

The Epic of Creation

The *Epic of Creation* is named an epic in a sense quite different to that of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. Here is no struggle against fate, no mortal heroes, no sense of suspense over the outcome of events. The success of the hero-god Marduk (in the Babylonian version, Assur in the Assyrian version) is a foregone conclusion. None of the good gods is injured or killed; no tears are shed. Yet cosmic events are narrated: the earliest generations of gods are recounted leading up to the birth of the latest hero-god; the forces of evil and chaos are overcome, whereupon the present order of the universe can be established, with its religious centres, its divisions of time, its celestial bodies moving according to proper rules, and with mankind invented to serve the gods. The gods themselves behave in an orderly fashion: they assemble, discuss, agree, and elect their leaders in a gathering of males; after Tiamat's primeval parturition and the spawning of monsters, goddesses play no part in creating the civilized world, not even in creating mankind.

DATE OF COMPOSITION

The date of the epic cannot be fixed precisely. Tablets on which the work was written date mainly to the first millennium, and the epic continued well into the Seleucid period when it was used by Berossus in his *Babyloniaca*, and was still known in the fifth to sixth centuries AD, when the writer Damascius quoted from Berossus. But the tradition must be earlier. No date can be given to the hymnic-epic dialect in which it was written, for such dialectic features are not found in any groups of non-literary or more easily datable inscriptions. It is usually assumed that the version featuring Marduk is primary and the version featuring Assur is secondary, for no traces of Assyrian dialect are apparent. Although plenty of literary texts of the early second millennium have been found, none of them contains the *Epic of Creation*, but this, of course, is an argument from silence. A

surprising lack of textual variation is to be found in the tablets, which came from a variety of sites and periods. This may be explained either as indicating that composition is relatively late, and that there is no oral background; or as showing that a text became 'canonized' if it was used for a particular ritual, as this epic was. When Sennacherib described scenes from the epic with which he decorated the doors of the Temple of the New Year Festival, he included details which are not found in the extant version, such as that the god Amurru was Assur's charioteer, and so we may deduce that there were indeed different versions in circulation.

If it is correct that the version with Marduk is the original one, the epic cannot have been composed before the reign of Sumula-el (1936–1901 BC), an Amorite ruler under whom Babylon, with Marduk as its patron god, first achieved eminence. Unfortunately, nothing is yet known of literary activity, style, or dialect during his rule. Hammurabi's reign (1848–1806 BC) has been suggested as a possibility, but there are no allusions to the epic in the poetic prologue and epilogue to his great Code of Laws, nor does that work contain features of the hymnic-epic dialect. The next possibility comes from the reign of an early Kassite king Agum-Kakrime in the sixteenth century, under whom the cult statue of Marduk was brought back from years in captivity and reinstated in Babylon. Such an occasion is likely to have inspired the composition of new hymns, and an inscription of that king described new doors for the temple as being decorated with composite monsters similar to those who join Tiamat's army in the epic. But they are not exactly the same, and some scholars have questioned the authenticity of the inscription; it may have been written several centuries later as a pious fraud, although a motive for such deception is hard to find. The reign of Nebuchadnezzar I (1125–1104 BC) has also been suggested, during which the cult statue of Marduk was returned once again from captivity, and Marduk is attested with the title 'King of the gods', but there is now good evidence to show that such a date for composition is too low. A lexical text known as *An-Anum* lists the major gods of the Babylonian pantheon together with their secondary names by assimilation and some of their epithets. A long section with the names of Marduk includes a subsection that corresponds very closely indeed to the

names of Marduk which are found in Tablet VII of the epic. A slightly less close comparison can be made between Tablet VI and other names of Marduk in *An-Anum*. Evidence from a tablet with a list of gods found at the Hittite capital in Anatolia shows that *An-Anum* must have included the *Epic of Creation*'s list of Marduk's names long before the time of Nebuchadnezzar I, and probably excludes a dating to his reign.

Tablets VI and VII of the epic are not essential to the main work; they are obviously inappropriate to Assur, and so in dating the final two tablets to the Kassite period we still retain a number of options for dating the main epic, Tablets I–V, to some earlier period. A possible indication of Amorite origins comes from the West Semitic name of the weather-god, Addu, which is included among Marduk's names. The general theme of a god triumphing over the Sea to bring new order to the world is found in a myth from Ugarit and alluded to in the Old Testament, although much of the detail is very different from that of the epic. Sumerian temple hymns and poems refer to the heroic exploits of gods, but never to a triumph over the Sea; the Sea, whether as a god or goddess, is not important in the Sumerian pantheon. The evidence is very tenuous, but it remains possible that the basic story of the epic is Amorite, and that the last two tablets were added during the Kassite period, a time which is recognized increasingly as one of composition as well as compilation. If so, an Amorite god, rather than Marduk, may have been the 'original' hero.

RELATED THEMES IN ANZU

Considerable similarities are evident between the *Epic of Creation* and the *Epic of Anzu*, which was certainly popular from the Old Babylonian period onwards. Both tales involve possessing the Tablet of Destinies as a key element; the weapons used in the big fight are largely the same, and the structure of the crisis, in which three gods are sent in turn and the third alone triumphs, is alike in both. The proclamation of new names and titles for the victor is likewise remarkably similar. Direct dependence, however, is impossible to prove, and such similarities may better be interpreted as showing how a common stock

of motifs existed, from which each composition drew freely. This way of looking at parallel items can also be applied to stock phrases, epithets, and similes, for a huge range of folk-tales must have existed in oral narrative, few of which were ever recorded in writing; *Anzu* and *Atrahasis* both contain references to tales of which we know nothing.

THE RITUAL CONNECTION

A ritual tablet is extant giving instructions for the performance of the New Year Festival in Babylon, and it says specifically that the *Epic of Creation* is to be recited (or possibly enacted) on the fourth day. The text has a long gap, and it is possible that more than one recital was envisaged. In any case, the epic is definitely used as part of a ritual, and it has a type of opening, like *Atrahasis*, consisting of a statement 'When . . .', which is quite distinct from the type 'I shall sing . . .', found in the standard version of *Gilgamesh* and in *Erra and Ishum*. The latter may introduce oral narrative in general, or may be a feature of the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages rather than earlier periods; Old Babylonian *Gilgamesh* almost certainly did not have such an opening.

In *Gilgamesh* we are aware of an audience constantly demanding detail, whereas the *Creation* is vaguely phrased, designed to impress rather than to entertain. Compare and contrast how the bow, Marduk's weapon, and the various weapons of *Gilgamesh*, are described. In the *Creation* we are told: 'He created a bow and assigned it as his weapon'; later we are told that 'its form was extremely cunning'. This weapon was instrumental in slaying Tiamat, ending chaos and allowing orderly creation to proceed. But we do not hear the audience asking, 'How was it made? What materials were used? How much did it cost?' By contrast, we are told of *Gilgamesh's* weapons how, down at the forge, 'craftsmen sat down and gave it thought . . . they cast large axes, they cast axes weighing three talents each, they cast great daggers with blades weighing two talents each, and rivets at the sides of thirty minas each'.

The reason for this difference may be found in the nature of the New Year festival. This took place in the capital city in the

month of Nisan (April), and the king had his mandate to rule renewed by the gods; to the ceremony came governors, plenipotentiaries, courtiers, top officials, and army officers to renew their oaths of loyalty to the king and royal family, just as the gods swore an oath to Marduk (or Assur), when he had been elected king. All of these subjects would have listened to the epic, and its recital would have impressed upon them how an orderly universe and its kingship should be organized: an ideal state of affairs used for propaganda purposes. When the king's subjects kiss his feet, they are doing no less than the great gods of heaven and earth did for Marduk. There is no question of rivalry; loyal support is absolute.

THE EPIC OF CREATION

TABLET I

When skies above were not yet named¹
Nor earth below pronounced by name,
Apsu, the first one, their begetter
And maker Tiamat, who bore them all,²
Had mixed their waters together,
But had not formed pastures, nor discovered
reed-beds;
When yet no gods were manifest,
Nor names pronounced, nor destinies decreed,
Then gods were born within them.
Lahmu (and) Lahamu emerged, their names
pronounced.³
As soon as they matured, were fully formed,
Anshar (and) Kishar were born, surpassing them.
They passed the days at length, they added to the
years.
Anu their first-born son rivalled his forefathers:
Anshar made his son Anu like himself,⁴
And Anu begot Nudimmud in his likeness.
He, Nudimmud, was superior to his forefathers:
Profound of understanding, he was wise, was very
strong at arms.
Mightier by far than Anshar his father's begetter,
He had no rival among the gods his peers.
The gods of that generation would meet together
And disturb Tiamat, and their clamour reverberated.
They stirred up Tiamat's belly,
They were annoying her by playing inside
Anduruna.
Apsu could not quell their noise
And Tiamat became mute before them;
However grievous their behaviour to her,
However bad their ways, she would indulge them.

