians in the *Iliad* might support such an argument,¹⁸ but it does not hold up under scrutiny when considering Hesiod’s vision of and terminology for Olympus.

In the *Theogony* Zeus’s rule is not based on force but on the mutual consent of the gods and on just principles of governance, marked by Zeus’s fair distribution of honors and privileges. Hesiod’s Olympus is a place of laws; it has a *boulê*, *eirai* (Aeolic for *agorai*), dancing floors, and multiple homes of the gods who live “within Olympus” (*Th.* 37, 51, 408), a phrasing which parallels Homer’s description of Trojans living “within (walled) Troy” (*Il.* 22.85). In the manner of a Mycenaean *wanax*, Zeus’s own house lies on the highest point. Considering Hesiod’s description of the topography of Olympus and his terminology for its “institutions,” his Olympus is something much closer to a human *polis* than to an extended family. As scholium A to *Iliad* 1.497 remarks: “on the height of Olympus there is by the same name Olympus the *polis*,” but if the case were obvious to all there would have been no need for the scholiast to make this point.

¹⁷ Burkert 2004: 25.

¹⁸ Cf. Sissa and Detienne 2000: 5–7, cf. 15–7, who speak of Olympus as a family and of Zeus as a despotic figure.

With the notable exception of Zeus' swallowing his first wife Metis and enraging his second wife Hera when he gives birth to Athena,¹⁹ the sovereign Zeus exists fully within the system of laws and concord he creates. In collective song and dance, the Muses describe Zeus as "he who rules in heaven, / himself possessing thunder and shining lightning, / by might having conquered his father Kronos; well (*eu*) in each of the details, / he has distributed *nomoi* and assigned honors for the immortals" (71–74).²⁰ In a parallel passage the Muses praise the Olympians in striking language for their "*nomoi* and cherished manners" (66).²¹ The nature of Zeus's rule is mentioned again when the gods urge Zeus to be their king: "the gods, spurred on by Earth's counsel and foresight, / urged the Olympian, wide-seeing Zeus to be king and lord / of the immortals, for (*de*) he divided up their honors well (*eu*)" (883–85). The aorist tense of "he divided" must mean that Zeus distributed honors among the gods *after* he was made king, but from the way Hesiod speaks of Zeus' rise to power we must believe that the gods urged Zeus to become king *because* they had every reason to believe that he would share honors and offices in a fair manner. In this sense, the particle *de* verges upon being explanatory, i.e., the gods urged Zeus to be king *because* he [would] divide up honors well. The Muses' songs

-
- 19 In the act of swallowing Metis and keeping her and their male child within, Zeus breaks outside the system of harmonies and shared governance that otherwise characterizes his rule within Olympus. In assuming the female power to give birth (to Athena), he incurs the "intense wrath and discord" (*zamenêse kai êrise*, 928) of Hera, his second wife. In this one act, Zeus' kingship unifies the essentially antithetical principles of Bia and Dike.
- 20 This translation follows West 1966 which accepts van Lennep 1843's emendation reading *nomous* ("laws") for the manuscripts' *homôs* ("equally"). Modern editors are divided between the two readings. My translation also follows West when rendering the difficult phrase *eu de hekasta* ("well in each of the details"). Cf. Raaflaub 2000: 35–6, and more broadly, 1989: 1–32.
- 21 Given the paucity of what survives from early Greek literature, we are not in a position to determine how Hesiod's audience may have responded to the language, let alone content, of this line. By Homeric standards, Hesiod's language shows marked innovation. In Homer, *nomoi*, accented on the ultima, refers to pasturelands (i.e., that which is distributed), but here, accented on the penult, it refers to laws or ordinances (i.e., that which the king distributes). In Homer *êthea* always refers to the "accustomed abode" of animals, but here it refers to an "accustomed way" of life, i.e., to manners. As Hoekstra 1957:220–21 plausibly suggested, Hesiod has reworked a formulaic expression, "the pasturelands and animal abodes," to designate social behavior. In Homer *kedna* usually modifies a person (a "cherished" lord, a "devoted" wife, or a "trusted" nurse) but here it modifies *êthea*, i.e., "cherished manners." Hesiod may not be responsible for all these innovations but the concentration of these non-Homeric phrases in the context of describing a lawful, civilized Olympus is striking.

as described in the proem celebrate and exemplify just this quality of Zeus and Olympus. Hesiod says that Zeus' three daughters with Themis (Traditional Customs or Law), the Horai (Seasons), individually named Eunomia (Good Governance), Dike (Justice), and Eirene (Social Peace), "tend to the work of humankind" (903) but we see that these personified abstractions apply equally well for Zeus' new Olympus.

