

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 main deities or characters in the myth:

Apsu (fresh water personified and father of all the gods)

Tiamat (salt water personified and represented as a sea-monster and mother of all the gods)

Mummu (advisor of Apsu and Tiamat)

Anshar (son of Apsu and Tiamat)

Anu (grandson of Apsu and Tiamat and father of other gods)

Qingu (Tiamat's main general in the struggle against the noisy gods)

Ea (son of Anu, god of wisdom among the younger gods who slays Apsu to prevent slaughter of younger gods)

Marduk (very young god and son of Ea who successfully slays Tiamat and restores order; patron deity of Babylon)

Anunnaki (name for a group of superior gods)

Tablet of Destinies (tablets containing what will happen that give a particular god a ruling position)

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!
Con[quer 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-balaṣsu-iqbi son of Na’id-Marduk.

Hand of Nabû-balaṣsu-iqbi son of
 Na’id-Marduk [].

(section omitted)

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.

[]

(section omitted)

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)

(section omitted)

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 ziggurat 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.

(remainder omitted – see Tim Beal for a summary of the the entire story)