Finally Apsu, begetter of the great gods,
Called out and addressed his vizier Mummu,
 'O Mummu, vizier who pleases me!
 Come, let us go to Tiamat!'
They went and sat in front of Tiamat,
And discussed affairs concerning the gods their
 sons.
Apsu made his voice heard
And spoke to Tiamat in a loud voice,
 'Their ways have become very grievous to me,
 By day I cannot rest, by night I cannot sleep.
 I shall abolish their ways and disperse them!
 Let peace prevail, so that we can sleep.'
When Tiamat heard this,
She was furious and shouted at her lover;
She shouted dreadfully and was beside herself with
 rage,
But then suppressed the evil in her belly.
 'How could we allow what we ourselves created to
 perish?
 Even though their ways are so grievous, we
 should bear it patiently.'
(Vizier) Mummu replied and counselled Apsu;
The vizier did not agree with the counsel of his
 earth mother.
 'O father, put an end to (their) troublesome ways,
 So that she may be allowed to rest by day and
 sleep at night.'
Apsu was pleased with him, his face lit up
At the evil he was planning for the gods his sons.
(Vizier) Mummu hugged him,
Sat on his lap and kissed him rapturously.
But everything they plotted between them
Was relayed to the gods their sons.
The gods listened and wandered about restlessly;
They fell silent, they sat mute.
Superior in understanding, wise and capable,
Ea who knows everything found out their plot,
Made for himself a design of everything, and laid it
 out correctly,

Made it cleverly, his pure spell was superb.
He recited it and it stilled the waters.
He poured sleep upon him so that he was sleeping
 soundly,
Put Apsu to sleep, drenched with sleep.
Vizier Mummu the counsellor (was in) a sleepless
 daze.
He (Ea) unfastened his belt, took off his crown,
Took away his mantle of radiance and put it on
 himself.
He held Apsu down and slew him;
Tied up Mummu and laid him across him.
He set up his dwelling on top of Apsu,
And grasped Mummu, held him by a nose-rope.
When he had overcome and slain his enemies,
Ea set up his triumphal cry over his foes.
Then he rested very quietly inside his private
 quarters
And named them Apsu and assigned chapels,
Founded his own residence there,
And Ea and Damkina his lover dwelt in splendour.
In the chamber of destinies, the hall of designs,
Bel, cleverest of the clever, sage of the gods, was
 begotten.
And inside Apsu, Marduk was created;
Inside pure Apsu, Marduk was born.
Ea his father created him,
Damkina his mother bore him.
He suckled the teats of goddesses;
The nurse who reared him filled him with
 awesomeness.
Proud was his form, piercing his stare,
Mature his emergence, he was powerful from the
 start.
Anu his father's begetter beheld him,⁵
And rejoiced, beamed; his heart was filled with joy.
He made him so perfect that his godhead was
 doubled.
Elevated far above them, he was superior in every
 way.

His limbs were ingeniously made beyond
 comprehension,
 Impossible to understand, too difficult to perceive.
 Four were his eyes, four were his ears;
 When his lips moved, fire blazed forth.
 The four ears were enormous
 And likewise the eyes; they perceived everything.
 Highest among the gods, his form was outstanding.
 His limbs were very long, his height (?)
 outstanding.

(Anu cried out)

‘Mariutu, Mariutu,⁶
 Son, majesty, majesty of the gods!’⁷
 Clothed in the radiant mantle of ten gods, worn
 high above his head
 Five fearsome rays were clustered above him.
 Anu created the four winds and gave them birth,
 Put them in his (Marduk’s) hand, ‘My son, let them
 play!’
 He fashioned dust and made the whirlwind carry it;
 He made the flood-wave and stirred up Tiamat.
 Tiamat was stirred up, and heaved restlessly day
 and night.
 The gods, unable to rest, had to suffer . . .
 They plotted evil in their hearts, and
 They addressed Tiamat their mother, saying,
 ‘Because they slew Apsu your lover and
 You did not go to his side but sat mute,
 He has created the four, fearful winds
 To stir up your belly on purpose, and we simply
 cannot sleep!
 Was your lover Apsu not in your heart?
 And (vizier) Mummu who was captured? No
 wonder you sit alone!
 Are you not a mother? You heave restlessly
 But what about us, who cannot rest? Don’t you
 love us?
 Our grip(?) [is slack], (and) our eyes are sunken.

Remove the yoke of us restless ones, and let us sleep!

Set up a [battle cry] and avenge them!

Conquer the enemy] and reduce them to nought!

Tiamat listened, and the speech pleased her.

'Let us act now, (?) as you were advising!

The gods inside him (Apsu) will be disturbed,

Because they adopted evil for the gods who begot them.'

They crowded round and rallied beside Tiamat.

They were fierce, scheming restlessly night and day.

They were working up to war, growling and raging.

They convened a council and created conflict.

Mother Hubur, who fashions all things,⁸

Contributed an unfaceable weapon: she bore giant snakes,

Sharp of tooth and unsparing of fang (?).

She filled their bodies with venom instead of blood.

She cloaked ferocious dragons with fearsome rays

And made them bear mantles of radiance, made them godlike,

(chanting this imprecation)

'Whoever looks upon them shall collapse in utter terror!

Their bodies shall rear up continually and never turn away!'

She stationed a horned serpent, a *mušhuššu*-dragon, and a *lahmu*-hero,⁹

An *ugallu*-demon, a rabid dog, and a scorpion-man,

Aggressive *ūmu*-demons, a fish-man, and a bull-man

Bearing merciless weapons, fearless in battle.

Her orders were so powerful, they could not be disobeyed.

In addition she created eleven more likewise.

Over the gods her offspring who had convened a council for her

She promoted Qingu and made him greatest among
them,

Conferred upon him leadership of the army,
command of the assembly,

Raising the weapon to signal engagement,
mustering combat-troops,

Overall command of the whole battle force.

And she set him upon a throne.

‘I have cast the spell for you and made you
greatest in the gods’ assembly!

I have put into your power rule over all the gods!

You shall be the greatest, for you are my only
lover!

Your commands shall always prevail over all the
Anukki!’

Then she gave him the Tablet of Destinies and made
him clasp it to his breast.

‘Your utterance shall never be altered! Your word
shall be law!’

When Qingu was promoted and had received the
Anu-power

And had decreed destinies for the gods his sons, (he
said),

‘What issues forth from your mouths shall
quench Fire!

Your accumulated venom (?) shall paralyse the
powerful!’

(Catchline)

Tiamat assembled his creatures

(Colophon)

First tablet, ‘When skies above’. [Written] like [its]
original [and inspected].

Tablet of Nabû-balaṣṣu-iqbi son of Na’id-Marduk.

Hand of Nabû-balaṣṣu-iqbi son of

Na’id-Marduk [].

TABLET II

Tiamat assembled his creatures
 And collected battle-units against the gods his
 offspring.
 Tiamat did even more evil for posterity than Apsu.
 It was reported (?) to Ea that she had prepared for
 war.
 Ea listened to that report,
 And was dumbfounded and sat in silence.
 When he had pondered and his fury subsided,
 He made his way to Anshar his father;
 Came before Anshar, the father who begot him
 And began to repeat to him everything that Tiamat
 had planned.
 'Father, Tiamat who bore us is rejecting us!
 She has convened an assembly and is raging out
 of control.
 The gods have turned to her, all of them,
 Even those whom you begot have gone over to
 her side,
 Have crowded round and rallied beside Tiamat.
 Fierce, scheming restlessly night and day,
 Working up to war, growling and raging,
 They have convened a council and created
 conflict.
 Mother Hubur, who fashions all things,
 Contributed an unfaceable weapon: she bore giant
 snakes,
 Sharp of tooth and unsparing of fang (?).
 She filled their bodies with venom instead of
 blood.
 She cloaked ferocious dragons with fearsome rays,
 And made them bear mantles of radiance, made
 them godlike,
 (chanting this imprecation)
 "Whoever looks upon them shall collapse in utter
 terror!

Their bodies shall rear up continually and never
 turn away!"
 She stationed a horned serpent, a *mušhuššu*-
 dragon, and a *lahmu*-hero,
 An *ugallu*-demon, a rabid dog, and a
 scorpion-man,
 Aggressive *ūmu*-demons, a fish-man, and a
 bull-man
 Bearing merciless weapons, fearless in battle.
 Her orders were so powerful, they could not be
 disobeyed.
 In addition she created eleven more likewise.
 Over the gods her offspring who had convened a
 council for her
 She promoted Qingu, made him greatest among
 them,
 Conferred upon him leadership of the army,
 command of the assembly,
 Raising the weapon to signal engagement, to rise
 up for combat,
 Overall command of the whole battle force.
 And she set him (*lit.* her) upon a throne.
 "I have cast the spell for you and made you
 greatest in the gods' assembly!
 I have put into your power rule over all the
 gods!
 You shall be the greatest, for you are my only
 lover!
 Your commands shall always prevail over all the
 Anukki!"
 She gave him the Tablet of Destinies and made
 him clasp it to his breast.
 "Your utterance shall never be altered! Your
 word shall be law!"
 When Qingu was promoted and had received the
 Anu-power,
 And had decreed destinies for the gods her sons,
 (he said),
 "What issues forth from your mouths shall
 quench Fire!