The nature of Zeus's shared governance differs greatly from Marduk's absolute power, as many have noted. In the *Theogony*, Zeus acquires power by inclusion. The thunderbolt and lightning blast are not his by nature or from birth but they are manufactured objects (141), given to Zeus as gifts "for the grace (*kharis*) of his kindness" (503).²² Zeus acquires the personified deities Strength, Might, Zeal, and Power when their mother Styx joins Zeus's forces after he has announced that he would bestow honor on any god who fought on his side, even if that god had previously been without honor (383–403). Despite his gift of lightning and the presence of Power by his side, Zeus is not able to defeat the Titans until he frees the 100-arms who come to his aid, "mindful of [his] kindly friendship" (*philotēs*) (651; cf. 655–57).

In a striking passage Hesiod describes how the Olympians live in festivity and free from discord. Any god who *lies* (*pseudētai*), or introduces *discord* (*eris*) or *quarreling* (*neikos*) among them is cast into a coma for a year and then as "a worse punishment" is barred from the *boulē*, *eirai*, and feasts for another nine years, in effect the prototype of the ten-year ostracism (782–804). In Hesiod's manner, where abstract nouns re-appear in singular and plural forms or in verbal or adjectival form, the three words in italics above may be understood in the context of Hesiod's deified abstractions: hateful Eris (Discord) and her parthenogenic offspring Quarrels (Neikea) and Lies (Pseudea), collectively characterized by Eris' child DUSNOMIA (Bad Governance) (226–32). These deities are part of the universe into which Zeus is born; his Olympus does *not* free the world of them but it creates a place set apart where they are kept at bay and replaced by qualities associated with Themis, Eunomia, Dike, Eirene, laws, cherished customs, and fair distribution of honors. In this context, the changes which Zeus makes to the world are much less sweeping than Marduk's when he makes the world out of Tiamat's corpse.

Hesiod calls the Muses *homophrones*, "of like mind" (*Th.* 60), a rare word similar to one found in the *Odyssey* in reference to the domestic tranquility of a

22 For "return-*kharis*," see MacLachlan 1993: 5–12, 80–81 and 81 n. 8. It is extremely rare in Greek to find that Zeus' weapons are manufactured objects given to him as a gift for his kindness; for another account of this, see Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica* 1.509–11 and 733–4.

husband and wife when they look upon the world with like mind (6.181–82). In his commentary on the Muses' epithet, Martin West observes that it describes what one might expect from children born of the same parents. Surely this is right, but to leave the significance of the epithet at that loses its broader scope. In the Greek Archaic Period, choral dance serves both as a vehicle to bring a community together and as an emblem of that collective harmony. Such seems especially true in the *Theogony* which celebrates the concord and homogeneity of the Olympians. In Hesiod's usage, I suspect, *homophrones* shows itself in action, not in static character, evoking the steps and voices of a community at one with itself. Following on the heels of the Muses' praises of Zeus's reign, Hesiod turns to the subject of kings, a passage frequently condemned. Martin West calls it "contrived" and "awkward;" Jenny Clay dismisses it as "seemingly tangential to the central concerns of the poem."²³ But is it either? The transition happens seamlessly in a subordinate clause (80), from naming the Muses to describing what will be called their "sacred gift to humankind" (93). Thematically, Hesiod moves gracefully from the Muses' songs about Olympian ordinances and good dispensation of privileges to the Muses' pouring sweet dew on the tongues of Zeus-nourished kings. With the Muses' honeyed speech, they come upon a discordant crowd in the city *agorē* and with their straight verdicts "soothe great quarreling (*neikos*)." For this, they are "honored like a god" (87–92). The kings in the *Theogony*, foundational figures as they are, do not lead men into war; rather they lead a *polis* to social harmony. As Zeus makes Olympus free from social conflict, so his kings dispel quarrels and bring god-like order to the *polis*. Rather than being awkward or tangential, this digression perfectly fits the political themes of the *Theogony*.²⁴ Like the *Enuma elish*,

23 Clay 2003: 74; West 1966: 181–82: "Why are the kings introduced at all? They are not usually regarded by the Greeks as being dependent upon the Muses, except for the celebration of their renown." Solmsen 1995: 38–42, regards the Muses' interest in politics as a Hesiodic innovation, while Pucci 1977: 17–8, 50–5; cf. 23–34; Thalmann 1984: 40, 134–43; Brillante 1994: 14–26, among others, see it as expressive of the overlapping functions of poets and kings. Cf. *Od.* 8.166–77, to which Clay adds *Od.* 7.71–4. One could also add *Od.* 3.265–72 when Agamemnon, off for Troy, leaves a singer behind "to guard his wife," as if the bard were a surrogate king.

24 The *Theogony* shows surprisingly little interest in mankind and says nothing about the birth of man unless one follows an ancient commentator who notes that the first race of men (and women?) was born from the Meliai (cf. 187). Contrary to Clay 2003: 97, Hesiod offers no clue that he either knows this story or finds it pertinent to his poem, though the making of the first woman (and wife) is a matter of great attention: a "*kalon kakon*" (585). The "sacred gift" to mankind is of a thoroughly different nature; man suffers at home through marriage, but in the *polis* he can enjoy civic harmony. The *Theogony*'s Zeus-

Hesiod's poem expresses the patriarchal ideologies of Olympus, which should be considered the prototype of an idealized *polis*.

4 *Enuma elish*

The *Enuma elish* is commonly dated to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar I (1124–1103 BCE).²⁵ The poem, then, would most likely have been transmitted to Greece, perhaps through the Phoenicians, either around 1000 BCE at Lefkandi or two centuries later among the Ionians. Jean Bottéro stresses that the *Enuma elish* was not a “holy book,” that it did not have “religious authority,” and that Marduk “never truly replaced once and for all, much less ousted, Enlil,”²⁶ but it is still the case that the poem was read widely and remained remarkably stable for close to a thousand years. Around the end of the first millennium the hymn became part of Babylonian ritual when it was recited annually on the fourth day of the New Year Festival at Babylon in Marduk's temple precinct, the Esagila, “House of the Raised Head.” It is not clear whether this practice spread to other cities, but its place in ritual and its fixity in written form account for the relatively few variants of the poem over a millennium. As a sign of its popularity, numerous copies of and commentaries on the text have been found in Hittite and Assyrian libraries, the Assyrians replacing Marduk with their supreme deity, Assur. And as a further sign of its wide fame, in fourth-century Greece Eudemus of Rhodes, when describing a Babylonian creation myth, tells the story of the *Enuma elish* (unnamed).

The myth/hymn opens with a primordial pair, Apsu and Tiamat, male and female, “who bore them all,” fresh and salt waters co-mingled in an undifferentiated wash. Rather than chaos at the beginning of time, the first couple exists before heaven or the netherworld had names or the world had form. Unlike the *Theogony*, the first divisions proceed peacefully as within Apsu and Tiamat “the gods are formed” (*ibbanû*) (1.9, 12)—first Lahmu and Lahamu,

nourished kings are a far cry from the corrupt kings of the *Works and Days* who make “crooked verdicts.”

- 25 For a full discussion of the dating of the *Enuma elish*, see Abusch 1995: 1014–26. Abusch dates it a few centuries later.
- 26 Bottéro 2001: 88 (also for the dating of the hymn's recitation in the New Year Festival); for an account of the festival, see 158–64. Near the end of the festival, the gods were transported from the Esagila to the Akitu-temple outside the city walls where Marduk's defeat of Tiamat was reenacted; cf. Lambert 1963: 189–90, but in Lambert 1965: 295, he cautions that “nothing in the epic [itself] implies a specific cultic use.”

male and female, then Anshar and Kishar, also brother and sister. At this early state of creation, reproduction is expressed in the passive voice and it is not clear whether Lahmu and Lahamu, and then Anshar and Kishar, should be thought as successive generations. Then, without the naming of female partners, Anshar made Anu and Anu begot Nudimmud [=Ea] “who dominated(?) his forebears: / Profound in wisdom, acute of sense, he was massively strong, / Much mightier than his grandfather Anshar” (1.17–9).²⁷ The identities of Lahmu and Lahamu remain obscure, some scholars equating them with sandbars which begin the process of separating the waters. Anshar in Sumerian refers to “total Heaven” and Kishar to “total Earth,” leading some to speculate that brother and sister describe the horizon zone of heaven and earth in the first stages of division.

It is not until the fourth “generation” that the antagonism between “father” and “sons” shows itself, prompted now no doubt by the birth of a god “profound in wisdom [and] massively strong,” at which point Apsu feels the urge to destroy all the gods. As he explains to Tiamat, “Their behavior is noisome to me! / By day I have no rest, at night I do not sleep! / I wish to put an end to their behavior, to do away with it! / Let silence reign that we may sleep” (1.37–40). Underlining the humor in Apsu’s reported reason lies fear of a more serious form of upheaval. As in the *Theogony*, it is the introduction of a wise offspring (Kronos, Ea) which most stirs fear in the “father.”