Your accumulated venom (?) shall paralyse the
powerful!''

Anshar listened, and the report was very disturbing.
'Woe!' he cried, he bit his lip,
His liver was inflamed, his belly would not rest.
His roar to Ea his son was quite weak.
'My son, you who started the fight,
You remain responsible for what you have done.
You went and slew Apsu,
And Tiamat, whom you enraged—where else
is an opponent for her?'

Despairing of advice, the prince of good sense,
Creator of divine wisdom, Nudimmud,
With soothing speech, words of appeasement,
He answered Anshar his father nicely:
'Father, you are the unfathomable fixer of fates!
The power to create and to destroy is yours!
O Anshar, you are the unfathomable fixer of fates!
The power to create and destroy is yours!
For the moment stay quiet at the words I shall tell you.
Bear in mind what a good thing I did.
Before I slew Apsu,
Who else could he look to? Now (there are)
these (monsters),
Before I can rush up and extinguish him (Qingu)
He will surely have destroyed me! Then what?'

Anshar listened, and the speech pleased him.
His heart prompted him to speak to Ea.
'My son, your deeds were highly commendable,
You can make a strike fierce, unbeatable.
Ea, your deeds were highly commendable,
You can make a strike fierce, unbeatable.
But go towards Tiamat, sooth her uprising,
May her fury abate at your spell.'

He listened to the words of his father Anshar.
He took the road, went straight on his way.
Ea went, he searched for Tiamat's strategy,
But then stayed silent and turned back.
He entered into the presence of the ruler Anshar,
In supplication he addressed him.
'My father, Tiamat's actions were too much for me.

I searched for her course, but my spell was not
 equal to her.
 Her strength is mighty, she is completely terrifying.
 Her crowd is too powerful, nobody could defy her.
 Her noise never lessens, it was too loud for me.
 I feared her shout, and I turned back.
 But father, you must not relax, you must send
 someone else to her.
 However strong a woman's strength, it is not
 equal to a man's.
 You must disband her regiments, confuse her advice,
 Before she can impose her power on us.'

(For the rest of this episode see Supplement 4, p. 342)

Anshar was speechless, and stared at the ground;
 He gnashed his teeth (?) and shook his head (in
 despair) at Ea.
 Now, the Igigi assembled, all the Anukki.
 They sat silently (for a while), tight-lipped.

(Finally they spoke)

'Will no (other) god come forward? Is [fate]
 fixed?
 Will no one go out to face Tiamat with []?'
 Then Ea from his secret dwelling called
 [The perfect] one (?) of Anshar, father of the great
 gods,
 Whose heart is perfect like a fellow-citizen or
 countryman (?),
 The mighty heir who was to be his father's
 champion,
 Who rushes (fearlessly) into battle: Marduk the
 Hero!
 He told him his innermost design, saying,
 'O Marduk, take my advice, listen to your father!
 You are the son who sets his heart at rest!
 Approach Anshar, drawing near to him,
 And make your voice heard, stand your ground:
 he will be calmed by the sight of you.'¹¹
 The Lord rejoiced at the word of his father,

And he approached and stood before Anshar.
Anshar looked at him, and his heart was filled with
joy.

He kissed him on the lips, put away his
trepidation.

(Then Marduk addressed him, saying)

'Father, don't stay so silent, open your lips,
Let me go, and let me fulfil your heart's desire.
Anshar, don't stay so silent, open your lips,
Let me go, and let me fulfil your heart's desire.'

(Anshar replied)

'What kind of man has ordered you out (to) his
war?

My son, (don't you realize that) it is Tiamat, of
womankind, who will advance against you with
arms?'

(Marduk answered)

'Father, my creator, rejoice and be glad!
You shall soon set your foot upon the neck of
Tiamat!

Anshar, my creator, rejoice and be glad,
You shall soon set your foot upon the neck of
Tiamat.'

(Anshar replied)

'Then go, son, knowing all wisdom!
Quell Tiamat with your pure spell!
Set forth immediately (in) the storm chariot;
Let its [] be not driven out, but turn
(them?) back!'

The Lord rejoiced at the word of his father;
His heart was glad and he addressed his father,

'Lord of the gods, fate of the great gods,
If indeed I am to be your champion,
If I am to defeat Tiamat and save your lives,
Convene the council, name a special fate,
Sit joyfully together in Ubshu-ukkinakku:

My own utterance shall fix fate instead of you!
 Whatever I create shall never be altered!
 The decree of my lips shall never be revoked,
 never changed!

(*Catchline*)

Anshar made his voice heard

(*Colophon*)

Second tablet, 'When skies above'. [Written]
 according to []

[] a copy from Assur.
 []

TABLET III

Anshar made his voice heard
 And addressed his speech to Kakka his vizier,
 'O Kakka, vizier who pleases me!
 I shall send you to Lahmu and Lahamu.
 You know how to probe, you are skilled in
 speaking.
 Have the gods my fathers brought before me;
 Let all the gods be brought to me.
 Let there be conversation, let them sit at a
 banquet,
 Let them eat grain, let them drink choice wine,
 (And then) let them decree a destiny for Marduk
 their champion.
 Set off, Kakka, go and stand before them, and
 Everything that I am about to tell you, repeat to
 them,
 "Anshar your son has sent me,
 He has told me to report his heart's message,
 To say, "Tiamat who bore us is rejecting us!
 She has convened a council, and is raging out of
 control.
 The gods have turned to her, all of them,
 Even those whom you begot have gone over to
 her side,
 Have crowded round and rallied beside Tiamat.

They are fierce, scheming restlessly night and
day.
They are working up to war, growling and
raging.
They convened a council and created conflict.
Mother Hubur, who fashions all things,
Contributed an unfaceable weapon: she bore giant
snakes,
Sharp of tooth and unsparing of fang (?).
She filled their bodies with venom instead of
blood.
She cloaked ferocious dragons with fearsome rays,
And made them bear mantles of radiance, made
them godlike,

(chanting this imprecation)

“Whoever looks upon them shall collapse in utter
terror!
Their bodies shall rear up continually, and never
turn away!”
She stationed a horned serpent, a *mušhuššu*-
dragon, and a *lahmu*-hero,
An *ugallu*-demon, a rabid dog, and a
scorpion-man,
Aggressive *ūmu*-demons, a fish-man, and a
bull-man
Bearing merciless weapons, fearless in battle.
Her orders were so powerful, they could not be
disobeyed.
In addition she created eleven more likewise.
Over the gods her offspring who had convened a
council for her
She promoted Qingu, made him greatest among
them,
Conferred upon him leadership of the army,
command of the assembly,
Raising the weapon to signal engagement, to rise
up for combat,
Overall command of the whole battle force.
And she set him upon a throne.

"I have cast the spell for you and made you
 greatest in the gods' assembly!
 I have put into your power rule over all the gods!
 You shall be the greatest, for you are my only
 lover!
 Your commands shall always prevail over all the
 Anunnaki!"
 She gave him the Tablet of Destinies, and made
 him clasp it to his breast.
 "Your utterance shall never be altered! His
 (! Your) word shall be law!"
 When Qingu was promoted and had received the
 Anu-power¹²
 And had decreed destinies for the gods her sons,
 (he said),
 "What issues forth from your mouths shall
 quench Fire!
 Your accumulated venom (?) shall paralyse the
 powerful."
 I sent Anu, but he was unable to face her.
 Nudimmud panicked and turned back.
 Then Marduk, sage of the gods, your son, came
 forward.
 He wanted of his own free will to confront
 Tiamat.
 He addressed his words to me,
 "If indeed I am to be your champion,
 To defeat Tiamat and save your lives,
 Convene the council, name a special fate,
 Sit joyfully together in Ubshu-ukkinakku:
 And let me, my own utterance, fix fate instead of
 you.
 Whatever I create shall never be altered!
 Let a decree from my lips never be revoked, never
 changed!"
 Hurry and decree your destiny for him quickly,
 So that he may go and face your formidable
 enemy!"'
 Kakka set off and went on his way,
 And before Lahmu and Lahamu the gods his fathers

Prostrated himself and kissed the earth in front of
 them,
 Then straightened up and stood and spoke to
 them,
 'Anshar your son has sent me.
 He has told me to report his personal message,
 To say, "Tiamat who bore us is rejecting us!
 She has convened a council, and is raging out of
 control.
 The gods have turned to her, all of them,
 Even those whom you begot have gone over to
 her side,
 Have crowded round and rallied beside Tiamat.
 Fierce, scheming restlessly night and day,
 Working up to war, growling and raging,
 They have convened a council and created
 conflict.
 Mother Hubur, who fashions all things,
 Contributed an unfaceable weapon: she bore giant
 snakes,
 Sharp of tooth and unsparing of fang (?).
 She filled their bodies with venom instead of
 blood.
 She cloaked ferocious dragons with fearsome rays,
 And made them bear mantles of radiance, made
 them godlike,

(chanting this imprecation)

"Whoever looks upon them shall collapse in utter
 terror!
 Their bodies shall rear up continually, and never
 turn away!"
 She stationed a horned serpent, a *mušhuššu*-
 dragon, and a *lahmu*-hero,
Ugallu-demons, rabid dogs, and a scorpion-man,
 Aggressive *ūmu*-demons, a fish-man, a bull-man
 Bearing merciless weapons, fearless in battle.
 Her orders were so powerful, they could not be
 disobeyed.
 In addition she created eleven more likewise.

Over the gods her offspring who had convened a
council for her
She promoted Qingu, made him greatest among
them,
Conferred upon him leadership of the army,
command of the assembly,
Raising the weapon to signal engagement, to rise
up for combat,
Overall command of the whole battle force.
And she set him upon a throne.
"I have cast the spell for you, and have made you
greatest in the gods' assembly!
I have put into your power rule over all the gods!
You shall be the greatest, for you are my only
lover!
Your commands shall always prevail over all the
Anunnaki!"
She gave him the Tablet of Destinies, and made
him clasp it to his breast.
"Your utterance shall never be altered! Your
word shall be law!"
When Qingu was promoted and had received the
Anu-power
And had decreed destinies for the gods her sons,
(he said),
"What issues forth from your mouths shall
quench Fire!
Your accumulated venom (?) shall paralyse the
powerful!"
I sent Anu, but he was unable to face her.
Nudimmud panicked and turned back.
Then Marduk, sage of the gods, your son, came
forward.
He wanted of his own free will to confront
Tiamat.
He spoke his words to me:
"If indeed I am to be your champion,
To defeat Tiamat and to save your lives,
Convene the council, name a special fate,
Sit joyfully together in Ubshu-ukkinakku:

And let me, my own utterance, fix fate instead of
you.

Whatever I create shall never be altered!

Let a decree from my lips never be revoked, never
changed!"

Hurry and decree your destinies for him quickly,
So that he may go and face your formidable
enemy.""

Lahmu and Lahamu listened and cried out aloud.

All the Igigi then groaned dreadfully,

'How terrible! Until he (Anshar) decided to report
to us,

We did not even know what Tiamat was doing.'

They milled around and then came,

All the great gods who fix the fates,

Entered into Anshar's presence and were filled with
joy.

Each kissed the other: in the assembly []

There was conversation, they sat at the banquet,

Ate grain, drank choice wine,

Let sweet beer trickle through their drinking straws.

Their bodies swelled as they drank the liquor;

They became very carefree, they were merry,

And they decreed destiny for Marduk their
champion.

(Catchline)

They founded a princely shrine for him

TABLET IV

They founded a princely shrine for him,

And he took up residence as ruler before his fathers,
(who proclaimed)

'You are honoured among the great gods.

Your destiny is unequalled, your word (has the
power of) Anu!

O Marduk, you are honoured among the great
gods.

Your destiny is unequalled, your word (has the
power of) Anu!

From this day onwards your command shall not
be altered.

Yours is the power to exalt and abase.

May your utterance be law, your word never be
falsified.

None of the gods shall transgress your limits.¹³

May endowment, required for the gods' shrines

Wherever they have temples, be established for
your place.

O Marduk, you are our champion!

We hereby give you sovereignty over all of the
whole universe.

Sit in the assembly and your word shall be
pre-eminent!

May your weapons never miss (the mark), may
they smash your enemies!

O lord, spare the life of him who trusts in
you,¹⁴

But drain the life of the god who has espoused
evil!

They set up in their midst one constellation,¹⁵

And then they addressed Marduk their son,

'May your decree, O lord, impress the gods!

Command to destroy and to recreate, and let it be
so!

Speak and let the constellation vanish!

Speak to it again and let the constellation
reappear.'

He spoke, and at his word the constellation
vanished.

He spoke to it again and the constellation was
recreated.

When the gods his fathers saw how effective his
utterance was,

They rejoiced, they proclaimed: 'Marduk is King!'

They invested him with sceptre, throne, and staff-
of-office.

They gave him an unfaceable weapon to crush the
foe.

'Go, and cut off the life of Tiamat!

Let the winds bear her blood to us as good
news!¹⁶
The gods his fathers thus decreed the destiny of the
lord
And set him on the path of peace and obedience.
He fashioned a bow, designated it as his weapon,
Feathered the arrow, set it in the string.
He lifted up a mace and carried it in his right hand,
Slung the bow and quiver at his side,
Put lightning in front of him,
His body was filled with an ever-blazing flame.
He made a net to encircle Tiamat within it,
Marshalled the four winds so that no part of her
could escape:
South Wind, North Wind, East Wind, West Wind,
The gift of his father Anu, he kept them close to
the net at his side.
He created the *imhullu*-wind (evil wind), the
tempest, the whirlwind,¹⁷
The Four Winds, the Seven Winds, the tornado, the
unfaceable facing wind.
He released the winds which he had created, seven
of them.
They advanced behind him to make turmoil inside
Tiamat.
The lord raised the flood-weapon, his great weapon,
And mounted the frightful, unfaceable
storm-chariot.
He had yoked to it a team of four and had
harnessed to its side
'Slayer', 'Pitiless', 'Racer', and 'Flyer';
Their lips were drawn back, their teeth carried
poison.
They know not exhaustion, they can only devastate.
He stationed on his right Fiercesome Fight and
Conflict,
On the left Battle to knock down every
contender (?).
Clothed in a cloak of awesome armour,¹⁸
His head was crowned with a terrible radiance.

The Lord set out and took the road,
 And set his face towards Tiamat who raged out of
 control.
 In his lips he gripped a spell,
 In his hand he grasped a herb to counter poison.
 Then they thronged about him, the gods thronged
 about him;
 The gods his fathers thronged about him, the gods
 thronged about him.
 The Lord drew near and looked into the middle of
 Tiamat:¹⁹
 He was trying to find out the strategy of Qingu her
 lover.
 As he looked, his mind became confused,²⁰
 His will crumbled and his actions were muddled.
 As for the gods his helpers, who march(ed) at his
 side,²¹
 When they saw the warrior, the leader, their looks
 were strained.
 Tiamat cast her spell. She did not even turn her
 neck.
 In her lips she was holding falsehood, lies,
 (wheedling),²²
 '[How powerful is] your attacking force, O lord of
 the gods!
 The whole assembly of them has gathered to your
 place!'

(But he ignored her blandishments)

The Lord lifted up the flood-weapon, his great
 weapon
 And sent a message to Tiamat who feigned
 goodwill, saying:
 'Why are you so friendly on the surface
 When your depths conspire to muster a battle
 force?'²³
 Just because the sons were noisy (and)
 disrespectful to their fathers,
 Should you, who gave them birth, reject
 compassion?

You named Qingu as your lover,
You appointed him to rites of Anu-power,
wrongfully his.
You sought out evil for Anshar, king of the gods,
So you have compounded your wickedness against
the gods my fathers!
Let your host prepare! Let them gird themselves
with your weapons!
Stand forth, and you and I shall do single
combat!
When Tiamat heard this,
She went wild, she lost her temper.
Tiamat screamed aloud in a passion,
Her lower parts shook together from the depths.
She recited the incantation and kept casting her
spell.
Meanwhile the gods of battle were sharpening their
weapons.
Face to face they came, Tiamat and Marduk, sage of
the gods.
They engaged in combat, they closed for battle.
The Lord spread his net and made it encircle her,
To her face he dispatched the *imhullu*-wind, which
had been behind:
Tiamat opened her mouth to swallow it,
And he forced in the *imhullu*-wind so that she could
not close her lips.
Fierce winds distended her belly;
Her insides were constipated and she stretched her
mouth wide.
He shot an arrow which pierced her belly,
Split her down the middle and slit her heart,
Vanquished her and extinguished her life.
He threw down her corpse and stood on top of her.
When he had slain Tiamat, the leader,
He broke up her regiments; her assembly was
scattered.
Then the gods her helpers, who had marched at her
side,
Began to tremble, panicked, and turned tail.