“Angry” at Apsu’s words, Tiamat “cried out to her spouse, / She cried out bitterly, outraged that she stood alone, / (For) he had urged evil upon her, / ‘What? Shall we put an end to what we formed?’” (1.42–45). As in the *Theogony*, the primordial father introduces “evil” into the world in his desire to undo what he has created (cf. *Th.* 155, 158: *kakon ergon*). And, as in the *Theogony*, the offspring are frozen in silence except for the last born, “ingenious, resourceful” Ea. But unlike Gaia in the *Theogony*, Tiamat has no scheme to stop Apsu, but must rely on Ea, “surpassing in wisdom,” to contrive a “master plan” (1.59 and 61, respectively). Ea’s actions also appear dynastic when he strips Apsu of his tiara and takes away his aura, putting it on himself, and when he usurps Apsu’s name, calling his dwelling in the subterranean waters the Apsu.

The parallels in generational conflict and violent succession up to this point in the Greek and Babylonian myths are clear, even if in details the stories differ. Unlike Gaia, Tiamat must rely upon Ea’s stratagem to counter Apsu’s evil plot,

27 For the cuneiform text and a transliteration of it, with French translation and glossary, see Talon 2005. Unless otherwise noted, all translations here are from Foster 2005. For other translations, see Dalley 1989: 228–77; Bottéro and Kramer 1989: 602–79 (with commentary); Speiser and Grayson in Pritchard 1969: 60–72 and 501–3, respectively.

and unlike the Kronos of the *Theogony*, Ea does not become the future leader when he strips away Apsu's aura and puts it on himself. Leadership falls to his grandfather Anshar, the Sumerian Heaven figure. But in both myths, evil and its attendant fear stems from trying to halt restless evolution, as the primordial father Apsu, like Ouranos (*Th.* 158), takes "delight" (1.51) in the "evils he plotted against the gods his children" (1.52). Together, the two myths would suggest that a father's violence against his descendants is a natural by-product of genealogy.²⁸ Kronos castrates but does not kill his father in the *Theogony* while Ea's castration, if that is the proper word for it, is symbolic as he "untied [Apsu's] sash" and stripped off his tiara, taking Apsu's name and aura for his own. As a parallel for this symbolic form of castration one might cite David's "cut[ting] off a corner of Saul's cloak" as Saul is relieving himself in a cave, although in this case the cutting is purely symbolic as David spares Saul's life and allows Saul to keep the throne (1 Sam 24:4).

When Ea gives birth to Marduk, the storylines of the *Enuma elish* and the *Theogony* diverge. Unlike Zeus, Marduk is all powerful by nature at birth. And unlike Kronos, Marduk's father, the wise Ea, glories in his son's superior strength and wisdom, as do all the other male gods:²⁹

In the cella of destinies, the abode of designs,
The most capable, the sage of the gods, the Lord was begotten,
In the midst of Apsu Marduk was formed,

28 Cf. Jacobsen 1984: 18 and Caldwell 1989: 81 have objected that the Oedipal nature of the father / son conflict in the *Theogony* is lost or deflected in the *Enuma elish* as several generations separate Ea from Apsu, and, later, Marduk from Tiamat. These objections do not take note that in the *Enuma elish*, words for son (*maru* and *bukru*) and father easily cross generations, as seen at 2.52–53 and 59–61, for example; also, Tiamat refers to all the offspring as "what we formed" (1.45).

29 From Marduk's birth, all the chief male gods rejoice in his birth; in time the whole male line from Anshar to Ea will join forces with him in a common alliance. As the pitched battle between Marduk and Tiamat nears, that alliance is most strongly felt between Anshar and Marduk, the present and future kings of the gods, who frequently call each other "father" and "son." Little in the first generation of gods in the *Theogony* would prepare for such a cross-generational male alliance. Our closest parallel comes from Jacobsen 1984's conjecture of a harmonious transfer of power from Anu to Enlil to Ninurta in the last stages of evolution in the *Theogony of Dunnu*. There is also a trace of generational cooperation and peaceful transmission of power in the *Phoenician History* when Kronos decrees that Astarte and Zeus, who in this story is Ouranos' son, rule over the land. With a slightly different twist, in the Hurrio-Hittite *Song of Kumarbi*, sons help avenge dethroned fathers. But even these parallels offer a faint likeness.

...

His body was magnificent, fiery his glance,
 He was a hero at birth, he was a mighty one from the beginning!
 When Anu his grandfather saw him,
 He was happy, he beamed, his heart was filled with joy,
 He perfected him, so that his divinity was strange,
 He was much greater, he surpassed them in every way.
 His members were fashioned with cunning beyond comprehension,
 Impossible to conceive, too difficult to visualize:
 Fourfold his vision, fourfold his hearing,

...

Anu formed and produced the four winds,
 He put them in his hand, "Let my son play!" (OR "My son, let them whirl")
 He fashioned dust, he made a storm bear it up,
 He caused a wave and it roiled Tiamat,
 Tiamat was roiled, churning day and night,
 The gods, finding no rest, bore the brunt of each wind.³⁰

Rather, it is the female Tiamat who turns against Marduk with an immediate and deep-seated hostility. Previously protective of her offspring, Tiamat is now greatly "pleased" (1.125) at the "evil" (1.111) prospect of killing Marduk. As explanation for her shift in mood, Tiamat says that the gods "have been adopting [wicked ways] against the gods [thei]r parents" (1.128). But why should Tiamat turn against Marduk for something that happened before he was born? Her explanation, like Apsu's, does not seem to convey the full force of Tiamat's hatred. It seems likely that as Apsu seemed to sense danger in Ea's birth so Tiamat seems to sense from the start—perhaps from the united male joy in his birth—that the all-seeing, all-knowing Marduk is a threat to her authority. As in the *Theogony*, what initially appears as a generational conflict between fathers and sons masks a deeper conflict between the genders. With the removal of the threatening female (Tiamat, Metis) and the creation of a political order, stability is created across generations and harmony between the genders can be achieved. In a far more dramatic fashion in the *Enuma elish* than in the *Theogony*, male victory is extreme: Marduk kills Tiamat and cuts up her corpse to make the cosmos, in a literal way giving male design to female form.

Unlike Kronos' overthrow of Ouranos and Ea's of Apsu, Zeus and Marduk must amass an army to defeat their adversaries and create the new order (although in the final moment Marduk, like Ea, will resort to magic—and his

30 1.79–81, 87–95, 105–110.

weaponry—to defeat Tiamat). The contrasting natures of the two armies are highly schematic. Tiamat's is savage; her soldiers are hybrid creatures of her own creation who confound the process of progressive differentiation in the evolution of the cosmos by blurring the categories of man and animal or of sanity and madness: a rabid dog, scorpion-man, fish-man, bull-man, and the like. In assembly they are also savage, “furious with rage, . . . , angry, scheming, . . . rumbling” (2.12–17). The commander of Tiamat's army particularly offends civilized principles when she makes her son, Qingu, her consort and king: “I make you the greatest in the assembly of the gods, / Kingship of all the gods I put in your power. / You are the greatest, my husband, you are illustrious, / Your command shall always be greatest, over all the Anunna-gods” (1.153–56). When facing Tiamat in combat, Marduk will particularly rebuke Tiamat for this act: “You named Qingu to be spouse for you, / Though he had no right to be, you set him up for chief god” (4.81–2). In Marduk's eyes, Tiamat's greatest offense is political as she had no right to form an assembly and elevate her son/husband without due process.

By contrast, Marduk is elevated to supreme (and absolute) rule by election and joyous concord by the Igigi-gods in assembly. When Anshar as leader of the Igigi-gods asks Ea and Anu to challenge Tiamat and they shrink away from her in horror, Marduk offers his assistance on the condition that the gods “convene the assembly, nominate me for supreme destiny! / Take your places in the Assembly Place of the Gods, all of you, in joyful mood. / When I speak, let me ordain destinies instead of you. / Let nothing that I shall bring about be altered, / Nor what I say be revoked or changed” (2.159–63). In contrast to Tiamat's snarling hybrids, the mood of the Igigi-gods is festive; when they gather before Anshar to ordain Marduk their champion and king, they “were filled with [joy]. / One kissed the other in the assembly [], / They conversed, sat down at a feast, / On produce of the field they fed, imbibed of the vine, / With sweet liquor they made their gullets run, / They felt good from drinking the beer. / Most carefree, their spirits rose, / To Marduk their champion they ordained destiny” (3.131–38). Some scholars, finding a parallel from a Sumerian hymn where a drunken Enki (= Ea) surrenders all his powers to his daughter Inanna and, once sober, cannot recover his lost authority,³¹ propose that Marduk similarly tries to wrestle power away from the Igigi-gods by getting them inebriated. But little in the text supports such a reading. Fear of Tiamat may prompt the gods to grant Marduk absolute power, but they are given advance word about the election. Anticipating the vote, they come to the assembly in good spirits, a mood of good cheer which continues after the

31 Kramer and Maier 1989: 57–68.

banquet: "Joyfully they hailed, 'Marduk is king!' / They bestowed in full measure scepter, throne, and staff, / They gave him unopposable weaponry that vanquishes enemies" (4.28–30). Nor at any time after the coronation when Marduk creates the universe and Babylon do they show signs of remorse or protest. Every indication suggests that Marduk succeeds to power legitimately and that once he is the supreme sovereign and assigns the gods their various offices and functions, he rules over a harmonious community of gods.