Although he allowed them to come out and spared
 their lives,
 They were surrounded, they could not flee.
 Then he tied them up and smashed their weapons.
 They were thrown into the net and sat there
 ensnared.
 They cowered back, filled with woe.
 They had to bear his punishment, confined to
 prison.
 And as for the dozens of creatures, covered in
 fearsome rays,
 The gang of demons who all marched on her right,
 He fixed them with nose-ropes and tied their arms.
 He trampled their battle-filth (?) beneath him.
 As for Qingu, who had once been the greatest
 among them,
 He defeated him and counted him among the dead
 gods,²⁴
 Wrested from him the Tablet of Destinies,
 wrongfully his,²⁵
 Sealed it with (his own) seal and pressed it to his
 breast.
 When he had defeated and killed his enemies
 And had proclaimed the submissive (?) foe his slave,
 And had set up the triumphal cry of Anshar ov all
 the enemy,
 And had achieved the desire of Nudimmud, Marduk
 the warrior
 Strengthened his hold over the captive gods,
 And to Tiamat, whom he had ensnared, he turned
 back.
 The Lord trampled the lower part of Tiamat,
 With his unsparing mace smashed her skull,
 Severed the arteries of her blood,
 And made the North Wind carry it off as good
 news.²⁶
 His fathers saw it and were jubilant: they rejoiced,
 Arranged to greet him with presents, greetings
 gifts.²⁷
 The Lord rested, and inspected her corpse.

He divided the monstrous shape and created marvels
(from it).

He sliced her in half like a fish for drying:
Half of her he put up to roof the sky,
Drew a bolt across and made a guard hold it.
Her waters he arranged so that they could not
escape.

He crossed the heavens and sought out a shrine;
He levelled Apsu, dwelling of Nudimmud.
The Lord measured the dimensions of Apsu
And the large temple (Eshgalla), which he built in
its image, was Esharra:

In the great shrine Esharra, which he had created as
the sky,

He founded cult centres for Anu, Ellil, and Ea.

(*Catchline*)

He fashioned stands for the great gods

(*Colophon*)

146 lines. Fourth tablet 'When skies above'. Not
complete.

Written according to a tablet whose lines were
cancelled.

Nabu-belshu (son of) Na'id-Marduk, son of a smith,
wrote it for the life of himself

And the life of his house, and deposited (it) in
Ezida.

TABLET V

He fashioned stands for the great gods.

As for the stars, he set up constellations
corresponding to them.

He designated the year and marked out its divisions,
Apportioned three stars each to the twelve months.

When he had made plans of the days of the year,
He founded the stand of Neberu to mark out their
courses,

So that none of them could go wrong or stray.

He fixed the stand of Ellil and Ea together with it,

Opened up gates in both ribs,
 Made strong bolts to left and right.
 With her liver he located the heights;
 He made the crescent moon appear, entrusted night
 (to it)
 And designated it the jewel of night to mark out the
 days.
 'Go forth every month without fail in a corona,
 At the beginning of the month, to glow over the
 land.
 You shine with horns to mark out six days;
 On the seventh day the crown is half.
 The fifteenth day shall always be the mid-point,
 the half of each month.²⁸
 When Shamash looks at you from the horizon,
 Gradually shed your visibility and begin to wane.
 Always bring the day of disappearance close to
 the path of Shamash,²⁹
 And on the thirtieth day, the [year] is always
 equalized, for Shamash is (responsible for) the
 year.
 A sign [shall appear (?)] : sweep along its path.
 Then always approach the [] and
 judge the case.
 [] the Bowstar to kill and rob.³⁰

(15 lines broken)

At the New Year's Festival
 Year []
 May []
 The bolt of the exit []
 From the days []
 The watches of night and day []
 The spittle of Tiamat []'
 Marduk []
 He put into groups and made clouds scud.
 Raising winds, making rain,
 Making fog billow, by collecting her poison,
 He assigned for himself and let his own hand
 control it.

He placed her head, heaped up []
Opened up springs: water gushed out.
He opened the Euphrates and the Tigris from her
eyes,³¹
Closed her nostrils, [].
He piled up clear-cut mountains from her udder,
Bored waterholes to drain off the catchwater.
He laid her tail across, tied it fast as the cosmic
bond,
And [] the Apsu beneath his feet.
He set her thigh to make fast the sky,
With half of her he made a roof; he fixed the earth.
He [] the work, made the insides of Tiamat
surge,
Spread his net, made it extend completely.
He . . . [] heaven and earth
[] their knots, to coil []
When he had designed its cult, created its rites,
He threw down the reins (and) made Ea take
(them).
The Tablet of Destinies, which Qingu had
appropriated, he fetched
And took it and presented it for a first reading (?) to
Anu.³²
[The gods (?) of] battle whom he had ensnared were
disentangled (?);
He led (them) as captives into the presence of his
fathers.
And as for the eleven creatures that Tiamat had
created, he [],
Smashed their weapons, tied them at his feet,
Made images of them and had them set up at the
door of Apsu.³³
'Let this be a sign that will never in future be
forgotten!'
The gods looked, and their hearts were full of joy at
him.
Lahmu and Lahamu and all his fathers
Embraced him, and Anshar the king proclaimed that
there should be a reception for him.

Anu, Enlil, and Ea each presented him with gifts.
 [] Damkina his mother exclaimed with joy
 at him;
 She made him beam [inside (?)] his fine (?) house.
 He (Marduk) appointed Usmu, who had brought his
 greetings present as good news,
 To be vizier of the Apsu, to take care of shrines.
 The Igigi assembled, and all of them did obeisance
 to him.
 The Anunnaki, each and every one, kissed his feet.
 The whole assembly collected together to prostrate
 themselves.
 [] they stood, they bowed, 'Yes, King
 indeed!'
 [] his fathers took their fill of his
 manliness,
 [They took off his clothes] which were enveloped in
 the dust of combat.
 [] the gods were attentive to him.
 With cypress [] they sprinkled (?) his
 body.
 He put on a princely garment,
 A royal aura, a splendid crown.
 He took up a mace and grasped it in his right hand.
 [] his left hand.
 []
 He set a [*mušhuššu*-dragon (?)] at his feet,
 Placed upon []
 Slung the staff of peace and obedience at his side.
 When the mantle of radiance []
 And his net was holding (?) fearful Apsu,
 A bull []
 In the inner chamber of his throne []
 In his cellar []
 The gods, all that existed, []
 Lahmu and Lahamu []
 Made their voices heard and spoke to the Igigi,
 'Previously Marduk was (just) our beloved son
 But now he is your king. Take heed of his
 command.'

Next they spoke and proclaimed in unison,
‘LUGAL-DIMMER-ANKIA is his name. Trust in him!’³⁴
When they gave kingship to Marduk,
They spoke an oration for him, for blessing and obedience.
Henceforth you shall be the provider of shrines for us.
Whatever you command, we shall perform ourselves.’
Marduk made his voice heard and spoke,
Addressed his words to the gods his fathers,
‘Over the Apsu, the sea-green dwelling,
In front of (?) Esharra, which I created for you,
(Where) I strengthened the ground beneath it for a shrine,
I shall make a house to be a luxurious dwelling for myself
And shall found his cult centre within it,
And I shall establish my private quarters, and confirm my kingship.
Whenever you come up from the Apsu for an assembly,
Your night’s resting place shall be in it, receiving you all.
Whenever you come down from the sky for an assembly,
Your night’s resting place shall be in it, receiving you all.
I hereby name it Babylon, home of the great gods.
We shall make it the centre of religion.’
The gods his fathers listened to this command of his,
‘[] . . .
Who has [] your []
More than you by yourself have created?
Who has [] your []
More earth than you by yourself have created?
Babylon, whose name you have just pronounced,

Found there our night's resting place forever!
 [] let them bring our regular offerings
 []
 Whatever our work that we []
 There [] his toil [].'
 They rejoiced []
 The gods [] them
 Who knows [] them light
 He made his voice heard, his command []
 [] them []
 []
 They did obeisance to him and the gods spoke to
 him,
 They addressed their lord Lugal-dimmer-ankia,
 'Previously the Lord was [our beloved] son.
 But now he is our king. We shall take heed of his
 command.
 [] gave long life []
 [] the mantle of radiance, the mace,
 and staff.
 [] all the lore of sages.
 We [].'
 (*Catchline*)
 When Marduk heard the speech of the gods
 (*Colophon*)
 Fifth tablet, 'When skies above'
 Palace of Assurbanipal, king of the world, king of
 Assyria.

TABLET VI

When Marduk heard the speech of the gods,
 He made up his mind to perform miracles.
 He spoke his utterance to Ea,
 And communicated to him the plan that he was
 considering.
 'Let me put blood together, and make bones too.
 Let me set up primeval man: Man shall be his
 name.

Let me create a primeval man.
The work of the gods shall be imposed (on him),
and so they shall be at leisure.
Let me change the ways of the gods miraculously,
So they are gathered as one yet divided in two.'
Ea answered him and spoke a word to him,
Told him his plan for the leisure of the gods.
'Let one who is hostile to them be surrendered
(up),
Let him be destroyed, and let people be created
(from him).
Let the great gods assemble,
Let the culprit be given up, and let them convict
him.'
Marduk assembled the great gods,
Gave (them) instructions pleasantly, gave orders.
The gods paid attention to what he said.
The king addressed his words to the Anunnaki,
'Your election of me shall be firm and foremost.
I shall declare the laws, the edicts within my
power.
Whosoever started the war,
And incited Tiamat, and gathered an army,
Let the one who started the war be given up to
me,
And he shall bear the penalty for his crime, that
you may dwell in peace.'
The Igigi, the great gods, answered him,
Their lord Lugal-dimmer-ankia, counsellor of
gods,
'It was Qingu who started the war,
He who incited Tiamat and gathered an army!'
They bound him and held him in front of Ea,
Imposed the penalty on him and cut off his blood.
He created mankind from his blood,³⁵
Imposed the toil of the gods (on man) and released
the gods from it.
When Ea the wise had created mankind,
Had imposed the toil of the gods on them—
That deed is impossible to describe,

For Nudimmud performed it with the miracles of
 Marduk—
 Then Marduk the king divided the gods,
 The Anunnaki, all of them, above and below.
 He assigned his decrees to Anu to guard,
 Established three hundred as a guard in the sky;
 Did the same again when he designed the
 conventions of earth,
 And made the six hundred dwell in both heaven and
 earth.
 When he had directed all the decrees,
 Had divided lots for the Anunnaki, of heaven and of
 earth,³⁶
 The Anunnaki made their voices heard
 And addressed Marduk their lord,
 'Now, O Lord, that you have set us free,
 What are our favours from you?
 We would like to make a shrine with its own
 name.
 We would like our night's resting place to be in
 your private quarters, and to rest there.
 Let us found a shrine, a sanctuary there.
 Whenever we arrive, let us rest within it.'
 When Marduk heard this,
 His face lit up greatly, like daylight.
 'Create Babylon, whose construction you
 requested!
 Let its mud bricks be moulded, and build high the
 shrine!'

The Anunnaki began shovelling.
 For a whole year they made bricks for it.
 When the second year arrived,
 They had raised the top of Esagila in front of (?) the
 Apsu;
 They had built a high ziggurrat for the Apsu.
 They founded a dwelling for Anu, Ellil, and Ea
 likewise.
 In ascendancy he settled himself in front of them,
 And his 'horns' look down at the base of Esharra.³⁷
 When they had done the work on Esagila,

(And) the Anunnaki, all of them, had fashioned
their individual shrines,
The three hundred Igigi of heaven and the
Anunnaki of the Apsu all assembled.
The Lord invited the gods his fathers to attend a
banquet
In the great sanctuary which he had created as his
dwelling.
‘Indeed, Bab-ili (is) your home too!’³⁸
Sing for joy there, dwell in happiness!’
The great gods sat down there,
And set out the beer mugs; they attended the
banquet.
When they had made merry within,
They themselves made a *taqribtu*-offering in
splendid Esagila.
All the decrees (and) designs were fixed.
All the gods divided the stations of heaven and
earth.
The fifty great gods were present, and
The gods fixed the seven destinies for the cult.
The Lord received the bow, and set his weapon
down in front of them.
The gods his fathers looked at the net which he had
made,
Looked at the bow, how miraculous her construction,
And his fathers praised the deeds that he had done.
Anu raised (the bow) and spoke in the assembly of
gods,
He kissed the bow. ‘May she go far!’³⁹
He gave to the bow her names, saying,
‘May Long and Far be the first, and Victorious
the second;
Her third name shall be Bowstar, for she shall
shine in the sky.’
He fixed her position among the gods her
companions.
When Anu had decreed the destiny of the bow,
He set down her royal throne. ‘You are highest of
the gods!’

And Anu made her sit in the assembly of gods.
 The great gods assembled
 And made Marduk's destiny highest; they
 themselves did obeisance.
 They swore an oath for themselves,
 And swore on water and oil, touched their throats.⁴⁰
 Thus they granted that he should exercise the
 kingship of the gods
 And confirmed for him mastery of the gods of
 heaven and earth.

Anshar gave him another name: ASARLUHI.
 'At the mention of his name we shall bow down!
 The gods are to pay heed to what he says:
 His command is to have priority above and below.
 The son who avenged us shall be the highest!
 His rule shall have priority; let him have no
 rival!
 Let him act as shepherd over the black-headed
 people, his creation.
 Let his way be proclaimed in future days, never
 forgotten.
 He shall establish great *nindabû*-offerings for his
 fathers.
 He shall take care of them, he shall look after
 their shrines.
 He shall let them smell the *qutrinnu*-offering,
 and make their chant joyful.
 Let him breathe on earth as freely as he always
 does in heaven.
 Let him designate the black-headed people to
 revere him,
 That mankind may be mindful of him, and name
 him as their god.
 Let their (interceding) goddess pay attention when
 he opens his mouth.
 Let *nindabû*-offerings be brought [to] their god
 (and) their goddess.
 Let them never be forgotten! Let them cleave to
 their god.

Let them keep their country pre-eminent, and
always build shrines.
Though the black-headed people share out the
gods,⁴¹
As for us, no matter by which name we call him,
he shall be our god.
Come, let us call him by his fifty names!
His ways shall be proclaimed, and his deeds
likewise!

MARDUK

Whose father Anu designated him at the moment
of his birth,
To be in charge of pasturage and watering places,
to enrich their stalls,
Who overwhelmed the riotous ones with his
flood-weapon
And saved the gods his fathers from hardship.
Let THE SON, MAJESTY OF THE GODS be his name!
In his bright light may they walk forever more:
The people whom he created, the form of life that
breathes.
He imposed the work of the gods (on them) so
that they might rest.
Creation and abolition, forgiveness and
punishment—
Such are at his disposal, so let them look to him.
MARUKKA—he is the god who created them.⁴²
He pleases the Anunnaki and gives rest to the
Igigi.
MARUTUKKU—he is the help of country, city, and
his people.
Him shall the people revere forever.
MERSHAKUSHU—fierce yet considerate, furious yet
merciful.⁴³
Generous is his heart, controlled are his
emotions.
LUGAL-DIMMER-ANKIA—his name which we gave
him in our assembly.
We made his command higher than the gods his
fathers'.

He is indeed BEL of the gods of heaven and earth,
all of them,
The king at whose instruction the gods are awed
above and below.

NARI-LUGAL-DIMMER-ANKIA is a name that we have
given him as director of all the gods,
Who founded our dwellings in heaven and earth
out of difficulties,
And who shared out the stations for the Igigi and
Anunnaki.
At his names may the gods tremble and quake in
(their) dwellings.

ASARLUHI (first) is his name which his father Anu
gave him,
He shall be the light of the gods, strong leader,
Who like his name is the protecting spirit of god
and country.
He spared our dwellings in the great battle despite
difficulties.
Second, they called him Asarluhi as NAMTILA, the
god who gives life,⁴⁴
Who restored all the damaged gods as if they
were his own creation.⁴⁵
Bel, who revives dead gods with his pure
incantation,
Who destroys those who oppose him but . . .s the
enemy.
Asarluhi third as NAMRU, whose name was given
(thus),
The pure god who purifies our path.⁴⁶

Anshar, Lahmu, and Lahamu called his three names;
They pronounced them to the gods their sons,
'We have given him each of these three names.
Now you, pronounce his names as we did!'
The gods rejoiced, and obeyed their command.
In Ubshu-ukkinakku they deliberated their counsel.
'Let us elevate the name of the son, the warrior,
Our champion who looks after us!'

They sat in their assembly and began to call out the destinies,

Pronounced his name in all their rites.

(*Catchline*)

Asare, bestower of ploughland, who fixes (its) boundaries

TABLET VII

'ASARE, bestower of ploughland, who fixes (its) boundaries,⁴⁷

Creator of grain and linseed, producer of vegetation.

ASAR-ALIM, whose weighty counsel in the Chamber of Council is most valued;

The gods, even those who know no fear, pay heed to him.

ASAR-ALIM-NUNA, the honoured one, the light of the father who begot him,

Who directs the orders of Anu, Ellil, Ea, and D[amkina?].

He indeed is their provider, who allocates their incomes,

Whose farmland makes a surplus for the country.

He is TUTU, (first) as creator of their renewal.

He shall purify their shrines, that they may stay at rest.

He shall invent an incantation, that the gods may be at peace.

Even if they should rise up in anger, he shall turn them back.

He shall be pre-eminent in the assembly of the gods his fathers;

None among the gods shall rival him.

He is Tutu, (second) as ZI-UKKINA, the inspiration of his people,

Who fixed the pure skies for the gods,⁴⁸

Who set their ways and marked out their stations.