Rather than see wine and beer as intoxicants that derange rational thought or take the edge off a painful abdication of autonomy that the gods will later regret, context suggests that these liquors should be seen as progressive attributes of culture, technology, and refinement. In this, they are like the prepared grains of the banquet and the civic discourse and deliberative nature of the assembly. For a parallel, one could cite how in the Hittite/Hurrian "Song of Ullikummi" the Sun God of the Sky eats and "drinks his full of wine" as a sign of relieved anxiety when he has reason to hope that Tešsub will oppose the diorite monster Ullikummi (Tablet 2, 1–13). By contrast, Tiamat is portrayed as a regressive figure, far from culture or refinement, who relies on her hybrid creations and her ancient matrilineal authority to rule and who resists the civic and political efforts of the male gods to introduce sovereign order into the cosmos.

The contrast between culture and natural chaos is equally over-determined in Marduk and Tiamat's weaponry and battle strategy. Both use spells. Tiamat's initially worked on Marduk: "his tactic turned to confusion, / His reason was overthrown, his actions panicky" (4.67–8), but once he recovers his composure he starts to list Tiamat's defects: her spurning of her natural, maternal feelings, her making her son Qingu consort and chief god, and her attempting wicked deeds against Anshar. When he challenges Tiamat to a duel, she is driven into a passion and seeks to swallow Marduk. He by contrast tries to contain her in a net which he has made and then harnesses nature to his will, using lightning and the four winds given to him at birth (in addition to seven more winds) to keep Tiamat's mouth open. His principal weapon is a bow which he had "made [and] appointed [as] his weapon" (4.35), killing Tiamat with an arrow shot through her gaped mouth. In another banquet after victory, Marduk's "fathers" admire the bow's craftsmanship. Kissing it, Anu exclaims, according to one interpretation of the cuneiform, "This be my daughter!" (6.85–7),³² perhaps seeing the bow as metonymically standing in for Ishtar. But the metaphor is

32 I print here Foster's translation which corresponds with Speiser's in Pritchard 1969. Dalley 1989: 263 and n. 39, interprets the idiom differently, translating "May she go far!", a reading that seems better suited for an arrow than the bow.

fascinating by itself as it reveals the creation of a new kind of “womankind,” one denatured, born without a mother, the instrument of her father’s will. As such, she seems a distant cousin of Athena, also born of aggression and one parent, devoted to her father’s new order.

One of the great surprises of this myth is Marduk’s creation of the physical universe out of Tiamat’s corpse (4.137-46):

He split her in two, like a fish for drying,
 Half of her he set up and made as a cover, (like) heaven.
 He stretched out the hide and assigned watchmen,
 And ordered them not to let her waters escape.
 He crossed heaven and inspected (its) sacred places,
 He made a counterpart of Apsu, the dwelling of Nudimmud.
 The Lord measured the construction of Apsu,
 The Great Sanctuary, Esharra, which he built, (its) heaven,
 He made Ea, Enlil, and Anu dwell in their holy places.

This is certainly a far cry from creation in the *Theogony* which evolves biologically in large measure and without plan; at the beginning of things is Chasm and happenstance. Born into a world which is already largely formed, Zeus cannot change it but he can create an (enclosed) ordered realm which keeps the disordering elements of the world at bay. In the *Enuma elish*, by contrast, Marduk literally (re)makes the world, shaping the universe asexually by calculation and measurement, much like Elohim in Genesis 1. In a major difference from Genesis 1, however, in the *Enuma elish* there is no mystery about the raw material of the world. Its substance is female, given form by male design: from the corpse Marduk creates the sun, moon, and constellations to demarcate time, as from Tiamat’s breasts he makes mountains and from her eyes he pours forth the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Also unlike the creation of the garden in Genesis 2, the Babylonian creation culminates in the making of the city: “I shall call [its] name [Babylon], Abode of the Great Gods. / We shall all hold fe[stival]s with[in] it” (5.129–30). At the center of Babylon, is the Esharra, “House of Totality” (Enlil’s domain), and the Esagila, “House of the Raised Head,” Marduk’s cosmos home, the counterpart of Ea’s Apsu and the *axis mundi* that links upper and lower worlds. Here, all the gods come to assembly, the three hundred Anunna-gods, previously obedient to Tiamat, ascend from the netherworld and the three hundred victorious Igigi-gods descend from heaven.

In other Babylonian myths and in the New Year Festival at Babylon where the *Enuma elish* is recited, Marduk has a wife Zarpanit and a son Nabû by

her, but in the *Enuma elish* Marduk's creation of the cosmos and the patriarchal rule at Babylon, unlike the male/female partnerships leading up to and including Marduk's birth, is asexual. The female in this myth has been thoroughly defeated; biological evolution implied in the first stage of creation has been replaced and denatured in the second act of creation. It is hard to imagine a more extreme, or violent, expression of the male's appropriation and transformation of the female body and life force.