May he not be forgotten by teeming humanity,
 may they uphold his work.⁴⁹
 Thirdly, they named him Tutu as ZĪKU, upholder
 of purification,
 The god of sweet breath, lord of obedience and
 consent,
 Producer of riches and abundance, who maintains
 a surplus,
 Who turns whatever is scant into plenty.
 Even in the worst hardship we can smell his
 sweet breath!
 May they speak in worship and sing his praises!
 Fourthly, let the people glorify Tutu as AGAKU,
 Lord of the pure incantation, who revives the
 dying,
 Who showed mercy even to the captured gods,
 Who removed the yoke imposed upon the gods
 his enemies,
 Who created mankind to set them free,
 The merciful one who has the power to give life!
 His words shall be firm; they shall never be
 forgotten
 In the mouth of the black-headed people whom
 he created with his own hands.
 Fifthly, let their mouths show forth Tutu as
 TUKU, whose spell (is) pure,
 Who uprooted all the wicked with his pure
 incantation.

He is SHAZU, aware of the gods' intentions, who
 can see emotions,
 Who does not allow evil-doers to escape him,
 Establisher of the gods' assembly, gratifier of
 their wishes,
 Who makes the arrogant kneel beneath his wide
 canopy.
 Director of justice, who plucks out crooked
 speech,
 In whose place lies can be distinguished from
 truth.

Secondly, let them worship Shazu as ZISI, silencer
of the aggressor,
Expeller of deathly silence from the bodies of the
gods his fathers.

Thirdly, he is Shazu as SUHRIM, uprooter of all
the foe by force of arms,
Dispelling their plots, scattering them to the
winds,
Extinguishing all the wicked, wherever they may
be.

May the gods always proclaim the triumph in the
assembly!

Fourthly, he is Shazu as SUHGURIM, responsible
for the obedience of the gods his fathers.
Uprooter of the foe, destroyer of their offspring,
Dispeller of their works, who left no trace of
them.

Let his name be proclaimed and spoken in the
land.

Fifthly, let future generations consider Shazu as
ZAHRIM,

Destroyer of all enemies, every one of them
arrogant,

Who brought all the refugee gods into shrines:
Let this be established as his name.

Sixthly, let them all praise Shazu as ZAHGURIM
too,

Who destroyed all the foe by himself in battle.

He is ENBILULU, the lord, their enricher;
Their deity is mighty, responsible for sacrificial
omens,
Who looks after pasturage and watering places,
establishes them for the land,
Who opens up wells (?) and apportions the waters
of abundance.⁵⁰

Secondly, let them address Enbilulu as EPADUN,
lord of the countryside and . . . ,
Canal-controller of heaven and earth, establisher
of the furrow,

Who maintains pure ploughland in the
 countryside,
 Who directs ditches and canals and marks out the
 furrows.
 Thirdly, let them praise Enbilulu as GUGAL
 ("canal-controller") of the gods' irrigated land.
 Lord of abundance and the luxuriance of great
 grain-piles.
 Responsible for riches, who gives surplus to
 homes,
 Giver of cereals, producer of grain.
 Fourthly (?), he is Enbilulu as HEGAL
 ("Abundance"), who heaps up a surplus for
 people,
 Who brings rain of abundance over the broad
 earth, and makes vegetation grow profusely.

He is SIRSIR, who piled a mountain over Tiamat,
 And took as booty the corpse of Tiamat, by his
 force of arms.
 Governor of the land, their righteous shepherd,
 Whose gifts are cultivation, garden plots and
 ploughland,
 Who waded into the broad Sea-Tiamat in his
 fury:
 Like a bridge he spanned her battlefield.
 Secondly, they named Sirsir as MALAH
 ("Boatman")—may she, Tiamat,
 Be his barque forever, and he her sailor.

He is GIL, who amasses mighty heaps and mounds
 of grain.
 Producer of cereals and flocks, giver of the land's
 seed.
 He is GILIMA, who established the cosmic bond of
 the gods, who created stability;
 The ring that encompasses them, who prepares
 good things.
 He is AGILIMA, the lofty, who tore out flood-waves,
 and controlled snows,

And built the earth above the water, established
the heights.

He is ZULUM who designated fields for the gods,
and divided up what he had created.
Bestower of incomes and food offerings, supplier
of shrines.

He is MUMMU, fashioner of heaven and earth,
director of . . .

The god who purifies heaven and earth, secondly
as ZULUM-UMMU

Whom no other god equals for strength.

GISH-NUMUN-AB, creator of all people, maker of
the world's quarters,

Destroyer of Tiamat's gods, maker of people in
their entirety.

LUGAL-AB-DUBUR, the king who scattered Tiamat's
brood and snatched her weapon,

Who made a firm base in the van and the rear.

PAGAL-GUENA, leader of all lords, whose might is
supreme,

Who is greatest of the gods his brothers, prince of
them all.

LUGAL-DURMAH, king, bond of gods, lord of the
cosmic bond,

Who is greatest in the royal abode, highest of the
gods by far.

ARANUNA, counsellor of Ea, creator of the gods
[his (?)] fathers,

Whom no god equals in his princely way.

DUMU-DUKU, whose pure dwelling is marked out
for him on the holy mound,

Dumu-duku, without whom rules cannot be
decided, LUGAL-DUKU.

LUGAL-SHUANNA, king whose might is supreme
among the gods.

Lord, might of Anu, who is pre-eminent as the
namesake (?) of Anshar.

IRUGA, who took them all captive from inside
Tiamat,

Who unites all wisdom, and is broad of
understanding.

IRQINGU, who took Qingu captive as foe (?) in (?)
battle,

Who administers decrees for everything, who
confirms supremacy.

KINMA, director of all the gods, giver of counsel,
At whose name the gods themselves quake in fear
as in a tempest.

As E-SIZKUR, he shall sit highest in the house of
prayer,

And the gods shall bring their presents before
him,

As long as he accepts revenues from them.

None may perform miracles without him.⁵¹

No (other) god shall designate the revenues of the
black-headed people, his own creation,

Without him, nor decisions about their lifetimes.

GIBIL, who establishes the . . . of weapon(s),

Who performed miracles in the battle with
Tiamat.

Profound in wisdom, skilled in understanding,

(So) profound, that none of the gods can
comprehend.

ADDU shall be his name: let him cover all the
sky,⁵²

And may his fine noise rumble over the earth.

May he shed water (?) from the clouds,

And give sustenance to the people below.

ASHARU, who like his name is responsible for the
gods of destinies:

He does indeed take charge over every single
person.

NEBERU: he does indeed hold the crossings of
heaven and earth.

Neither up nor down shall they cross over; they
must wait on him.

Neberu is his star which is bright in the sky.

He controls the crossroads; they must look to
him,

Saying: "He who kept crossing inside Tiamat
without respite,
Shall have Neberu as his name, grasping her
middle.
May he establish the paths of the heavenly stars,
And may he shepherd all the gods like sheep.
Let him defeat Tiamat, constrict her breath and
shorten her life,
So that for future people, till time grows old,
She shall be far removed, not kept here, distant
forever."
Because he had created the Place (heaven),
and fashioned Dannina (earth),
ENKURKUR, father Ellil named him.
Ea heard that name, by which the Igigi all called
him,
And was delighted, saying,
"He whose fathers have given him such a
splendid name
Shall have the name Ea, just like me.
He shall have mastery over the arrangement of
all my rites,
And shall direct every one of my decrees.""

With fifty epithets the great gods
Called his fifty names, making his way supreme.
May they always be cherished, and may the older
explain (to the younger).
Let the wise and learned consult together,
Let the father repeat them and teach them to the
son.
Let the ear of shepherd and herdsman be open,
Let him not be negligent to Marduk, the Ellil of the
gods.
May his country be made fertile, and himself be
safe and sound.
His word is firm, his command cannot alter;
No god can change his utterance.
When he is angry, he does not turn his neck
(aside);

In his rage and fury no god dare confront him.
 His thoughts are deep, his emotions profound;
 Criminals and wrongdoers pass before him.
 He (the scribe?) wrote down the secret instruction
 which older men had recited in his presence,
 And set it down for future men to read.
 May the [people?]'s of Marduk whom the Igigi gods
 created
 Weave the [tale?] and call upon his name
 In remembrance (?) of the song of Marduk
 Who defeated Tiamat and took the kingship.

NOTES TO EPIC OF CREATION

Text: composite cuneiform text for students: Lambert and Parker 1966; outdated edition Labat 1935; new edition announced Lambert and Millard 1969 still awaited.