In the polity which Marduk fashions, the violence of the earlier generations, first between "father" and "son," then between female and male, is defused and replaced by a world of apparent communal concord in Marduk's governance, feasting, and unbounded fecundity. In retrospect, it is not difficult to imagine why Tiamat might have wished to swallow and absorb back into an amorphous black hole the figure destined to give definition to the cosmos, both in its physical and social dimensions. Tied to the biological processes of life, at Marduk's birth Tiamat changed from a caring to a devouring mother as if she realized intuitively that it was impossible to co-exist with the new order. Even more than the evil Apsu, Tiamat, as it turns out, is the regressive force which threatens to turn the world back into a primal chaos. In this myth, her death and reapportionment make cosmos and city possible.

5 Conclusion

It is this theme, considerably restructured, that the *Theogony* imitates. The considerable differences in detail between Hesiod's poem and the Akkadian myth indicate that the *Enuma elish* did not directly influence the Greek myth. But the narrative pattern is fundamentally the same in the movement of cosmic evolution from generations of familial violence to the creation of civic order, although the construction of the city is more explicit in the *Enuma elish* and the change in the mode of creation more dramatic. Both creation myths, nevertheless, are also praise hymns of the god and the order and polities they create.

In both city myths, male rule is predicated upon transforming the threatening female and breaking free of biological generation, whether in the form of Marduk's radical dismemberment and reconfiguration of Tiamat's body according to male design or of Zeus swallowing wise Metis (who knows good and evil³³), assuming her knowledge and name (becoming *mētietia*), and giving

33 Metis does see the future not as something fixed (fated) but as a set of possibilities open to good or evil fortunes; cf. Detienne and Vernant 1978: 107–8.

birth to Athena. Even so, the Greek myth is considerably more embracing of the female as positive contributors to the making of city and civilization than is the Babylonian myth. The creation of Olympus is generated by Zeus's sexual partnerships with the personified abstractions of Themis and Mnemosyne, and most of his children in the *Theogony* are female personified abstractions of civic order. With these unions, Zeus has transformed the dangerous power of primal Eros to the purposes of civilization which are almost without exception female in gender.

A striking feature of Hesiod's *Theogony* is the near absence of many canonical Olympians. Most noteworthy of all is Apollo's low profile, named only four times in the poem (*Th.* 14, 94, 347, 918). In all other archaic references to the Muses singing on Olympus, Apollo leads them in the song and dance, but in Hesiod's telling, Zeus's daughters, most with collective names like the Horai, Kharites, and the Muses, are like choruses (identified in archaic Greece by collective names), with Zeus as their figurative choral leader.³⁴ With the exception of Metis, Zeus does not defeat or remake threatening females like Night, Eris, and their descendants. Rather, they still permeate the universe, just not within Olympus (except in the case of Zeus's wife).

Nor, with the exception of his giving birth to Athena, does Zeus create "asexually." Rather he tames eros by (1) creating the institution of marriage ("making Metis a wife" *alochon theto Mētin*, 886; "making Hera a wife" *poiēsai' akoitin*, 921, but see 410), (2) using sexual unions politically to bring out latent powers in Titans like Themis and Mnemosyne and to unite older and younger generations, often bringing together former enemies, and even lexically by (3) redefining the meaning of *philotēs* (651).

While Tiamat and Gaia are the dominant figures in the primordial couple of their respective poems, Gaia plays a more complex role than does Tiamat. The conflict between male and female principles in cosmic evolution is immediately apparent at Marduk's birth. In the *Theogony* this unfolds more elusively. Up until Zeus's victory over the Titans, Zeus's success at almost *every* turn was predicated upon Gaia's intervention: it was her plan to trick Kronos with the stone (463–73, 494–500); Earth hid the power of thunder and lightning until Zeus liberated the Kyklopes (505); Earth's advice prompts Zeus to free the 100-Arms (626). Gaia also urges the gods to make Zeus lord and king (883–85) and warns Zeus, once he is king, of the danger from Metis in order that he *not* be unseated (888–94). But between the advice to free the 100-Arms and the urging of the gods to make Zeus king, Gaia beds down with Tartaros to create

34 Calame 1997: 30. For Apollo and the Muses, see Nagy 1990b: 339–81, esp. 350–54 and 360–63. For Zeus as choral leader on Olympus, see Ramnoux 1987: 155–64.

the monster Typhoeus who, in single combat, comes close to defeating Zeus and returning the earth to a primal confusion of earth and sky all jumbled together (820–80). As West and others have noted, many elements in this surprise passage have much in common both with the Hittite Ullikummi myth and with Tiamat's hybrid progeny in the *Enuma elish*. While Gaia's begetting of Typhoeus is out of character in Hesiod's portrait of her, it closely resembles Tiamat's shift in loyalty in the *Enuma elish*; in both instances the primordial mother attempts to thwart the powerful new male god on the verge of his creating the new patriarchal order.