1. The epic is often referred to by the first two words of the first line as *Enuma Elish*.
2. The word 'maker' is *mummu*; the *bīt mummi* was the term for a workshop that produced statues of deities.
3. The Assyrian version has Ea and Damkina instead of Lahmu and Lahamu.
4. The Assyrian version has Marduk instead of Anshar. Assur was assimilated with Anshar from the eighth century at least, perhaps because of similarity in names.
5. Variant has Lahmu instead of Anu.
6. This appears to be a play on the logogram for Marduk's name AMAR.UTU; it has also been interpreted as a possible diminutive of the word 'son'.
7. *šamši* is a title, literally 'my sun', meaning 'your/his majesty' which was taken by gods who headed their local pantheon and by great kings during the Late Bronze Age (c.1500–1000 BC).
8. Perhaps a pun: 'Hubur, river / *hubūru*, hubbub'.
9. Compare this list of Tiamat's monsters with those with which Agum-kakrime adorned the doors of Marduk's temple: 'I made a pair of great door leaves, pine door leaves, . . . I had them inlaid with a horned serpent, *lahmu*-hero, bull-man, *ugallu*-demon, rabid dog, fish-man, goat-fish in lapis lazuli, rock crystal, carnelian, and alabaster.' Either these creatures were there simply to ward off evil, or a different version of the Epic was in circulation, illustrated by the doors.

10. Alliteration, *libbuš lippuš*.
11. It has been suggested that *emarukka*, translated here 'by the sight of you', is a name of Tiamat elsewhere unattested in Akkadian or Sumerian, corresponding to Omorka in Berossus' *Babyloniaca*; but Tiamat would be quite out of place in this sentence.
12. The variant *enūtu*, 'power of the *en*-priesthood', puns with *anūtu*, 'Anu-power'. The pun presumably applies also to other occurrences of this line.
13. Alliteration: *itukka la ittiq*.
14. Marduk's title 'Lord' (*Bēl*) = same as that used for Ninurta in SBV *Anzu*.
15. 'Constellation', *lumāšu*, was previously misread as 'garment', *lubāšu*; the cuneiform signs *ba* and *ma* are often very hard to distinguish.
16. Compare note 15 to *Anzu*. The phrase is identical here.
17. Apparently 'evil wind' is an explanatory gloss on *imhullu*, a Sumerian loan word, and seems quite unnecessary.
18. Alliteration on the letters HLP in the four words of this line. Cf. note 45 to SBV *Gilgamesh*.
19. Pun: 'middle/battle-force' (both Akkadian *qablu*).
20. Subject perhaps Qingu rather than Marduk.
21. Sennacherib's inscription, describing a scene from the Epic as depicted on the doors of his Temple of the New Year's Festival, makes it clear that the gods accompanied Assur into battle in the Assyrian version. 'A picture of Assur who goes inside Tiamat for battle; how he raises the bow in the chariot that he rides, the flood-weapon with which he is entrusted; Amurru who rides with him as rein-holder, . . . the gods march in front of him and march behind him, those who ride in a vehicle, those who march on foot, and how those in front of Assur are arrayed, and how those behind Assur are arrayed; Tiamat and the creatures of her insides, against whom Assur, king of the gods, marches to battle; a picture of Sennacherib king of Assyria; the gods Sharur, Shargaz, Kakka, Nusku, Madanu, Tishpak, Ninurta-of-the-wall, Kubu, Haya, Sebitti—these are the gods who march in front of Assur. Mullissu, Sherua, Sin, Nikkal, Shamash, Aya, Kippat-mati, Anu, Antu, Adad, Shala, Ea, Damkina, Belet-ili, Ninurta—these are the gods who march behind Assur. The conquering weapons are positioned in Assur's chariot.'
22. 'Falsehood': see Borger 1980 for this interpretation.
23. A close parallel with this pair of lines is found in an inscription of Ashurbanipal (Streck 1916, p. 28, line 381).
24. The precise implication of 'dead gods' is uncertain.
25. Play on words and alliteration: *šimāti la simāti*.
26. The north wind was regarded as the most pleasant and favourable wind in ancient Mesopotamia as in Egypt.
27. 'Greetings gifts' may be an explanatory gloss of 'presents', and seems to be unnecessary.
28. The word for the fifteenth day of the month, *šabattu*, is cognate with the Sabbath.
29. i.e. the moon must disappear on the eastern horizon at sunrise.

30. A literary composition describing the Bowstar who is killed by Ea was published by Walker 1983. See also note 39 below.
31. The word *inu* means both 'eyes' and 'springs'.
32. Anu or Ea; the logogram is ambiguous.
33. This may allude to the decoration of Ea's temple in Eridu, or may alternatively be modelled on the display of Ninurta's trophies in Sumerian mythology. See Cooper 1978, 141–54.
34. Lugal-dimmer-ankia: Sumerian for 'King of the gods of heaven and earth'.
35. The ambiguity of subject (Marduk or Ea) may be deliberate.
36. Division of land at inheritance among brothers was done by lot. See note 4 to *Atrahasis*.
37. Perhaps the pinnacles; or a reference to the crown with bulls' horns which all gods wore.
38. Written phonetically, which is unusual, perhaps emphasizing its (secondary?) etymology as 'Gate of God'.
39. By a different reading of the same signs, 'May she go far' can alternatively be translated, 'She shall be my daughter', and may possibly be a learned pun. The bow almost certainly refers to Ishtar, daughter of Anu, as the Bowstar *elamatum*. See Walker 1983, 147, note 14. He publishes there a fragment from the seventh tablet of an otherwise unattested myth *Gerra and Elamatum* which bears some close resemblances to this epic and to *Anzu*. The month in which the great festival of Ishtar of Arbil was held is described as: 'Month of the heliacal rising of the Bowstar'.
40. This gesture is attested as accompanying treaty oaths in the Old Babylonian period.
41. The expression 'black-headed people' is normally understood to be a poetic term for mankind in general. It may also imply contrast with fair-haired people living beyond the bounds of ancient Mesopotamia.
42. This name Marukka and the following one play upon the name Marduk.
43. Mershakushu was previously read as Agashadulu.
44. The temple of Ellil in Babylon as 'lord of the lands' was E-namtila.
45. Perhaps this refers to the repair and restoration of divine statues in the workshops of Esagila; but there may also be an allusion to a feat of Ninurta.
46. There is play on various forms and secondary etymologies of the name of Ellil: *ellu*, 'pure', and *mullilu*, the Sumerian *eme-sal* dialect form of Ellil's name.
47. It is not possible to give an accurate translation or explanation for many of the following Sumerian titles of Marduk. In some cases, e.g. Asare, Tutu, Enbilulu, and Addu, he is assimilated with venerable deities whose independent existence is attested. In other cases the titles appear to be epithets which describe various aspects of his power; they are occasionally paraphrased and elaborated in the Akkadian description which follows each title, but often the elaboration consists largely of an esoteric play on words and logograms that is impossible to convey in English even when it is understood, and which can hardly have been meaningful in spoken form. The most comprehensive discussion is by Bottéro 1977,

- who uses an ancient, erudite commentary of extreme brevity to help explain the riddle-like complexities of the text.
48. The verb 'fixed', *ukinnu*, puns on the second element of the epithet, *Ukkina*.
49. The word 'teeming', *apâti*, used to be translated 'beclouded' owing to an incorrect etymology.
50. 'Wells', *berâti*, or 'irrigated land', *miṭrâti*. *be* and *miṭ* are both readings of a single sign.
51. This line seems to be intrusive according to the sense of the adjacent lines.
52. This is the only assimilation of Marduk with a major god of the Late Bronze–Iron Age pantheon as distinct from ancient Sumerian gods. An Old Babylonian text from Mari refers to Addu (the west-semitic form of the weather-god Adad) of Aleppo as the conqueror of Tiamat. This may show that a version of this creation story was current in west-semitic circles in the early second millennium, and may account for the specifically west-semitic form, phonetically written, of the god's name here. See J.-M. Durand 1993.

OXFORD WORLD'S CLASSICS



Myths from Mesopotamia
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Edited and translated
with an Introduction and Notes by
STEPHANIE DALLEY

Revised edition

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

OXFORD

UNIVERSITY PRESS

Great Clarendon Street, Oxford OX2 6DP

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford.
It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship,
and education by publishing worldwide in

Oxford New York

Auckland Bangkok Buenos Aires Cape Town Chennai
Dar es Salaam Delhi Hong Kong Istanbul Karachi Kolkata
Kuala Lumpur Madrid Melbourne Mexico City Mumbai Nairobi
São Paulo Shanghai Taipei Tokyo Toronto

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Published in the United States
by Oxford University Press Inc., New York

Translation, Introduction, Explanatory Notes, and other editorial matter
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First published 1989 by Oxford University Press
First issued as a World's Classics paperback 1991
Reissued as an Oxford World's Classics paperback 1998
Revised edition 2000

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
Data available

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication Data
Data available

ISBN 0-19-283589-0

7 9 10 8 6

Printed in Great Britain by
Clays Ltd., St Ives plc