In conformity with the distinctions between Babylonian kingly rule and the rise of shared governance in the early Greek *polis*, the nature of Marduk's and Zeus's power differ significantly. None of Zeus's power is his by nature but is granted to him as gifts by others in exchange for his freeing them from imprisonment or for his fair distribution of power. Marduk, by contrast, is born all-powerful and far from Zeus's delicate sharing of power and imperfect taming of nature, Marduk rules with absolute power, having absorbed into himself the power and authority of his predecessors. In a seven tablet poem, the last tablet and a half records Marduk's fifty names which, collectively, with learned puns, reveal his destiny, nature, and full power. His forty-ninth name specifies in part that "he shall keep Tiamat subdued" (7.132), and his last name confirms his uncontested supreme status throughout the cosmos when Enlil, the supreme Sumero-Akkadian god, bequeaths his epithet to Marduk: "Father Enlil has pronounced his name (50) Lord of the World" (7.136).³⁵ He is also called "Ea" (7.140) and "Anu-Enlil-Ea" (6.64), a name which subsumes his father Anu (Heaven), the former supreme deity, and the god of wisdom and magic. Absolute as his authority is, it is also true that Marduk lives in a kind of partnership with the other gods whose "stations" are divided appropriately (cf. 5.39–46 and 6.78–9). As the supreme god, Marduk lives somewhat outside the system of harmonies he establishes, although in the *Enuma elish* there is no outward sign that he abuses his privileged position. Zeus, by contrast, clearly lives fully within the system of harmonies he creates, with the exception of his relation to Hera, and indeed has power, the *Theogony* implies, precisely because of the *eunomia* he creates. Contrary to Marduk, Zeus is not secure after his victory over the Titans and election to kingship. Nor can he make the universe according to his design or fully escape sexual and biological processes of reproduction, in contrast to Marduk's asexual creation that, much like creation in Genesis 1 and 2, elegantly sidesteps the question of succession.

35 Cf. 7.143 (Scribes write Fifty to signify Enlil).

In its movement from a time at the beginning of creation when gods and things were nameless to the identification of Marduk's fifty names at the end of the poem, the *Enuma elish* is clearly concerned with identity and creation through the word, but this interest in names (and the identification of Marduk's essence in the puns associated with his fifty names) falls short of Hesiod's intense reliance on personified abstractions by which his poem of creation comes close to being a mythic treatise on political philosophy.

In a brief passage, the *Enuma elish* describes the creation of humankind, fashioned by wise Ea from the blood of Tiamat's consort and commander, Qingu. The product of rebel blood and a wise maker, humankind is to attend to the needs of the gods, in the city and elsewhere, and relieve them of their burdens. The *Theogony* alters this relation between Olympians and man considerably. With the making of the first woman, "a beautiful evil or hardship," the Olympians introduce mortal males to the mixed blessings of women and marriage (something like Zeus' marriage to his second wife, Hera), but, with the sacred gift of the Muses, Zeus grants to humankind in the *polis* the possibility of sharing in the same kind of communal harmony which the gods enjoy on Olympus.

Allowing for these important cultural differences, a comparison of the *Theogony* and *Enuma elish* enables us to articulate how, in addition to being a creation myth, Hesiod's poem is also a hymn to Zeus and a hymn to Olympus.³⁶

36 In Cornford 1950: 192, and 1952: 202–13, Cornford also discusses the *Theogony* as Hymn to Zeus. I wish to thank Tzvi Abush for his generous help in preparing this article.

Cultural Contact and Appropriation in the Axial-Age Mediterranean World

A Periplos

Edited by

Baruch Halpern
Kenneth S. Sacks

Associate Editor

Tyler Edward Kelley



BRILL

LEIDEN | BOSTON

The Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available online at <http://catalog.loc.gov>
LC record available at <http://lcn.loc.gov/2016036654>

Typeface for the Latin, Greek, and Cyrillic scripts: "Brill". See and download: brill.com/brill-typeface.

ISSN 1566-2055

ISBN 978-90-04-19454-0 (hardback)

ISBN 978-90-04-19455-7 (e-book)

Copyright 2017 by Koninklijke Brill nv, Leiden, The Netherlands.

Koninklijke Brill nv incorporates the imprints Brill, Brill Hes & De Graaf, Brill Nijhoff, Brill Rodopi and Hotei Publishing.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, translated, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission from the publisher.

Authorization to photocopy items for internal or personal use is granted by Koninklijke Brill nv provided that the appropriate fees are paid directly to The Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Drive, Suite 910, Danvers, MA 01923, USA. Fees are subject to change.

This book is printed on acid-free paper and produced in a sustainable manner.